

for
further
details

HAMEVASSER

see
Chaim
Feller

Official Student Publication of RIETS and JSS

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Number 1

Volume VII

Sacknovitz Wins Presidency By One Vote Margin in JSS

Robert Sacknovitz, Herbert Berezin, and Jim Michaelson have been elected as the new officers of the JSS student council.

Election activity in JSS began the last week in March with the prospective candidates obtaining the 75 signatures of fellow JSS students required to secure a place for their name on the official ballot. Petitions were turned in to the election committee, and those who qualified as candidates for office

election day, April 4th, was excellent, with special interest being given to a referendum regarding the adoption of new JSS regulations in the middle of this semester.

Several recounts of the ballots, due to the almost equal number of votes cast for opposing candidates, were required before the results became official.

Concerning the referendum, of the 216 votes cast by JSS students, 210 stated that they were opposed



JSS officers Berezin, Sacknovitz, Michaelson

were: Bruce Spinowitz-Junior Y and Bob Sacknovitz-Soph A1 for president, Laure Futerick-Soph A2 and Herbert Berezin-Junior A1 for vice president, and Neal Fober, Soph A2, Jim Michaelson-Fresh B, and Aryeh Moshe-Fresh A1 for secretary-treasurer.

(Enthusiasm for the election seemed to be aroused in most JSS circles. In the few days remaining before the balloting, time was spent in door-to-door campaigning, and posters were placed throughout all the buildings. The candidates reflected their desire to influence all prospective voters in the messages they had written on their posters. Thus the messages varied from the simple, "vote for experience" to the "thought provoking," "rise up and avoid the creepy meatball").

The turnout by JSS students on

to the adoption of the new rules at this time, and 6 students were in favor. Due to the overwhelming vote in opposition to the regulations, Rabbi Berezin has agreed to defer official adoption of the regulations until next year.



Ben-Zion Safran, Contributing Editor of HAMEVASSER, has been named valedictorian of the Class of '68. A history major, he is a member in the Rev's club. Ben-Zion maintained a perfect 4.0 scholastic index throughout his college career. He was chosen for this honor from among the three high-achieving students in an election held by his classmates.

It is very easy to call the Con-

Rabbi Nissim Addresses YU Audience; Voices Plea For Our Immediate Aliyah

by MARK KARASICK

The Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim, visited Yeshiva University on March 7th, and addressed an overflow crowd at Silver Hall.

Rabbi Nissim, who was invited to this country by the UOJCA, did not for a moment try to conceal the purpose of his mission to the United States. He began his presentation by dramatizing the historic dimension of the events which have transpired in the past year. Not since the days of the Second Commonwealth, he said, did Israel ex-

perience such millennial days as those in June of last year.

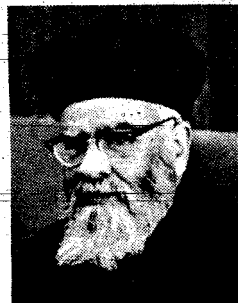
The significance of those days was enhanced, Rabbi Nissim emphasized, through a religious renaissance, "a miracle within a miracle": the renewed spiritual reaffirmation of many thousand of the "alienated."

Most of the religious Jews in the Golan, the Chief Rabbi remarked, are aware of these realities, yet they fail to be actuated by them. They habitually reiterate the importance of Israel to them as Jews; nevertheless, they ignore the relevance of Israel in terms of a land in which to live and create.

How can American Jews, Rabbi Nissim asked, continue to proclaim "next year in Jerusalem" without feeling a sense of hypocrisy? "Whoever is interested to come—you're welcome!" he exclaimed.

The Chief Rabbi addressed himself to the Halachic controversy whether the *mitzvah* to settle in Israel is Biblical (*d'oraita*). Even the Rambam, he claimed, believes that this commandment is Biblical. His failure to enumerate it stems from the Rambam's principle of omitting from his *Mishnah Hamitzvot* those commandments which are of a more inclusive nature. The

mitzvah of settling in Israel is inclusive of other *mitzvot* contingent upon the land and its sanctity. Furthermore, Rabbi Nissim pointed out, those commentators who have



Chief Rabbi Nissim

considered this particular *mitzvah* as Rabbinic did so when the land of Israel was under alien domination; however, when all of the land is "in Jewish hands," all concur that this *mitzvah* is as binding as any other.

Finally, Rabbi Nissim turned to his approximately one thousand listeners, asking very few of them to rise and explain his "excuse" for remaining in the Golan. When no such "excuse" was articulated by any one, the Chief Rabbi concluded his speech to the thunderous applause of his enthusiastic audience.

UOJCA Issues Report On World Conference; Student Participant Offers Personal Impressions

by DAVID MILLER

Approximately four months ago, I attended the World Conference of Ashkenazi and Sephardic Synagogues in Jerusalem as the head of a delegation of students from North American Yavneh. As the UOJCA recently published a Report of its congregations on the Conference, and as a review article by Rabbi Ralph Pelcovitz has just appeared in *Jewish Life*, I feel the time is appropriate to look back from a proper perspective and present, from the point of view of a participant, impressions of what occurred this past January. I am interested in offering insights into the results of, rather than discussing the workings of, the Conference; thus, I recommend the Report, which adequately summarizes the Program (assemblies, addresses, sessions, and workshops) to those who are interested in the latter points. I also do not intend to answer the specific question as to whether the Conference fulfilled its goals and objectives, for those did not appear in print until after it was over, and as such they have no meaning. Instead, I intend to respond to the general question as to what the Conference did accomplish.

ference a "thrilling success" as the Report did, but if one hopes to derive lessons from what transpired, one must look at it realistically, and not from a vantage point steeped in self-adulation.

The Report gives nine answers to the key question as to what was accomplished. I feel that these can be further reduced to two basic categories of accomplishments, those *K'lapei chutz* and those *K'lapei pnim*. The former are that "the World Conference gave the world

the world over.

Regarding the first points, I am quite unaware of any mass of publicity in the world press, and to the best of my knowledge, most non-Orthodox Jews and certainly the vast majority of non-Jews were not even aware of the fact that a conference was held. On the Israeli scene as well, the popular newspapers gave the sessions very limited coverage, (the only extensive coverage was to be found in the religious organs, *Hatzofe* and *Parim*



Rabbi Gore, speaks at Conference

at large a new awareness of the "Orthodox Jew" and that "the World Conference bore significant impact on the Israeli populace, bringing to many a radically changed image of Orthodox Jewry, and the Orthodox Synagogue."

The latter was basically that the World Conference was a "potent demonstration of the strength, solidarity" and unity of religious Jewry

El Panim, most of whose readership were either attending the conference or had friends or relatives attending) and thus the "Israeli populace" was in general uninformed in the conference both physically and spiritually. In addition, they had little opportunity to meet the "radically changed image of Orthodox Jewry" other than in the

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Large Turnout Elects Safran, Schloss, And Hoening To SOY Posts

Nearly 70% of RIETS' students turned out to vote in the SOY elections, held on Thursday, April 25. Eliyahu Safran won the office of president, Menachem Schloss that of vice president, and Jacob Hoening won the office of secretary-treasurer. Safran's victory was somewhat of a landslide: he received 339 votes to 61 for his opponent, David Savitsky. The races for the other two offices were much closer. Menachem Schloss, with 196 votes, defeated Michael Shmidman (172) and Eugene Rostker for the office of vice-president. Mr. Hoening, although polling more votes than either of his opponents, Solomon Adler and Neil Leist, did not receive a majority, but won in the second ballot, getting 216 votes to 128 for Solomon Adler.

This year's turnout, the largest ever for an SOY election, is especially creditable since for much of the time that the elections were being held there was being held simultaneously a rally in commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, which also had a large number of participants from Y.U.

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Needed — Hashkafa

In the world of higher education, Yeshiva occupies a unique position. Not only does it attempt to provide its students with both a secular and a Jewish education, it is also supposed to produce what used to be called a synthesis of these two. Our morning studies should teach us not only Jewish scholarship, but also a way of life—an understanding of our religion and a value system based thereon—that will enable us to live as fully as possible the life of committed Jews.

We feel that this, to a large extent, is not the case. In too many classes and for many students, the subject matter of the morning hours is something to be studied only then—in the morning. Not only is it felt by many to be irrelevant to what is learned in the college, it is also often considered unrelated to the way they think and act when they are no longer within the confines of our institution. This is not meant to indicate in any way that the present methods of studying *limudei kodesh* are irrelevant or out-dated, or that they should be changed in any way. Yet it seems that for most people a supplementary training is also required.

As can be attested to by the interest in the recent Yom Iyoun, as well as by the drawing power of Yavneh lectures and the *hashkafa shiurim* of some *Rabbeim*, many students feel that there is a need for more instruction in *hashkafa*. We fervently endorse this need, yet feel that *hashkafa* must be given on a more systematic and rigorous basis. This does not mean another course in Jewish Philosophy. Although the ones presently given in the college are extremely informative, there must also be a class with emphasis on the way we should act and think in our everyday experiences.

Although we eventually would hope to see a large number of coordinated courses developed into a four-year program, we realize that for the immediate future such hopes are slightly unrealistic. We therefore offer the following trial proposal, which can be put into effect by next September. A one-year, three credit course, to be taught by one person, or several people under the direction of one coordinator, should be made available to all college students during the afternoon hours. At first the course will have to be optional, but RIETS students should have the option of substituting it for six of the twenty-six credits in Jewish Studies that they must currently take. This option is not intended as a subtle way of making the course more attractive, but rather is necessary so that the student already overburdened with required courses will have the opportunity to take this one if he so desires.

The need for such a course is obvious and elemental, and has existed for a long time. A full and satisfactory solution is still a long way off, but a start must be made now. Yeshiva must make an immediate attempt to provide direction as well as education.

Day School Crisis

A major factor in the resurgence of the American Orthodox Jewish Community since World War II has been the growth of the Day School movement. In the short span of twenty years, it has provided the beginnings of a well-educated laity and of dedicated leaders who are crucial to the future of Orthodoxy. After an amazing start, the movement has continued to grow and extend its influence in the communities it has reached.

Yet we are approaching a state of crisis. To enable the day schools to continue growing, there must be a steady increase in the number of qualified teachers and administrators. Unfortunately, the sources for these people seem to be drying up. Too few students are willing to meet the challenge and many do not even seem to be aware of the problem. For this reason, many existing positions are constantly vacant, and plans for new schools must often be postponed or abandoned.

Recognizing the extreme urgency of the situation, many of the noted *Roshei Yeshiva* recently issued a joint statement calling on all *bnei yeshiva* to come to the assistance of the day schools. They are also working on a personal level by urging their students to enter the field of chinuch. Although some of the *Rabbeim* at YU are also using their influence to direct students to this field, the record of our Yeshiva is generally quite poor. Neither RIETS nor EMC produces more than a few teachers or rabbis each year, and the administration has certainly not evidenced any strong desire to alter this trend. Surely the problem arises, in part, from the lack of an awareness of community responsibility among many of the YU students; but the passive and sometimes even negative attitude of our school and the Jewish community at large must, at least, equally share the blame.

Because we feel that Yeshiva must at all times live up to its position of responsibility in the Jewish community, and especially must act now that the situation is so crucial, we urge the administration to make a special attempt to do what it can to alleviate the problems outlined above. Although we must leave the details of such changes to the authorities in charge, we would suggest action in the following areas: *Rabbeim* should invest greater effort in impressing upon their students the importance of *chinuch*, and in encouraging them on a personal level to enter the field. More publicity should be given to the needs of and opportunities available in the day school movement. The goals of EMC should correspond more closely to its original purpose as teacher's institute, and incentives such as rebating tuition and subsidizing salaries should be offered to prospective teachers in both EMC and RIETS. Finally, Yeshiva should use its vast public relations network to change the attitude of the American Jewish community towards day school teachers. This means not only training communities to pay higher salaries, but also enhancing the image of the teacher among American laymen.

The growth of the day school movement is crucial to our survival in this country. For a school that claims to be a leader in community service, we have done very little to ensure this growth. Both the students and the administration must act to immediately halt this dangerous trend.

Semicha Graduate Load

For many years, Yeshiva University has espoused a policy of *Torah Umada*, offering its students a dual program in the belief that a secular education can be obtained without seriously hampering the learning of Torah. Although there have been and still are obvious disadvantages to this type of program, on the whole they have been caused by errors in administrative judgment rather than by flaws in the basic theory.

Yet this policy is not being followed in a consistent manner. Although college students are allowed to take a normal course load while studying *limudei kodesh*, the Semicha students are limited to six credits above the sixteen per term required by the Semicha program itself. No allowances are made for individual capabilities or levels of achievement. Rather all Semicha students are treated in the same manner—as immature boys incapable of choosing a program that will not be

so taxing as to cause their learning to suffer.

We understand the motivation for the policy, but while agreeing that there are serious deficiencies in the present Semicha program, we do not feel that negative rules are a good way to overcome these problems. Giving a student free time is not the best way of making him learn more, especially since this free time can be used by him in almost any fashion he chooses just as long as he does not go to graduate school.

The Semicha program should be improved by strengthening it, not by creating a vacuum for it to operate in. Perhaps requirements for Semicha could be raised. Perhaps more emphasis can be placed on practical *halacha* and the methods used for answering a *halachic* question. Some sort of project could be demanded of each student, such as the research papers that were at one time a prerequisite for Semicha.

The implementation of these ideas would serve to improve the Semicha program by giving the students badly needed training. No purpose is served by limiting the student's use of his own free time. The administration has a right to demand a certain level of achievement of the students, but beyond that, the students should be left free to use their extra time as they wish.

Polish Anti-Semitism

The hideous reality of the spectre of blatant anti-Semitism in Poland is indeed a paradox of history. One would have thought that after a few hundreds years of almost rabid anti-Semitism culminating with the monstrous destruction of Poland's three million Jews, barbarous intolerance of Jews in Poland was at an end. However, after a mere twenty-five years, a new wave of hate has been unleashed against Poland's remaining thirty thousand Jews. We urgently appeal to the Polish government to repeal its policy of oppression against Poland's Jews. The Polish government should be mindful that men of good conscience cannot remain silent while the remnants of Hitler's holocaust are again made the scapegoats of a nation whose very soil contains the ashes of an Auschwitz.

From the Editor's Desk

Education And Direction

by David Shatz

Although classic formulations portray the YU experience as a bold encounter between religious and secular knowledge, the current drift of affairs points up a severe insufficiency in that conception. Naturally, for the intellectually or religiously motivated student, struggling to create a personal world-view, the challenge of reconciling the two combatants looms as the paramount drama of self-discovery. But for the others, intellectual synthesis is doomed to failure, and the problem assumes a different hue.

And, in the main, a commonly expressed frustration applies to Yeshiva: ours is an age not of disbelief or of wrong belief, but of lack of concern about belief; not of philosophical "doubt," but of psychological indifference. And the failing of the Jewish education at Yeshiva lies not simply in any abortive attempts to harmonize religion with science or philosophy, but in the failure to harvest the activities of campus life with Jewish values; to mold religious "attitudes" and perspectives; and to channel emotive and creative tendencies in the direction of Jewish ideals.

Thus, while the storm aroused by events at other colleges and the generally rebellious temper of the times sparked agitation at Yeshiva for students' rights—agitation which ultimately reaped indisputable benefits—religious issues both within and without Yeshiva have paled into matters of small concern. Even religious insubordination is very much "in"; the issue of minyan attendance has become a "political football" to help promote the cause of students' rights.

Likewise, the popular impression that religious values are of no relevance to our secular pursuits—an impression perhaps solidified by the outspoken antagonism between morning and afternoon "representatives"—is no doubt culpable for the attrition of idealism and shrinking of ethical responsibility that is evident, for example, in the impracticality of instituting an honor system here, or in the outcome of the curriculum evaluation. True, the evaluation could have been handled with sensitivity and discretion; that it was not, however, is reflective of a general current of

(Continued on page 3)

Editor Emeritus

Fragmentation

by Jon Bloomberg

To anyone who approached the recent Yom Iyyun seriously—or who has conducted his own private Yom Iyyun, one truth is readily apparent: it is impossible (except for the occasional genius) to do complete justice to the double program. A first-rate college education—one that is approached with total intellectual honesty and involvement by both faculty and student—and a first-rate yeshiva education—one that is approached with total intellectual honesty and involvement by both *rebbe* and *talmid*—are mutually exclusive.

Unfortunately, a significant portion, if not the majority, of our students either fail to realize this or deliberately avoid facing up to it. The result is a wasteful fragmentation of their endeavors. Much more often than not the Yeshiva College graduate must do a great deal of catching up on his reading in order to survive in graduate school; much more often than not the prospective RIETS *mushmach* must do a great deal of catching up in his learning in order to feel that his *kiaf* really represents a mastery of some part of his field.

Rabbi Israel Miller has been named to the newly-created position of Assistant to the President on Student Affairs. We welcome Rabbi Miller to this capacity, assured that his long record of service to the Jewish community insures that he will carry out his new role with dedication and distinction.

One of the greatest contributions facing to this very tragic situation is the by-now-infamous lack of time. Unlimited cuts (even on a permanent basis) presents at best a partial solution; many truly motivated people are reluctant to miss a class, no matter what it may be. An even more helpful step would be a significant reduction in classroom hours—one required semester hour each of art and music is sufficient for the Yeshiva College student; two semester hours of a three-credit course is also sufficient.

Yet even this is only a partial solution. We can cut down classroom time only so much, and there is a tremendous temptation to extend the religious studies hours—learning Torah even 22 hours per week (theoretically) is certainly not enough when one considers its centrality in all our lives. Even in 44 hours per week one could not do it justice.

Reduction of classroom hours is not the solution, and neither is a compulsory five-year program—a legislated lightening of the load. Even those of our students who are at the present time on the five-year plan feel the fragmentation deeply.

The solution, if indeed it is a solution, rests with the individual. The unavoidable element in it is, as Rav Lichtenman pointed out as well as Yom Iyyun, sacrifice; one cannot have the best of both worlds. Whether the sacrifices involve going to a second-choice graduate school rather than a first choice or devoting free time to reading in one's spare field rather than to learning, it must inevitably be made. Certainly one would hope that the Yeshiva University student would prefer the former, but the most important thing is an honest choice, made after much careful

deliberation and true introspection.

Optimally, at least in terms of Yeshiva University's goals, one should devote himself fully to both Torah and his secular field; practically, this is completely unrealistic. True synthesis lies between thesis and antithesis—it does not and cannot include both. It is ultimately up to the individual to decide in which direction he will steer himself.

Schatz Sees Vital Role For Paper

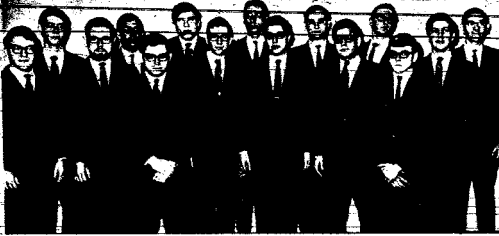
(Continued from page 2)

ill will and bad faith, for which not only students must bear the blame. If this point sounds familiar, it is only because our plight here is symptomatic of a much-recognized malaise in the community: an insensitivity to the interpersonal, ethical dimensions of religion.

But the most telling manifestation of the failure of the current system lies in the statistics pertaining to minyan and beis-midrash attendance. That the administration has chosen to rest content with meeting this obvious indifference to Yeshiva's ideals with threats and coercion betrays, I think, a certain lack of foresight or even sincerity; do we really care how these "delinquents" will act once graduation lifts the fear of retribution? Coercion may at times be the last resort, but it is a poor substitute for a good religious education. For the success or failure of that education must be measured not quantitatively, but qualitatively; not by how often a boy can be compelled to go to minyan, but by how wisely he spends his leisure time; not by how effectively he can be pressured to attend beis-midrash, but by how great a role his beis-midrash education will play in molding outlooks and aspirations.

Now I am not naive enough to believe that a few helpings of *musar* or a few editorials in HAMEVASER will remedy any of these situations. Contrary to current practice, the problem is forging religious attitudes, not castigating wrongs piecemeal after the fact. And much creativity and effort must be expended before we can witness the maturation of a genuine religious "climate" at Yeshiva, one in which thinking and acting religiously will come of itself. May I add, too, that our current failings are by no means endemic to the college; reflecting on my own experience, I am led to believe that much of our present difficulty is imputable to detrimental environmental factors which first take their toll in our Yeshiva high schools.

HAMEVASER's desire, of course, is to heighten religious awareness at Yeshiva. In assuming the responsibility of Editor-in-Chief, I sense that my Governing Board—and I have been entrusted with the opportunity to make significant strides towards that goal. But despite noble and sincere intentions, HAMEVASER has at times employed the wrong strategy. Our purpose must be implicit, not avowed; we must be critical without sounding self-righteous, and inspiring without being didactic. Indeed, the "acceptability" of HAMEVASER will hinge on its tenor, on its "presentability."



This issue of HAMEVASER is the first edited by the newly-elected Governing Board chosen at a meeting of the outgoing Board on April 3rd. Pictured, from left to right: Bernice Smolovitch, Ezra Lightman, Editor Emeritus Jon Bloomberg, David Miller, Jack Bieler, Aaron Kandelberg, Joel Waxman, Saul Muckham, Editor-in-Chief David Schatz, Abraham Kinstlinger, Jerry Lowitz, Yecheskel Shvetsky, Michael Shaulman, Michael Ben-Zvi, Harold Horowitz. Not shown: Henry Horwitz, Rezael Setran, Jeffrey Silver.

Towards enhancing the attractiveness of the paper, therefore, greater attention will be paid to literary quality and overall "readability." The thorny problem of italicized transliterations will hopefully be resolved judiciously. In addition, stronger emphasis will be placed on high quality feature articles of timely Jewish interest.

Editorial policy will hopefully steer clear of petty controversy and needless discord. The opportunity to speak responsibly and effectively on issues of moment is too auspicious to let slip by.

Projects for the coming year include the publication of supplements (or special studies) dealing with specific areas of Jewish thought or Jewish history or with specific sociological questions also in the offering are several symposiums devoted to our well-known writers on Jewish experience in America will hopefully insure continued improvement in all aspects, substantive and technical. As in the past, we plan to appear monthly.

We hope to see positive results. At the very least, the experience of first-hand involvement in issues which might otherwise escape our concern, will, we trust, be its own reward.

An Open Letter: Miller Urges SOY Involvement In Creating Proper Yeshiva Atmosphere At YU

by DAVID MILLER

Dear Eliyahu,

The purpose of this letter is not to offer practical advice regarding your program for next year, as Polonius did Laertes, and yet his introductory clause, "And these few precepts in thy memory look thou character" very well summarizes my intent: before attempting to solve the problems of this institution, one must first define what those problems are, in which areas they lie, and constantly keep sight of these basic points while formulating counter-measures. Thus I

will not be writing anything new, but merely organizing and analyzing that which is probably already known to you. I should also not be considered over-critical for dealing only in those areas in which Yeshiva has failed, rather than those in which it has succeeded (and many such areas do exist), for I do not intend to present an overall balance sheet of the institution's pros and cons, but rather to discuss the issues that you will have to deal with as president and to which you will devote the greater part of your efforts.

The problem is basically one; the areas in which it manifests itself are two. The problem is the lack of direction, of a goal, of a knowledge of what we are trying to produce, of the ideal we should strive for. We enter an institution which has neither the atmosphere of a true yeshiva nor that of a good university (it seems to be a glorified extension of a yeshiva high school). We search for a policy, and in some areas we find none, in others we find many, but in none do we find one. We look for an overall coordinated plan, a unity of purpose, and find diversity and self-contradiction.

This problem is manifest on both administrative and student levels. The division at most educational institutions is basically threefold: administration, faculty, and students. However at Yeshiva, the faculty (both secular and religious) have played no role as yet in the policy-making decisions nor even expressed themselves as a body, and thus cannot be considered a power in this discussion.

The administrators can be divided into four categories: a) those who have a sense of direction, but don't act, who don't take steps to put their beliefs into practice but rather wait and hope for the Yeshiva to naturally evolve into the proper state with the passage of time; b) those who don't have this sense of direction and do act, i.e. those who view their department not as a section of an organic whole but rather imagine that they exist independently, and whose actions, administrative and policy decisions, reflect their limited perspectives; c) those who neither have the sense of direction nor act at all; and d) those rare few who have the sense of direction and act in accordance with it.

Into this partial vacuum flow the students. They can be divided into two types: those who are serious about attending Yeshiva and those who are not. Forgetting about the latter, as they are a small segment of the student population, the former can in turn be divided into three categories: a minority who have a proper understanding of the relation of yeshiva to college and a proper sense of the purpose of YU, a minority who have a wrong conception of the above, and a vast majority who are bewildered and confused. This mass, if not given proper guidance, will naturally tend to the path of least resistance, to the path of convenience, to that which is socially acceptable in American society. They will overstress their college courses at the expense of their

Jewish studies, not for the knowledge, but for the grades which in our educational system will help determine their earning power in the future. Their guidance, since it doesn't stem to a large extent from administration and faculty, should stem on an individual level from the students who have a sense of direction; yet many of these students, especially those in the semicha program, have abdicated their



David Miller

responsibility toward their fellow students. It is this gap that the SOY must attempt to fill, instilling the proper sense of perspective and direction into the students.

The SOY must work in coordination with interested administrators to establish the Yeshiva in its proper place in the framework of the university. It must create an atmosphere conducive to Torah study. It must present to the students—not only the intellectual side of the Halacha, but also the emotional experiences which are just as much a part of Judaism—a proper *shabbat* and *yom tov* spirit, etc. The question is how to implement these goals; what means should be used to bring them from the realm of theoretical to that of the practical? Seeking the answers to this question will be the major source of frustration you will encounter in your new position. I hope you will succeed in finding the solutions.

Respectfully yours,

David Miller

Rabbis Set New Day For Hallel

The Israeli Rabbinate has proclaimed the 28th day of Iyar, which this year falls on May 26, a day of thanksgiving and celebration for World Jewry to commemorate the first anniversary of the unification of Jerusalem. This decision was reached at a convocation recently convened by Chief Rabbi I. Unterman in Jerusalem. It was resolved to call for the recital of Hallel with a *bracha*, the holding of a festive banquet, and the limitations of the morning customs of *tsiya* on that day. Chief Rabbi Unterman reiterated his considered view that "the cardinal duty of *pirsum haness* made the recital of Hallel on the anniversary of Israel's victory literally a Biblical ordinance, and one was also authorized to say the *bracha* accompanying it." The wholehearted religious celebration of this remarkable event was, he said, a sanctification of the Divine Name in the truest sense.

Morse Decries U.S. Apathy: While Six Million Died

by ISAAC GEWIRTZ

In recent years it has become fashionable for writers to deplore the world apathy that existed during the time of the Nazi holocaust. Their articles are usually filled with lukewarm platitudes on humanity, and while decrying world passivity in the face of Nazi barbarisms, deliver panegyrics to the heroic role played by the United States in its fight against Nazism. Arthur D. Morse, author of *While Six Million Died*, shatters this long-nurtured illusion with documented evidence of United States apathy. Further, it speaks to the detriment of those who lived here during that period of inaction that much of the evidence was gleaned from official wire services and well-publicized newspaper articles.



U. Friend

In the New York Times of August 27, 1943, a chart was published revealing the number of people exterminated by the Nazis in sixteen European countries and territories. 1,500,000 were reported from Poland as having been killed either by "organized murder" or "starvation epidemics." In Germany, 135,000 were killed by like methods. The total number of dead in all Europe by 1943 was over three million.

At the very time that these shocking statistics were published, the indifference of the State Department retarded a movement from within its own ranks to allow rescue operations to be set in motion to aid 185,000 deported Rumanian Jews, starving and being beaten to death in the Transnistrian wastelands.

The Rumanian government, fearful of the Allied military approach to the scene of their crime, was willing to provide ships to transport 70,000 Jews to "any refuge selected by the Allies." This was made publicly known on February 12, 1943 in a dispatch of C. L. Sulzberger. The required \$600,000 needed for the refugees' clothing, feeding and handling was being offered by wealthy Rumanian Jews who had escaped the Nazis and were now living in the United States. The State Department, always reluctant to spend U.S. dollars on such ventures or to allow private monies to fall into the hands of the Germans, could not possibly object to the plan under consideration. The money was to be kept in a blocked account in a Swiss bank which would release it after the completion of the rescue operation. The Romanians had agreed to this. The State Department was not to be so compliant.

On May 17, Robert Reams, an officer in the European Division of the State Department, and who was in charge of all "Jewish questions," sent a memorandum to Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, in which he voiced his reaction to the proposed evacuation plan: "... questions of this sort will properly fall within the competence of the Inter-governmental Committee." The committee referred to had not yet been reconstituted and was incapable of action, as Reams knew. Only by chance was this program salvaged from State Department indifference. A Dr. Feis of the Economic Affairs Department came across the original telegram requesting the proposed action to be permitted by the State Department. He forwarded it to Secretary Hull. Gerhart Reiniger, the Swiss representative to the World Jewish Congress, a prime mover in all effort to save his fellow Jews, waited eight months, till December 23, for the issuance of a license to "undertake transactions necessary for the purpose of evacuating Jewish refugees from Rumania..." As State Department procrastination

necessitated, an eight-month delay in the granting of a license, the ambassador of the Polish government in exile was informing Secretary of State Hull of the greatest mass murders that have ever occurred in the entire criminal history of the occupation of Poland. Morse notes that in contrast to the United States' lethargy, Hitler was always prompt in his dispatching of cremated bodies to meet his timetable of death. Hull's reaction to the Polish ambassador's fervid plea was that he "would keep especially in mind all phases of the matter."

Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, more than "kept in mind" the mountains of evidence proving conclusively that mass deaths were common occurrence in Europe. Through contact with State Department in many issues involving the state of the condemned Jews, he became more acutely aware of that department's inaction. With this growing awareness came a growing indignation. He assigned Randolph Paul with the task of writing a documented report with the purpose of exposing the State Department. Paul's assistant was in turn appointed architect of the paper. This sixteen page report entitled "Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews," has never before been published. The State Department was charged with having "taken steps designed to prevent effective programs to be instituted," and of having "gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe." The guilt associated with the death of thousands of Jews due to restrictive immigration laws was placed squarely on State Department shoulders. "While the State Department has been thus 'exploring' the whole refugee problem, without distinguishing between those who are in danger of imminent death and those who are not, hundreds of thousands of Jews have been allowed to perish." This report was forwarded to President Roosevelt in a condensed and less vitriolic form. Nevertheless, for the first time since the danger became apparent in the early thirties, Roosevelt took effective action and established the War Refugee Board. Yet the guilt for the permitting of the holocaust to be perpetuated in the dimensions it was forever shifted to Roosevelt's name in disgrace. For one of the most angering aspects of the United States' reaction to the prophet of the Nazism's rise to power is the unrelaxed stringency of anachronistic immigration statutes. In 1933 the total U.S. immigration quota was fixed at 153,774. Only 3,068 were admitted and of these 1,798 were Germans. The cause of the disparity between the number of immigrants admitted to the country and those refused can be traced to Hoover's executive directive of 1930 to the State Department. He instructed consular officers "to pass judgment with particular care on whether the applicant may become a public charge, and if the applicant

cannot convince the officer that it is not probable, the visa will be refused."

The diligence exhibited by the consuls in obeying the presidential order was reflected in the number of aliens admitted. In their zeal to conform with the wishes of their President, even those who could prove economic surety were refused visas in overwhelming numbers. When turned to for aid, President Roosevelt maintained that restrictionist elements in Congress would block any reform in the immigration quotas. Yet as James McDonald, a specialist in international affairs noted at the time, "Just as President Hoover by administrative interpretation in effect instructed the consuls to block immigration, so now President Roosevelt could... make easier the admission of a few thousand additional Germans a year." The restrictionist element appears to have had situated itself in the executive branch, as well as in the Congress.

The hoped-for liberalization was not to be forthcoming and remained as unfixed as ever in the face of documented tales of atrocities and pridefully acknowledged threats proclaiming the imminent extermination of the Jews in Germany. A confidential memorandum of Dr. Grech, expert in racial questions in the German Ministry of the Interior, dated September 6, 1933, fell into the hands of American officials in Berlin who forwarded it to Washington. Its contents should have precipitated immediate positive action in the State Department: "... plans and programs (regarding the Jews) must have a definite aim which leads into the future." These programs would constitute the "final solution of the Jewish question." Recountings of Nazi barbarisms to the State Department on the part of diplomats, tourists and reporters increased throughout the nineteen thirties. All found their way to President Roosevelt's desk. On October 28, 1938, later to become infamous as the "night of broken glass," 195 synagogues were burned, almost 200 shops were destroyed or looted, and over 20,000 Jews were arrested and taken to concentration camps. When asked five days later if he would now relax the immigration restrictions, President Roosevelt replied, "That is not in contemplation. We have the quota system."

The referred to quota system was assailed as inequitable to endangered inhabitants of Nazi controlled areas. In answer to charges that the consuls were unfair in their treatment of applicants for U.S. visas, the consul in Rotterdam chose five cases to send to the State Department to disprove this charge. One case involved a thirty-three-year-old physician and his wife. They were fortunate enough to salvage \$600 and had three affidavits of support from a sister, cousin and friend in the United States. A second sister owned \$70,000 worth of property and \$12,000 in additional resources. The decision of the consulate: "Visa refused on the grounds that the physician and his wife are likely to become public charges."

The implications of this book for Jews in the United States are clear. This country cannot be considered "home" to any Jew. Many Jews pride themselves on their intensity of self-righteous indignation in their refusal not to step foot in Germany, yet complacently plan and live a life in a country which bears a significant share of the guilt associated with the death of the six million. In his concluding paragraph, Morse concisely depicts the sentiment prevalent in the United States during that period. "Oblivious to the evidence which poured from official and unofficial sources, Americans went about their business unmoved and unconcerned... The bystanders to cruelty became bystanders to genocide." And the name Roosevelt, so often depicted with the coveted title of "friend of the Jews" will now be uttered with a bitterness which comes after humiliation. We live in a country whose hand is stained with innocent blood, whose institutions reflect the passive and secretive Anti-Semitism of its citizens. Now we are those who shall be seeking admittance to a country in which we will not have to turn to strangers for aid. Pensively contemplating the future, Morse asks, "Who are the potential victims? Who are the bystanders?" We have been the victims. We will not again be bystanders.



Prof. Pinchas Poll speaks at May 5 symposium on "YU and Israel." Seated: Dr. A. Slav, Rabbi I. Miller, Rabbi J. Lookstein

Too Far Away

The market's up and Jews are making money once again. Good Jews, I mean, who will not bare their heads in brokers' suits though once they bent their backs as Peter passed through hamlet squares or had their velvet caps knocked off (and they were only children then) by laughing fascists.

Far away, across the sea.

Or cut the cloth just so, judge the trend, add two buttons, make a fortune.

New left gestest A head for logic, him, and an eye for the real.

Good Jews, who give their gold to worthy causes. Keep the Rebbe in black, the wife in blonde, the sheitel lives in Brooklyn. And the guy obscenely throws beer can off the stoop

Far away, across the street.

He has a head for logic, this one. Packed in crates, burned in boxes, shipped across the pretty countryside in millions—the phoenix shades their ashes off, stretches its neck to greener pastures, Tell him, a Jewish State, "What for?"

Too Far away, across the sea."

"As if a man did flee from a lion..."

by SHALOM CARMY

As believing Jews, we are inevitably confronted by a tension of Vision and Reality, a conflict of what ought to be and what is. If we are to be committed Jews, we must be ready to translate our belief into action. Now experience teaches us that there is a yawning chasm between *emunah* and *bitachon*, and that we often retreat from the Leap of Faith that is needed to transform the belief that Torah is veracious into Trust in the God of our fathers, and we know very well that mere belief is fleeting and ephemeral; only *bitachon* can give substance to doctrine, and propel us into the sphere of living commitment.

But many of us experience doubt as a gigantic flypaper which prevents our liberation from the curse of inertia that has descended upon us. Unable to extricate ourselves, we are caught in a lonely, egotistical trap. There is nothing to turn to, nobody to rely upon—"As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his head on the wall, and a serpent bit him." (Amos V, 19).

For some, a solution to this problem of No Exit, is to romanticize our hanging on the wall. Thus spiritual homelessness becomes the watchword of a doctrine of eternal perdition, and man is condemned to the interminable darkness of despair. This approach attempts to overcome our human frailty by placing "inner conflict" on a pedestal as a sine qua non of religious experience. I think it rests on a confusion of the search for God—the true quest for commitment, and the self-pity of a man who suddenly is confronted by his utter nakedness. I cannot but sympathize with such a person, but crying over our fate will not melt the cement encasing our feet, restraining us from action.

Disillusionment

Neither will the hippie-like platitudes about love, harmony, and happiness currently masquerading as "Jewish Existentialism" soothe the doubt-eaten soul. Bromides are not a solution; and all we know is that doubt is here, nausea has arrived.

Let us retrace our steps and try to understand why we are filled with dread at the prospect of surrendering ourselves to God's will. I dare suggest the blame lies with the society we live in. In the amoral atmosphere of our age, betrayal is the order of the day, distrust, the basic attitude of social intercourse. The "credibility gap" undermines our relationship to authority. Even the representatives of organized religion disappoint us time and again by their ineptitude bordering on hypocrisy. For one reared on a pragmatic *weltanschauung*, as so many of us are, this disillusionment with a society transfers to the religion upon which it is ostensibly based. Today's solipsism of the spirit follows from the bankruptcy of ideology, just as Cartesian solipsism followed the upheaval caused by iconoclastic scientific discoveries. Judaism, then, takes its place among the other "isms" and spurious ideologies. And man suddenly realizes how cold his world has become.

I have let go of Father's hand, the waves have separated us, and I am now tossed about, seasick, and lonely, straining to catch His voice in the midst of the storm... The remedy for the nausea of seasickness is Torah: "And you shall find Him, if only you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul." Finally, the consciousness of *Mitzvah* and *Metzaveh*, of the umbilical cord which sustains me, and guides my existence, is here; and the stormy night creeps away tamely, till only the scar remains.

But now that I am conscious of my duty, I am presented by a crucial choice. Shall I shrink it, rationalize it away, or face it head on? This is the testing ground of true commitment. When I choose for Torah, I am also choosing responsibility for society—the very society whose pervasive influence I have barely escaped. Can I risk reopening the wound, flirt with disillusionment and despair, being corrupted and corrupting others? If "I am a man of unclean lips, and among a people of unclean lips I dwell," dare I say: "Here I am! Send me."

Isaiah's Imagery

After Isaiah saw the angels proclaiming God's holiness, the Bible says: "And the posts of the doors were moved... and the house was filled with smoke." It is then that Isaiah realizes the gulf between his society and himself—and the Vision of God. On the day of this vision, Uzziah, King of Judah, attempted to usurp the office of High Priest. He was struck down with leprosy in the Holy of Holies as punishment for his brazenness. (Leprosy is here used as a translation of *tsara'at*, and is not to be confused with Hansom's disease). The Seder Olam interprets the passage "And the house was filled with smoke..." as an allusion to the earthquake that accompanied Uzziah's chastisement. If we are to give this interpretation any credence as exegesis, we must clarify the connection between the passages. On first view, it would seem that "I am a man of unclean lips" is a direct reaction to the theophany of "Holy, Holy, Holy." But according to the Seder Olam, we have an intervening passage describing the earth-

quake; this breaks the continuity of the chapter. Moreover, one tends to wonder why the Vision of the Chariot caused Isaiah more uneasiness than it did Ezekiel, for example. Therefore, I submit that Isaiah's guilt feelings are a consequence of Uzziah's sin. At first, Isaiah does not grasp fully the incongruity in his encounter with the Divine. Only when Uzziah's attempt to crown himself High Priest meets with divine reprimand, is Isaiah disillusioned with the society that tried to do away with Divine Guidance. It is then that he feels unclean, uneasy in Zion. But Isaiah must be cleansed by the touch of live coals upon his lips. Then he must return to the Godless society and take upon his shoulders the thankless burden of a mocking nation.

Leaving the lofty heights of prophetic experience, we can find a similar message in the laws of leprosy. The Talmud recounts that since all the *kohanim* were relatives of Miriam, there was nobody to declare her a leper and nobody to purify her. And God said: "I will be her priest..." *Tosafot* asks: Let nobody declare her *tanai* and nobody purify her. Why was there need to go through the whole rigamarole? The Netziv answers that the atone-

ment to be gained by the leper was primarily through the ceremonies, the submission to ritual impurity as prescribed by Torah and the rites of *tsarah* terminating the leprous condition. The suffering and disfigurement of the victim are secondary. In other words, the value attached to the sickness of the soul depends on its integration into a Torah framework, not to the degree of whining and self-pity engaged in. Interestingly enough, the Torah uses the passive voice in describing the leper's "being brought to the priest," when he is to be declared pure. While it is clear why one must often be forced to see the *kohen* when becoming a leper, it is odd indeed that the leper does not come forward freely to be reinstated into Society. But let us ponder. Chazal associate leprosy with *lashon hara*. Now the repentant leper would naturally feel that the only way to preserve his tongue from evil would be to forego entirely any contact with the corrupting environment, just as a reformed alcoholic avoids the bottle. But the Bible teaches that one ought to close the circle of *tsuvah*. He returns chastised and renewed to his community, anticipating a full future of Torah commitment.

Literary Editor

Elie Wiesel's Night: Death Of A Young Boy



by Abraham Kinstlinger

There is an old Yiddish proverb that says that man is stronger than iron and weaker than a fly. In Elie Wiesel's *Night*, the author reveals both the pathetic paralysis and colossal vitality of European Jewry in the holocaust. The book is an autobiographical account of Wiesel's boyhood experiences—the life of Sighet, the Romanian village where he spent his childhood, the deportation of his family to Auschwitz, his subsequent struggle for survival in the concentration camp, and finally, his release.

In the beginning, Wiesel dramatizes an important factor in the destruction process, namely, the Jews' inability to comprehend their impending doom—their complete lack of contact with reality. Though they had been boycotted, terrorized, assaulted, and finally herded into the ghetto, the Jews of his native Sighet refused to believe that any real harm would come to them. Even after a survivor of a

fires, of studying the Talmud, a world both externally and internally structured by his religion, into a world of absolute evil. He is torn from his home and family and stripped of his humanity. Love, hate, pleasure, pain, and morality all give way to one consideration—survival.

It was the smell of death that first accosted him upon his arrival at the camp, the fumes of charred flesh spewed out by the chimneys of the crematoria. After the "selection" which separated him forever from his mother and little sister, he witnessed a chapter of the "final solution" as a lorry hurled its load of babies into a flaming ditch. "Someone began to recite the Kaddish," he recalls, "the prayer for the dead. I do not know if it has ever happened before. In the long history of the Jews, that people have recited the prayer for the dead for themselves."

Perhaps the most painful part of his ordeal, though, even more agonizing than the pervading mask of death which surrounded him, was witnessing his own spiritual deterioration. It was as if he could stand outside himself and view the gradual decay of his humanness, until one day he would come to witness his father's death with relief, as if a heavy burden had been removed from him. The abhorrence he felt for himself upon realizing that he could be brought to this primordial form of human existence, where he was willing to sacrifice anything, even his father, for his own survival, never left him.

"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

"Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.

"Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."

Yet, paradoxically, man in the last gasp of his life is still man, the spark of the Divine. Wiesel describes the desperate evacuation of the Buna concentration camp before the onslaught of the Russian army, when the few survivors were forced by their tormentors to run for days, naked, beaten, sick, and tortured, into the interior of Germany, where they would ultimately be sent to die in Buchenwald. Yet, somehow, it was in the frenzy of their last super-human effort to survive that the Jews managed to transcend their surroundings.

Unique Tragedy

But what, one may ask, is unique about this one boy's tragic experience? Perhaps its significance lies in the fact that Elie Wiesel's tragedy reflects the tragedy of the millions who left their bodies or souls in the European graveyard. Perhaps its lesson lies in the fact that twentieth-century Europe shattered unequivocally the two-hundred-year-old Enlightenment myth of man's progress and its faith in human reason. Perhaps its challenge lies in the crumbled foundations of human dignity and moral responsibility upon which civilization has heretofore stood. Perhaps its urgent question lies in the dilemma of the profound silence of the God of Mercy.



Courtesy of COMMENTARY

Elie Wiesel

Arthur K. Wang

mass murder of Jews had come back to warn them to escape, the honorable Jewish citizens preferred to believe that their brother had gone insane rather than to admit the truth—that the Nazis had. Wiesel observes perceptively that "it was neither German nor Jew who ruled the ghetto—it was illusion."

Looking back to the final weeks before the Nazis "liquidated" the Jews of Sighet, Wiesel realizes how blind his fellow Jews had been to the catastrophic ramifications of the cloud which was enveloping them. When a group of Jews complained to Elie's father about the Nazi proclamation that all Jews must wear yellow badges, the elder Wiesel replied, "The yellow star? Oh well, what of it. You don't die of it." Much later his son reflects, "Poor Father, of what then did you die?"

The real tragedy of the book is, however, Elie Wiesel's own existential confrontation with the world (or rather the hell) he had been thrown into. Here is a boy of fifteen who is thrust from his own world of love, of close family

END OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE? - Kaplan Explores Friedmann's Thesis

by LAWRENCE KAPLAN

The establishment of the State of Israel and the emergence of the American Jewish Community as the largest world Jewish community, both events following upon the heels of the destruction of that rich repository of Jewish culture and tradition, the Eastern-European Jewish Community, have added new and perplexing facets to the already complex question concerning the nature of Jewishness, Judaism, and the Jewish people.

What is the nature of the developing nation in the State of Israel? What is that nation's relationship with the Jewish people? Can traditional Jewish patterns of living which were often fortified by the hostile diaspora environment survive in the very changed conditions of a Jewish community living in the midst of free, open and alluring social surroundings (the Jewish community in the United States) or a Jewish community free and sovereign in its own land (the Jewish community in Israel)? To what extent has the Jewish people developed out of its own inner logic and to what extent is it a product of external influences?

It should give us pause to realize that perhaps the most lucid and probing discussion, to date, of these questions can be found in a book written by a self-confessed marginal Jew, *The End of the Jewish People?* by Georges Friedmann. Friedmann, an eminent French sociologist, was brought up in a secular, assimilated, Jewish family, and for most of his life was only peripherally aware of his Jewish identity. The anti-semitic laws of the Vichy Regime, for a brief moment, brought him up against this identity, but his awareness of it was soon submerged by his commitment to France, a commitment strengthened while fighting for the Resistance. In 1963-64 he visited Israel to research the problem to which he has devoted most of his sociological studies: the effect of technology upon society and culture, and man's efforts to control the forces unleashed by his technological genius. Once in Israel, though, this problem of "the possible contribution of the Israelis to the humanization of technical civilization" were grafted questions about "the Jewish people" and the Jewish religion, the relations between Messianism and technical progress, the future of the State of Israel... the destiny of Judaism... and the universal recognition of man by man." For the first time Friedmann felt a sense of interdependence "with the fate of all those who are known as Jews." *The End of the Jewish People?*, then, is at once a sociological study of the problems and institutions of Israeli society and a reflection on the larger issues that this study raises.

Why is it that a marginal Jew can achieve a level of perception of these issues that seems to be denied to most of us committed Jews? Is it because, in our concern for the day-to-day tasks of building Jewish commitment, we lose sight of the larger issues? Or, is it because a cold clear look at some of these questions might make us aware of the present inadequacy of our responses and might force upon us a radical and difficult change of strategy? I will return to this question later.

Friedmann's discussion of such institutions as the Kibbutz and the Histadrut or of such problems as that of integrating the "second" Israel (the oriental and North African immigrants) within the framework of Israeli society or the tensions caused by the interaction of the religious "establishment" with an essentially secular State never fail to be illuminating. He brings to his analyses both a sophisticated sociological technique and a keen perceptive eye. Underlying and transcending, however, the specific analyses is the problem to which Friedmann, almost compulsively, keeps returning, that of the crisis of values confronting Israeli society. The "normalization" of Israeli society, the "decline of revolutionary ideals in a society where the object of revolution has been achieved" has led to the decline of the collectivist and egalitarian ideals of Israel's founders. The traditional halutic values of personal achievement, sacrifice, and redemptive labor, the vision of building a society based on justice and righteousness (ideals and a vision which Rav Kook felt were visible fruit of an essentially religious spirit) have given way to the race for abundance, prosperity, and material success, a growing hedonism and technocratic positivism. With the growing penetration of a rather low-level mass culture, the present generation of Israeli Sabras, instead of dedicating themselves to a Messianic vocation, however conceived, wish to be "a society just like the others."

Unfortunately, and here Friedmann's observation hits home, the religious community has not been able to fill the gap. Instead of attempting to provide directions in which Israeli society can move, instead of grappling with such problems as the meaning of man in a technological age, the moral vacuum, the gap between the "two" Israels, of colors, the religious community has withdrawn into its shell, intent on preserving and conserving the tradition in a hothouse atmosphere, to the exclusion of utilizing the tradition in the transformation and reconstruction of Israeli society.

Friedmann's rebuke is painful; all the more painful in that it comes from a secular Jew and even more painful in that it is undoubtedly correct. Isolated voices have been

raised among religious Israeli intellectuals, expressing the lack of any broad social or ethical concern on the part of the religious "establishment," but their voices have been drowned out by the prevailing silence bred of apathy (is it fear?)

While Friedmann regrets this movement in the direction of a technocratic state, he seems to feel that it is, in large measure, inevitable. For Friedmann, the Jewish people's awareness of a special task and vocation, of their unique specificity, is primarily a product of historical circumstances in which anti-Semitism played and plays a prominent role. "It was anti-Semitism viewed as a whole that encouraged fierce attachment to the law, assured the survival of the Jewish consciousness, Jewish 'difference,' Jewish solidarity, which are the essential content of the idea of the 'Jewish people' in the diaspora." The basic Jewish quality has as his distinguishing psychological features a feverishly developed critical sense, a mood of restless, fertile anxiety that feeds on dissatisfaction with the present reality and seeks something different and better. With the decline of anti-Semitism, this sense of Jewish "difference," this creative anxiety is bound to diminish. With the Jews in the Galut rapidly assimilating and the Jew in Israel becoming "Hebrew-speaking gentiles" it may well be that the Jewish people is coming to its end.

The disagreement that we immediately feel upon reading Friedmann's conclusions (however tentative and reluctantly arrived at) to a degree reduces itself to a question of faith, to a difference in vision, between the religious Jew who believes in the reality of the covenant and the chosenness of the people, Israel, and the secular Jewish sociologist who, as a methodological principle, cannot believe in the chosenness of any people but only in an age-long molding process by a sum-total of material and moral living conditions." Nevertheless, even on purely historical and sociological grounds, Friedmann's conclusions are questionable.

Robert Alter, in a review essay of Friedmann's book in *Commentary*, has shown that self-affirmation of Jewish identity among the Israeli Sabras is stronger, than Friedmann seems to believe. Similarly, Friedmann's knowledge

of the level of commitment of the American Jewish community, based primarily on Eric Rosenthal's study of intermarriage and several other methodologically dubious surveys, is woefully inadequate. To be sure, the supposed religious revival in the American Jewish community is largely so much window-dressing, but there are signs of a small yet noticeable growth of authentic religious and cultural creativity of which Friedmann seems to have no knowledge.

Friedmann's arguments present all of Jewish history in the diaspora, viewed through the prism of the medieval ghetto. Such a picture must be rejected as simplistic. For example, the great flowering of halutic creativity in the Babylonian Academic Academies cannot be explained as a "institutionalized defense mechanism" against anxiety produced by a hostile environment. If anything, the social position of the Jews in third century Babylonia, as Jacob Neusner has pointed out, was closer to that of the Jewish community in twentieth century America than to that of the Jewish ghetto-dwellers in medieval Christendom. Moreover, although Friedmann is not wholly unaware of the fact that creative anxiety is not the only "current in the rich stream of Judaism" but that there are many other currents: "Pharisaism which has been so unfairly treated; Hasidism, which communicates with God in joy; and the Davidson tradition, that symphonic opening to happiness, life seized and enjoyed in all its splendor of the senses and the spirit," this awareness, somehow, gets lost when he is presenting his main points.

Nevertheless, if we must reject Friedmann's conclusions on religious, sociological and historical grounds, we cannot sit complacently by and ignore some of the alarming trends to which he points. Friedmann himself grants that his conclusions "are riddled with anxiety" and the question mark of the title indicates his own uncertainty as to his prognosis. Perhaps we should view his book less as an argument than as a challenge, a challenge to religious Jewry to plunge into a monstrous century, face its realities, take part in the adventure of humanity at grips with technology and help it to emerge from the struggle victorious and free, having achieved justice and fraternity together with abundance.

It is a challenge that we ignore at our own peril.

Contributing Editor

Time And The Religious Experience

by Michael Shmidman

With summer vacation lurking enticingly on the horizon, the unpleasant task of exploring its more undesirable consequences once more becomes imperative. It is only natural that students should look forward eagerly to the relaxation, pleasure and freedom from pressure associated with the summer months. It is well known, however, that these months are capable of effecting a radical change of behavior and attitude in many individuals. A relatively studious, serious-minded type may suddenly be transformed into a pleasure-oriented person, utilizing neglected social and physical talents to best advantage at the expense of learning, and at the same time becoming careless in proper observance of *mitzvot*, receding in social behavior, and generally apathetic to total spiritual development. In short, the summer interlude too often results in a pleasure-seeking suspension of the ethical.

My purpose in this essay is not solely to analyze the evils inherent in any prolonged vacation but to warn against succumbing to them. Often that warning is little more than wasted effort. I think it necessary now to explore a basic flaw in the outlook of many students, one which is clearly in evidence in the summer months and which, perhaps, lies at the root of the problem.

In most respects, we consider ourselves as men. In truth, we are all prisoners held captive by the most fearful and eternal of captors: time. Winter is a restless, anticipatory first interlude, and finally, summer vacation. Summer itself is spent in an attempt to indulge in as much pleasurable experience as possible, out of an acute awareness of the proximity of fall. In actual moments of the year, when regarded separately, are empty, fleeting and wasted. And as each day passes, a greater dread of the inevitable last day envelops man.

Summer, then, is unique in its capacity to waste the limitations of time. It affords its adherents the opportunity to sanctify time. Man can never conquer or take on his portion of time, as he can space. Yet he may reach, as Rashi proclaimed by Jewish the Patriarch, in his presence, "there are those who gain eternity in a lifetime, others who gain it in one brief moment." (Avodah Zarah, 17a, 18a.)

What is meant by sanctity and eternity? This

may be understood within the perspective of the I-Thou relationship between an Orthodox Jew and God. When the level of I-It, of learning Torah on a purely intellectual basis, is transformed into a total spiritual experience—when a personal relationship with the ever-present Shech-*ina* fills the consciousness—the unique experience of I-Thou is fulfilled. Intrinsic in this relationship is the notion of presentness. In the I-It experience, man is imprisoned by time. Each present moment is no more than the "conclusion of a finished time." (Martin Buber, *I-Thou*.) The moment that appears to be fixed in space is past upon being apprehended. The term "now" is devoid of any present meaning.

The present of the I-Thou, on the other hand, is a "fused," real present. It is the unique, exclusive, and blessed moment when the "Thou" is properly confronted, when the "I" steps into the flow of time and a singular meeting is effected. In the I-Thou of the Orthodox Jew vis-à-vis God, a relationship uniquely governed by divine commandments, it is a sanctified moment; the individual becomes the embodiment of *Kedusha*. Although this concept of holiness in time (see Abraham Heschel's essay "Sabbath: Holiness In Time") may appear to be abstract, it entails that which is ultimately truly real.

Clearly, both the particular problem of the split personality in summer and the general dilemma of man's inability to cope with time would be alleviated by the awareness that one moment or hour of sanctified time can be infinitely more precious than two months or more of empty time. Constant attachment to sanctified time creates a hallowed existence which overcomes the obstacles of space, environment and weather, and which leads to the ultimate level of closeness to God, an attainment beautifully alluded to in a story quoted by Heschel in his essay on the Sabbath. It tells of the rabbi who once entered heaven in a dream. He was permitted to approach the temple in Paradise where the great sages of the Talmud were spending their eternal lives. He saw, however, that they were just sitting around a table studying the Talmud. The disappointed rabbi wondered, "Is this all there is to Paradise?" But suddenly he heard a voice: "You are mistaken. The Talmud is not in Paradise. Paradise is in the Talmud."

Brown Criticizes Growing Intellectualism In Religion

by HARRY BROWN

EDITOR'S NOTE: HAMEVASER originally received Mr. Brown's observations in the form of a Letter to the Editor. We realize that not all will concur with the viewpoint expressed here but we hope that it will stimulate thought and response.

Just as any other student of Yeshiva, I am acquainted with, and have become accustomed to, the broad, eclectic background of our student body and the resultant divergence of approaches and attitudes. However one recent incident has given me serious pause, and has helped me verbalize a problem that has long bothered me in a vague, nebulous way.

Late one night, about four weeks ago, I walked into the "Greek's," for a cup of coffee. Recognizing two fellow Yeshiva students, I joined them at their table. They were discussing the complex problem of Divine Precognition versus Free Will, with special emphasis on the *Kuntres* of the Ramban dealing with this topic. But I was profoundly shocked when the waitress came with our order, and along with my coffee put down two hamburgers. Thinking that she must have made a mistake, I looked at the fellows and was greeted by somewhat beligerent looks, as if daring me to make some remark as to the impropriety of their action. I was not so naive to think that all our students eat only kosher, but I was somewhat mortified by the incongruity of eating *terfuf* while discussing a problem of Jewish *hashkafa*.

This anecdote is illustrative of what I believe is a major problem of our school in particular. There is a tendency here to substitute theology for

religion, to intellectualize Judaism to the extent that it can no longer be the emotional experience that it of necessity must be.

This attitude is reflected in many ways other than the personal behavior of many of the students. One of the most common, and in many ways the most invidious, is the constant request for the institution of courses in Jewish Philosophy, Jewish Problems, etc. and the almost plaintive cry for a *hashkafa* couched in the language of modern theology and philosophy. Another reflection of this phenomenon is the different tack that many groups are taking—Yavneh, which according to Rabbi E. J. Steinhorn, its former Executive Director, seeks to "intellectualize Judaism," and the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists of America, who try to mold and reconcile the Torah to modern thought and fact. One cannot criticize such attempts, for they are necessary and can be very meaningful. However, one must ask what price we must pay to receive these benefits. Certainly the loss of religious experience is too high a price.

One must wonder why the intellectual approach should result in a loss of religious fervor, and indeed, whether it really does. It can be ascertained that many instances, intellectualized religion, especially in our era of social consciousness, results in a redirection of the religious force into the sphere of *bein adam l'chavero*, with concomitant loss of thrust in the field of *bein adam la'Makom*.

The Rav, in discussing the two components of Jewish life, intellectual and experiential, related that he received the former values from his father, while he received the latter from his mother and a Chasidic Rebbe. In passing, he mentioned that while the students of our Yeshiva compare very favorably with those of the European Yeshivos of his ken in their development of the intellectual scheme of Judaism, they are grossly lacking in the experiential realm. The Rav mentioned one possible method of rectifying this situation—the introduction of the study of the *Agadot* of the *Gemara*, a topic which most of Rabbeim either gloss over lightly or skip altogether. The Rav reminded us that in addition to being great scholars, the *Chachmei HaGemara* were great men in their personal behavior and attitudes, and that there is much to be learned about Yiddishkeit from their actions as related by the *Gemara*.

But this suggestion in itself is not enough for by its character it remains integrally an intellectual approach. Something must be done to make religion some thing not only discussed and dissected, but also observed and practiced.

It is possible that this appears to me to be a major problem only because of my Eastern European cultural antecedents, and because much of my previous religious training has been within a relatively Chasidic tradition. But as I look around me, and at myself, I notice this trend and am bothered by it. I must admit that I really do not have any cogent suggestions, but I remain bothered by the nagging question of "Quo Vadis Yeshiva?"

Israel And Golah Differ On Priority Of Issues, Yet Striving For Unification Remains Imperative

(Continued from page 1)

delegates' role as tourists. The basic accomplishments of the Conference were, rather *k'lapei p'nim*, and here again I must also differ with the Report's view. Quite opposite from stressing the

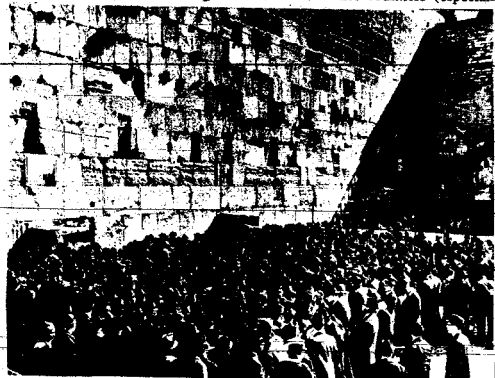
Golah talked among themselves, as virtually no Israelis showed up, since their system of priority of problems is so different.

Even among the countries of the Golah, the United States differed from the other countries (especial-

possible objections to the site, was at the 14th minute not attended by a number of the few Roshei Yeshiva who were scheduled to attend.

Rabbi Pelcovitz gives six reasons in his article for the opposition of the Roshei Yeshiva, reasons which he indicates range from the ridiculous (the fear of establishment of a Sanhedrin; which of course was never intended and was so stressed time and time again) to the personal (they were insulted because there was not sufficient prior consultation with them regarding the planning) to what Rabbi Pelcovitz regards as the basic reason, a subtle power struggle between the Yeshiva and the Synagogue which has been in effect in recent years. I have no more information at my disposal than Rabbi Pelcovitz had, and won't speculate beyond the possibilities he mentioned.

The accomplishment of the Conference was that it brought to the fore these and many other differences, some of them quite formidable. The first steps towards their resolution are now being taken, and must be followed up properly for the Conference to have a lasting value. The convening of the Conference in Israel symbolizes the fact that the Golah cannot be separated from Israel in the resolution of these problems, for it is ultimately in Israel that our future lies. "Ki Mitzion Tzech Torah."



Ashkenazi Mincha at the Kotel

VOJCA

hypothetical present unity, I feel the accomplishment of the Conference was to point up and accentuate the differences and splits now existing in the Orthodox community which must be honestly confronted, and the hope for unity in the future.

In the title of the Conference itself we find the difference between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities, which extend beyond diverse cultural levels and backgrounds. (many Yemenite delegates even strongly objected to being classified under the "Sephardi" designation, and wished to amend the title to include a third group, the "Oriental" community). A difference between the younger and older Israelis erupted in a fight over whether a "Nusach Achid," a common form of service, should be introduced in place of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi forms. The more basic distinction between Israel and the Golah was seen in the difference between the role of the Synagogue (a basic cell and bastion of Jewish life abroad, while an almost irrelevant part of the Jewish scene in Israel), and the role of the Rabbi in the two communities. This distinction also affected me in my role as a delegate: the speeches deliv-

ly France) in terms of the strength and standards of Orthodoxy it represents. Finally, the most disturbing split is that between the Yeshiva and Synagogue worlds which manifested itself in the uproar preceding the Conference and the resulting boycott by Yeshiva groups both in Israel and in the U.S. Even the session on *Hitzuk Ha-Torah* which was held in a Yeshiva rather than in Heichal Shlomo to remove any

Freshman Offers Evaluation Of EMC's Talmud Curriculum

by MARK BODNER

EDITOR'S NOTE: In our last issue, two freshmen from RIETS and JSS voiced their initial reactions to YU. Mark Bodner's article, originally scheduled for last issue, offers a first impression of the EMC curriculum.

The chief reason for my decision to attend Erna Michael College (EMC) instead of RIETS was that I preferred to receive a broad background in general Hebrew studies, and to select several electives in EMC which are not offered to RIETS students. It was not afraid to tackle this load in addition to my Yeshiva College courses, since I had successfully carried a double program in Yeshiva high school (BTA). Furthermore, I plan to settle in Israel some day, and there, I feel, a comprehensive education in Judaism is more useful than a knowledge of only one or two subjects.

Although at first glance EMC seemed to be an ideal institution for securing a well-rounded Jewish education, I now believe, after my first term, that the EMC curriculum is structurally deficient. Talmud is taught in "periods," just as Bible or Jewish History or Modern Hebrew Language, except that Talmud is taught three times a week instead of once. This crude division of an important subject may make it easier to digest, but in the process Talmud loses the flavor derived from a real shiur, such as is designed for RIETS. Learning Talmud only five hours per week nec-

essitates, for one thing, neglecting most major commentaries; consequently, the students' knowledge of the *gemara* is superficial. If all the Rashi's and most of the Tosafot are included in the class "lecture," the result is that only five blatt are covered in a term (such was the case in my class). Another class studied only a fraction of the Rashi's and practically no Tosafot, yet covered just three and a half blatt. This system can hardly be said to instill the impressionable freshman with a genuine appreciation of true learning.

Thus, top-quality Talmud education in EMC is unfortunately sacrificed in favor of the seven other courses—Jewish History, Mishna, Modern Hebrew Novel, etc. What is the reason for this deficiency? The answer lies in the fact that not only are many classes overcrowded, but there are many diverse types of students in each class, each with dissimilar backgrounds and facility with the subject matter. What is needed is a better distribution of students in the various classes so that the instructor can better gear the course toward a single level and method of instruction.

Mazel Tov to
George Finkelstein and
Fredda Hoenig
— from —
Mr. and Mrs. Jay H. Marcus
and the
Passover Provisions Comm.

Rabbinic Alumni Honor Abrams

Mr. Norman B. Abrams, Administrative Director of RIETS, was honored for his more than forty years of service to Y.U. at a dinner held by the Rabbinic Alumni of Yeshiva University at their annual midyear conference on March 21st.

The principal speakers were Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin and Rabbi Dr. Emanuel Rackman, both of



YUFR

Max J. Elia, Norman B. Abrams, and Dr. Samuel Belkin

whom hailed Mr. Abrams for his long record of dedication and service to Yeshiva. In accepting the plaque from Dr. Rackman, Mr. Abrams spoke gratefully of the many acquaintances he had made at Yeshiva, particularly among the Roshei Yeshiva, and then proceeded to extol Dr. Belkin's own great contribution to the growth of the institution.

Other speakers included Rabbi Joshua Fishman, and Mr. Max J. Elia, chairman of the Board of Trustees.

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of HAMEVASER extend warmest wishes to George B. Finkelstein, former SOY President, and Fredda Hoenig upon their recent engagement. Miss Hoenig is the daughter of Dr. Sidney Hoenig of the Bernard Revel Graduate School and Sister of Jacob Hoenig '70, Secretary-Treasurer of SOY. MAZAL TOVI!

ered by David Hurwitz and myself on the problems of Jewish youth in a secular society and particularly on the college campus and the efforts of NCSY and Yavneh were very well received by the delegates from the Golah who are faced with similar problems, but were considered almost irrelevant by most of the Israelis present. At the workshop dealing with the student problem that followed the session on youth, the delegates from Yavneh and interested parties from the

Soviets Mount Anti-Semitic Campaign In Aftermath Of Six-Day War, But Pro-Zionist Sentiment Rises Among Jews Despite Coercion

by JOSEPH TELUSHKIN

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joseph Telushkin is President of the *Yeshiva Chapter of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry*.

Unfortunately, it is the Jews of Russia (and of Poland) who have emerged as the victims, and forgotten ones at that, of the Six-Day War. It is now almost a year since the fighting has subsided, but the Anti-Zionist, Anti-Semitic campaigns in the press and media have continued, relentlessly reiterating charges of "imperialism" and "Hitlerism" directed at the Jewish State. It would be instructive to analyze initial Soviet reaction to the War, and also to record eyewitness accounts of the Soviet Jew's reactions.

The most obvious pattern discernible throughout the Soviet charges is a series of comparisons between Israel's actions and Nazi Germany's. When one recalls that Russia, more than any other country, suffered from the Nazis, lost seven-and-a-half million out of an army of twelve-and-a-half million, besides another fifteen million civilians; one can easily understand that comparisons of such an odious nature are well geared to engender great hatred for Israel. For instance, a cartoon appeared in the June 24th issue of *Pravda* with the caption: "Re-tailoring the map—on the old pattern." The cartoon shows two Israeli soldiers, one cutting out a new map, the other outfitting himself with a Nazi uniform. Such cartoons certainly are not isolated incidents. In fact Moshe Decter, Executive Director of the Conference on the Status of Soviet Jews, and probably the most informed man on the situation of Russian Jews, has assembled a booklet, consisting of nothing but samples of caricatured anti-Zionist anti-Jewish cartoons that have appeared in the Soviet press since the War.

Furthermore, statements of Soviet leaders were geared towards implanting the "Israel-like-Nazis" image in the Soviet mind. All the major Soviet leaders utilized the comparison. At the U.N., June 9th Ambassador Fedorenko said of Israel, "they follow the bloody footsteps of Hitler's executioners," and ten days later Premier Kossygin used the same forum to declare, "what is going on brings to mind the heinous crimes perpetrated by the Nazis during World War II." To ensure that such charges receive adequate home consumption, Party Secretary Brezhnev stated in Moscow July 5th, "In the atrocities against the peaceful Arab populations, it seems they try to copy the crimes of Nazi invaders. The aggressors conduct themselves like the worst bandits and commit atrocities in the Hitlerite style." A more "scholarly" type historical review of Nazi-Zionist

relations appeared in *Izvestia* July 2nd entitled "Whom Do They Serve—The True Face of the Ruling Clique in Israel," by Yuri Ivanov. (The article reiterated the old charges of Nazi-Zionist affiliations, charges propagated in the infamous Trofim K. Kichko book "Judaism Without Embellishment.") Ivanov charges that "since both the Zionists and the National Socialists (Nazis) elevated race and nation above all things, it was inevitable that a common bridge should arise between them."



Anti-semitic cartoon in Soviet press

The charges in the press were of such an extraordinary and extravagant nature that one is surprised at the lack of subtlety on the Soviets' part. An article in *Izvestia* June 17th, entitled "Anne Frank and Dayan" by L. Kolosov, charges that Israeli tankists drenched Arab prisoners with benzine and set them aflame while yet alive. Others were run over by tanks. Later the Israelis "invented a new and even more heinous way of killing them. Captive and wounded Arabs were stripped to the skin, deprived of their water flasks and abandoned under the blazing sun, in the

sand. These people were doomed to slow tortured death." Later the article "quotes" an Italian journalist, "I cannot help comparing Anne Frank, the young Jewish girl tortured by the Nazis... with General Dayan who has surpassed the inhuman Nazi generals. What a guilt."

In such an atmosphere it becomes understandable that a rabbi in the Republic of Georgia was lynched and found hanging upside down, that reports emerged of a near-pogrom at Moscow and of assaults upon Jews in Tashkent, that synagogues were pressured to an enormous degree to condemn Israel, and that Jewish mothers in Moscow were fearful of sending their children to school, for fear of encountering anti-Semitism.

An Optimistic Note

But other reports also emerged, reports of a more optimistic nature. The leader of a three-man fact-finding committee under the auspices of the Center for Russian Jewry which visited Russia this summer told me that "It's unbelievable it seems as if every Jew in Russia listens to Kol Yisroel (which is no longer buzzed out). They know the totality of the Israeli victory and they're jubilant." A rabbinical student, expelled this fall from Russia for "acts of godliness," reported a meeting he had with four young professionals who told him of their love for Israel, of their belief that Israel would come and rescue them. These men do not eat meat, and subsist only on dairy products, because Kosher provisions are unobtainable. Elie Wiesel told of a story he heard from the diplomat to whom it happened. In Tiflis, hundreds of Jews came to the Synagogue the morning the War broke out to say Psalms. At the end, each of the hundreds shook hands with the diplomats and said, "Al tirah avdi Yaakov"—"do not fear, my servant Jacob." And they were not afraid. Simhas Torah, the day of the Jew's annual "mishigas," a crowd larger than in the past gathered, and twenty to thirty thousand Moscow Jewish youth affirmed their heritage. And reports have emerged that on Pesach a thousand youth gathered for the purpose of dancing and being joyous. This was the first time something of this nature happened on a night other than *Simhas Torah*, and it took place despite the officials' negative attitude towards such a demonstration.

And so interspersed with all the horrors of the government, are reports of the still-living soul of many of the Jews of Russia. Their remarkable strength enjoins us to redouble our efforts, to never rest peacefully while our brothers have no rest at all.

Book Review

The exegetical process called *d'rash* may be termed the *pilpul* of the sermonizers. Like *pilpul*, it involves, to use Rabbi E. Berkovits' description, "intellectual juggling and mental acrobatics," and interprets the text homiletically. In his *God In All Seasons*, Rabbi Shubert Spero of the Young Israel of Cleveland attempts "to present a view of the Jewish Festivals from the perspective of the Few who observe them and who in so doing attempt to make them part of their own lives," essentially employing *d'rash* to do so. The treatment, Rabbi Spero notes, may be of a psychological, historical, or philosophical nature.

His treatment of Rosh Hashana, for instance, with its focus on the Binding of Isaac and the emphasis on the Patriarchs, is psychological. The Patriarchs, Rabbi Spero believes, represent the Jungian proto-images of every Jew. On Rosh Hashana, as the repentant Jew implores God for forgiveness, Isaac as an archetype illustrates the Jew's ability to make sacrifices for God. When Chazal said *maaseh avot siman l'banim*, the intended meaning may well have been just this archetype-patriarch in the Jewish consciousness.

By far the most original and controversial sermon is on *s'firah*. Rabbi Spero questions the Talmudic explanation that the mourning period is observed in memory of the thousands of Rabbi Akiba's students who were killed by an epidemic of pestilence. Why, then, asks Rabbi Spero, does the *s'firah* period occupy one-twelfth of the year, while the Jewish calendar prescribes only a three-week mourning period for the destruction of the Temple, an obviously greater catastrophe? Relying on the epistle of Rav Sherira Gaon, Rabbi Spero reveals the "best kept secret of the Jewish calendar." *S'firah*, he believes, commemorates the disastrous defeat of Rabbi Akiba's disciples on the battlefield during the Bar Kochba revolt. The martyrs could not be mourned overtly as Judea was under Roman suppression. The period in which the battle occurred was prescribed for mourning but the true reason went "underground"; the Talmud uses a vague plague to disguise the true reason for the observance. The significance of the revolt lies in its representing

God In All Seasons

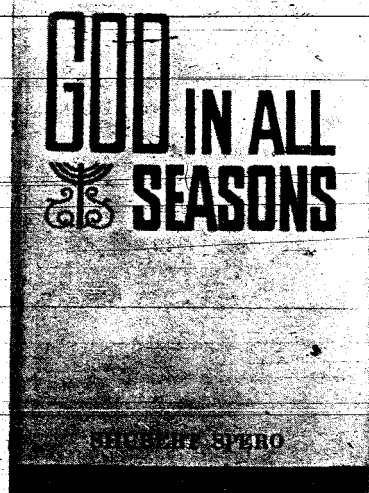
by BEN NEIMAN

"the only successful effort made by the Jewish people from the time the second temple was destroyed in 70 C.E. until the Israeli War of Liberation in 1948 to retake their land by political and military means."

This brochure, another subject discussed extensively by Rabbi Spero, namely that of the relationship between *hish-tadlut*, active faith, and *bitachon*, passive faith. In his treatment of *Sukkot*, the author portrays the festival as an illustration of the need for *hish-tadlut*. While on Pesach one is bound to eat matzah and is forbidden to eat *chometz*, on *Sukkot* one is duty-bound to dwell in the *Succeh*, while under certain conditions, Halacha permits the return to the home. In a symbolic sense, one cannot compromise with evil, *chometz* representing the "leavening of evil." The *succeh*, on the other hand, symbolizes the principle of faith, whose antithesis, *hish-tadlut*, can never be rejected in its entirety. Faith is vital, but human initiative and self help are also needed." On the modern plane *hish-tadlut* is personified by the active role Jews are playing on the political-historical scene, especially in Israel, in creating the conditions for the appearance of the Messiah. Rabbi Spero notes perceptively that after the destruction of the Temple, the impossibility of an organized return to Israel relegated *aliyah* to an equal plane with *techiat hametim*, which obviously would have to wait for the Messiah's arrival. "But now that historic conditions have changed, we not only have the right, but the religious duty to return to Eretz Yisrael. There is no question but that the process of redemption has begun." And again raising the call for *hish-tadlut*, Rabbi Spero writes that the Omer period reminds us to seize the opportunity to return to Eretz Yisrael and in this manner hasten the Messiah's appearance. "Indeed when such an opportunity does present itself, one religious law obliges us to work and if necessary to fight to regain and to hold the land of our fathers."

A point that strikes a discordant note in this admirable volume is the author's seeming elation in the new representation of the Jew as a fighter. "We have returned to

than judge the emergence of the warrior—Jew as a necessary evil, Rabbi Spero hails it as a return to the "classic the tradition of Joshua, David, Judah the Maccabee and above all, of Simon Bar Kochba." Must Jacob switch weapons with Esau to combat the *Arendt* thesis? Rather



M. Fried

"Biblical image of the Jew as a fierce fighter for his independence."

Generally, however, the reader is struck by the originality displayed, and by the social commentary the author reads into the Jewish Festivals. *D'rash*, despite its drawbacks, in this exercise, truly reinterprets the old and stretches its relevance to the new.