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## Tendler Shabbat Lecture Councils Mark Dr. Belkin's 25 Years At YU; Sefer Presentation Highlights Convocation

*Hukhot Shabbat* in general and the particular problem of "keshiva" and "hatarat hakasher," tying and untying, were the areas dwelt upon by Rabbi Dr. Moses D. Tendler on the night of October 28 in Rubin Shul. The shiur was the first in the Halakha series sponsored by SOY this year, in a continuing effort to afford more opportunities for YU students to hear the Roshei HaYeshiva on varied topics.



M. Tendler  
Dr. Tendler Speaks For SOY

Although Rabbi Tendler's exposition of the specific category of *melakha* of tying and untying is too involved to be reproduced here, his introductory comments regarding the theme of Shabbat and the implications evolving from the study of its laws can be noted.

Rabbi Tendler began by observing that due to the complexity that is common to the laws involved in observing Shabbat, only the constant study of these laws will allow an individual to be assured that he will not be continually committing transgressions. But over and above the fact that study is required in order to observe Shabbat properly, Rabbi Tendler pointed out that only with a thorough knowledge of the laws of Shabbat can one appreciate the three-fold message that this *mitzvah* conveys to man. Firstly, the positive observance of the Shabbat by man as manifested in his reciting of the *Kiddush*, in which divine creation and redemption are emphasized, constitutes man's attesting to God's role as the creator as well as the controller of the universe. And just as there is a divine natural law which controls beings and objects lacking intelligence, so, too, man, in his role as creature, is given a set pattern to which he must adhere—namely *mitsvot*, one of them being the observance of Shabbat. Yet, pointed out Rabbi Tendler, along with a positive set of means for indicating God's role in the universe, there arises a need for negation as well—the negation of man's tendency to look upon himself as a competitor to God, as a fellow creator. Though man can potentially rise to great heights of achievement and development, he can never become God's opponent, nor can he lose his perspective

vis-a-vis God if he comprehends and carefully observes the prohibitions of creative physical activity on Shabbat.

A second basic theme inherent in Shabbat is that man represents a higher order in the world scheme than do the other creatures, for man, when he rests or "engages in *menuchah*" on the Shabbat, rather than just physically catching his breath, is in truth engaging in a uniquely human activity. The definition that Shabbat gives to "rest" reveals to all onlookers that there is more to man than the animal aspect.

Finally, Rabbi Tendler suggested that if people would properly come to understand the *halakhot* that apply to Shabbat, they would come to appreciate the true meaning of *Emunat Chazal* (subjugation to rabbinic authority). Rabbi Tendler stated that if individuals could be made aware of the function and purpose of the *rabbanan*, who serve not only in the capacity of the enforcers of the laws of Shabbat, but also as the definers and determiners of what *mitsvot* really are, as indicated by the numerous "*ayuggim*" ("fences"), then the multitude of problems that discourage attempts to establish an organized Orthodox community today would be much closer to resolution.

The vision of Dr. Samuel Belkin—its realization in the past, its implications for shaping the future—was the theme of a special convocation held on Tuesday afternoon, October 29 in Lamport Auditorium to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Dr. Belkin's ascendance to the Presidency of Yeshiva University. The event, which was attended by religious division and college faculty, the student body, and alumni, was sponsored by the students themselves, through the Student Councils of Yeshiva College and the Stern College for Women. College classes were cancelled to allow all students to be present at the proceedings.

Climaxing the program was the presentation of a *Sefer Torah* to Dr. Belkin. Participating in this presentation were Elyahu Safran, President of the Student Organization of Yeshiva; Robert Sacknovitz, President of the J.S.S. Student Council; Norman Bertram, President of the Erna Michael College Student Council; Kenneth Hain, President of the Yeshiva College Student Council; and Mrs. Beverly Koval, President of the Stern College Student Council.

After Mr. Hain's prefatory remarks opening the convocation, Mrs. Koval spoke of Dr. Belkin's

achievements. Elaborating upon a theme found in the *Nineteen Letters* of Samson Raphael Hirsch, she described Yeshiva University as a manifestation of Israel's ability to champion the ideals of jus-

but in the power of the spirit. Elyahu Safran, President of SOY, then delivered an address in Hebrew which he described as an attempt to place the achievements of Dr. Belkin in a broad historical



Student Leaders Present Scroll To Dr. Belkin

## Hesped Underscores Tragedy Of Yeshiva's Loss As Speakers Emphasize Mr. Abrams' Dedication

On the night of September 26, 1968, a *hesped* was held in the main Bet Hamedrash to mark the end of the *shloshim* period of mourning for Mr. Norman B. Abrams z"l. Scores of faculty, students, and alumni attended the tribute to the late Administrative Director of RIETS.



Dr. Belkin Addresses Gathering

YUFR

After a few prefatory remarks, Elyahu Safran, President of SOY, and chairman of the proceedings, introduced the first speaker, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin. Dr. Belkin's address dealt with a theme that had recurred many times since

Mr. Abrams' passing, but one which Dr. Belkin was able to illustrate with particular poignancy because of his long and intimate association with Mr. Abrams: his indefatigable devotion to Yeshiva. Dr. Belkin described how, during the war years, a period of great financial hardship, Mr.

Bernard Berzon, President of Yeshiva University Rabbinic Alumni, noted that the full impact of the loss of Mr. Abrams might not have yet been felt—for with the passage of time, the absence of his guiding hand and authority would become ever more striking.

Jeffrey Silver, nephew of Mr. Abrams and a student in RIETS, then presented a biographical portrait of his uncle, stretching back to Mr. Abrams' days as a student in the Lomzer Yeshiva, where his father was a Rosh Yeshiva. Throughout his administrative career at YU, remarked Mr. Silver, Mr. Abrams' philosophy stressed the centrality of the "yeshiva" aspect of the institution.

The last speaker was Mr. Stanley Cohen of Montreal, Canada, son-in-law of Mr. Abrams. Mr. Cohen explained that the impact of Mr. Abrams' death transcends the personal grief of the family, for his loss is sensed deeply by a legion of friends and associates—and, not the least, by the Yeshiva itself. The most fitting tribute to Mr. Abrams, said Mr. Cohen, is the perpetuation of his qualities of unstinting labor and dedication to the institution.

Elihu Feldman concluded the evening with the chanting of "*Kei Molei*."

The following speaker, Rabbi

perspective. The year of Dr. Belkin's accession to the Presidency—1943—was a year of destruction and holocaust for Jewry in Eastern Europe. It was largely through the efforts of Dr. Belkin that the tradition of Torah learning was able not only to survive but to flourish in America. Mr. Safran cited a passage from Dr. Belkin's book, "*In His Image*," in which the author stresses that a man is judged not merely by his actions, but by his intentions and aspirations. We at YU appreciate, explained Mr. Safran, that Dr. Belkin consecrated all his thoughts and all his deeds towards the strengthening of this institution.

In his address, Kenny Hain, President of Student Council, divided the history of Yeshiva University into three phases. The first phase was the period of demonstrating that a viable institution of religious learning could be made a reality; the second was a period of confident expansion. The "third phase" is our present situation, one which Mr. Hain described as a challenge rather than a static condition: our task is to insure that quantitative growth will not spell qualitative deterioration, that growth of "the body" will not breed a want of "the spirit." He called for mutual cooperation and understanding among all those associated with Yeshiva—faculty, students, and administration.

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to obtain.

Because of the above considerations, it seems highly improbable that Yeshiva will be able to attract people who are currently the top men in their fields. However, it should certainly make an effort to do so, and in particular should endeavor to attract the younger men who are just beginning to make a name for themselves. It will certainly be easier to obtain the services of these people now, rather than wait until after they have made their reputations at other schools. We would like to offer a list of men now teaching in other schools who fall into the above categories, together with their areas of specialization and their current school:

Isadore Twersky, Jewish History (Harvard); Marvin Fox, Philosophy (Ohio State); Alexander Altman, Jewish Philosophy (Brandeis); Eliezer Berkovits, Philosophy (Hebrew Theological College); Joseph Baumgarten, Jewish History (Baltimore Hebrew College); Barry Eichler, Assyriology (University of Pennsylvania); Shnavel Leiman, Jewish Studies (Yale); Naftali Weider, Medieval Jewish History (Boston Hebrew Teachers College); Gerald Bliedstein, Jewish Studies (Temple University); and David Weisberg, Assyriology and Near Eastern History (Hebrew Union College).

We offer these names as only a partial list of men who we think would add stature to the Bernard Revel faculty. We feel that Yeshiva should be the place to which all serious students in the field of Jewish Studies will come, rather than the one that many of them leave. Only a major effort by the administration can change the current situation. We call for such an effort. It is desperately needed, and if started immediately, could prove richly rewarding.

## Sunday Exams

Once again this year, final exams are scheduled to be administered on a Sunday. As we have pointed out frequently in the past, this practice imposes undue hardships upon students who wish to observe the Shabbat as a day of complete Kodesh. We therefore request that the final exam schedule be re-arranged in order to accommodate this important consideration.

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

The article recently published in HAMEVASER (Sept. 30, 1968) which summarized Rav Aaron Soloveichik's address to a National Yavneh Convention on the subject of *hikhot milchamah* and their application to the present conflict in Vietnam contained certain inaccuracies as to Rebbe's position on the legality of the Vietnamese war, and as to his reason for condemning draft evasion.

Rebbe did not say that, according to the Rambam, any war declared by a government is a *milchemet reshut*, or a justified war which the Torah permits. On the contrary, the Rambam is of the opinion that any war (except one waged against the Seven Nations and Amalek) which is not in response to an attack that has already taken place, and is not conducted by the King of Israel with the sanction of the Sanhedrin and *Urim v'Tumim*, is a "*milchemet akhzarit*" and involves a violation of the commandment, "*v'halakhtia b'derakhav*." The Rambam even condemns King David for conducting certain wars without consulting the Sanhedrin. The *halakha* which Rebbe cited in the name of the Rambam (in contrast to the opinion

of Rashi and a few other *rishonim*) is that any war conducted by a government which does not kill more than one-sixth of the enemy nation is not punished as *retzachah* and *gezel*, and that conquest in such a war is an effective method of acquisition. Rebbe did not distinguish between "legal legitimacy" and "moral criteria," as if such a distinction were possible from the viewpoint of Torah. Any war waged by a non-Jewish nation not in self-defense is legally forbidden, but it is recognized as *milchamah* and not *retzachah*.

Furthermore, Rebbe's condemnation of draft evasion was not based upon the legitimacy of the Vietnamese war. It was based upon the prohibition of "*meridakh b'umot ha-olam*," since draft evasion is interpreted by the United States Government as a sign of disloyalty. Rebbe cited the Machaneh Yisroel of the Chofetz Chaim as stating that a Jew must risk his life to avoid showing disloyalty to the *umot ha-olam*.

Perhaps the author of the HAMEVASER article meant not that Rebbe's condemnation of draft evasion was based on the legitimacy of the Vietnamese war, but that Rebbe's *heter* for participation in the war—i.e. for killing

combatants on the battlefield—was based on the legitimacy of the war. (I entertain the possibility of such an interpretation, although it is against the literal meaning of the article, inasmuch as the author proceeded at this point in the article to the prohibition of killing civilians, omitting any discussion of the question of participating in killing on the battlefield, and also inasmuch as the literal meaning of the article, relating the prohibition of draft evasion to the legal status of a particular war, would be not only a misinterpretation of Rebbe's position, but a logical incoherency.) This interpretation, however, is also not in accord with what Rebbe actually said. His *heter* for killing combatants was based not on the legality of the war, but on a *h'shavah* of R. Akiva Eger which states that in a situation in which two parties are engaged in mortal combat, and the aggressor cannot be identified, either party may kill the other in self-defense, although a third party may kill neither. Rebbe considers the position of two opposing soldiers on the battlefield of Vietnam to be the same as that discussed by R. Akiva Eger.

H. LEE MICHELSON

(LETTERS continued on page six)

## Bernard Revel Graduate School

The one area in which Yeshiva University should excel is the field of Jewish scholarship. Yet the sad fact is that the Bernard Revel Graduate School, Yeshiva's school for advanced Jewish studies, is far from being the first-rate institution it should be, and, in fact, lags behind other graduate institutions in this field.

A general reflection on the academic status of the school can be seen in the fact that essentially the only admissions requirements are possession of a B.A. and some knowledge of Hebrew (with little notice given to previous academic achievement), and that no fellowships are awarded. Furthermore, the scope of the courses is very limited; there are no reading courses, no colloquia, and no genuine seminars. A number of the professors aim their lectures at a low level, and little intellectual creativity is exhibited in class.

The main problem in the school, however, appears to be a severe shortage of faculty members. Although the student body of Bernard Revel has multiplied tenfold since the school's inception, the ranks of the faculty have not increased proportionately. As one result, current professors are obliged to assume inordinate workloads, leaving them little time to devote to research or to the all-important function of advising doctoral candidates. Moreover, many of the faculty have outside obligations which diminish their contributions to Bernard Revel. The severity of this shortage is pointed up by the fact that, at times, when an instructor leaves, his position is not immediately filled, but rather the courses that he taught are dropped from the curriculum, (at least temporarily).

Let us examine the causes of some of these problems. It is certainly true that the school suffers from lack of money. We feel that Bernard Revel is precisely the graduate school on which the University administration should lavish the most attention. A strong fund-raising effort would bring in money needed to raise salaries and thereby attract scholars from other institutions.

However, lack of funds may not be the only factor preventing Revel from improving. It seems that Yeshiva should actively recruit faculty members from other schools and offer them as many benefits as possible. Instead, Yeshiva often seems determined to drive these people away. Professors at other institutions have told us that the reputation of Yeshiva's faculty-administration relationships has dissuaded them from considering a post here. They have also indicated that the attitude which the administration brings to recruiting tends to alienate the very people it is trying

From the Editor's Desk

## Relevance And Validity

by DAVID SHATZ

If one distinguishing phrase or theme may be said to capture the whole tone and temper of contemporary Jewish thought, that phrase is "relevance." The cry of the lay community for a vigorous new scholarship which will translate the insights of Jewish law into the modern idiom, and which will propound halakhic and hashkafic guidelines to meet our most urgent contemporary problems, is a call now echoed by swelling numbers of the Orthodox scholarly community, who have come to envisage the task of "relevance" placed upon their shoulders not simply as a pragmatic measure calculated to fortify the waning commitment of increasingly ominous numbers of Jews, but as a responsibility dictated by the very purpose and inner logic of the Halakha itself.

We at YU have heard these spokesmen well, and we too now clamor for "relevance." But, as happens so often, a movement whose origins lie in the rejection of one extreme—in this case, the alternative of total withdrawal and isolation from modern life—has, with time, itself succumbed to a form of extremism. From the conviction that Torah can and should be "made relevant," the notion has gradually evolved that its "relevance" to contemporary problems is in fact the criterion of its validity, the sole standard which vindicates the Torah's claim to regulate our lives. Of course, the blatant and offensive forms that this conception has assumed in other circles are rejected outright by nearly all YU students. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly apparent that we have made certain concessions to this doctrine. Symptoms of this malaise include the verbal assaults on the rabbeim, and the denunciation of the RIETS curriculum as outmoded and irrelevant. For underlying these attacks is a prevailing psychological mood, an attitude, a pattern of thinking.

That attitude is, briefly, that the methods of the "old style" are impotent in grappling with the challenges of the modern era; and that inevitably, therefore, RIETS will turn out products who may be steeped in the methodology and content of Talmudic discourse, but who are largely oblivious of and insensitive to the most pressing dilemma of the contemporary Jew. The RIETS program, it is felt, promotes and perpetuates—or, rather, embodies—the irrelevance and intellectual lethargy of which YU as a whole is found to be guilty.

The temptation, of course, is to dismiss these critiques with a simple reaffirmation of the centrality of Torah and Torah study. Clearly, no event in the twentieth century has been so cataclysmic in its ramifications as to depose the *Talmid Chakham* from the unique position of honor and veneration which he occupies in our tradition, or to somehow mitigate the injunction of "*v'hageta bo yomam va'lailah*." On the other hand, it is only fair to point out that few of the critics—excepting those who employ their philosophically-couched objections merely as a cloak for their indifference to any sort of religious education—actually dispute the theoretical primacy of Torah study, or the record of its past achievements in keeping Yiddishkeit alive throughout the generations.

(Continued on page three)

# Program of "Relevance" Requires Veneration of Scholarship

(Continued from page two)

What they do maintain, rather, is that changing times require changing emphases in the specific content and style of that study. Thus, in modern times, it is urged, Judaism cannot flourish if it adheres to curricular systems embraced by generations long since expired. Given the unprecedented, overwhelming proportions of the challenges we face, our most immediate educational requirement, those areas which deserve the bulk of class time and to which students should dedicate the greater part of their energies, must be philosophy and other "contemporary" courses—Jewish history, sociology, Zionism, etc.

How shall this argument be dealt with? I believe that the response can assume two forms. The first approach is to draw a qualitative distinction between the study of Talmud and the kind of studies the critics seek to emphasize. In this way, it may be shown that while the latter do merit far more attention than has hitherto been recognized, the former must nevertheless remain central. The second approach is to meet the critics on their own grounds, and to examine the basic premise of their position—the conjunction of RIETS with irrelevance—on its own merits, i.e. to discern whether the facts support this association. I plan to explore the issue from both these vantage points.

## The first approach

The traditional interpretations of the rationale behind the commandment to study Torah should, ideally, be no less applicable today than ever before. Numerous Jewish thinkers have found in *limud Torah* not a purely noetic or intellectual pursuit, but an intense experiential, emotional dimension; for the man completely immersed in his study, knowledge about God—the specific content of his study—can be transformed into knowledge of God, that is into a total absorption in His word to the point where the individual experiences a self-transcendence, almost as if his intellectual processes were thoughts addressed to God. Just as the performance of *mitzvot* can be seen as a mode of consecrating the mundane, of transforming every commonplace human act into a religious act directed towards God, so, too, immersion in learning a Talmudic text can wield a powerful influence on the entire personality, by imbuing one's being with intense religious awareness and devotion.

Conversely, a de-emphasis on "yegiah" and *har-madah*, a playing down of the significance of intensive preparation for a shiur, and the substitution of an intellectualized approach for this potential experiential involvement—particularly if carried to the point where Talmud or Tanakh threatens to become a mere "source book" for the culture of the Jewish people—leads to a sapping of religious fervor and, I suspect, a corresponding attrition of religious observance. There should be no need to belabor, by way of historical or contemporary example, the insufficiency of a familiarity with Jewish philosophy or theology in molding the kind of Orthodox Jews we would like, or the inadequacy of nationalist feeling to necessarily bolster religious observance, or the inability of an intellectual humanistic sensitivity to "ethical teachings" to create the totally committed Jew, or the relative insignificance of a knowledge of modern Hebrew literature in the definition of an Orthodox Jew. Yet these have been the prime areas of emphasis called for by student critiques of RIETS. To be sure, these subjects deserve far more attention than has hitherto been accorded; but there are definite dangers inherent in assigning them too much prominence.

At its last council meeting, SOY decided to extend the YU Charity Drive to both terms of the school year, thus enabling the Drive both to support more institutions worthy of backing, and to increase allotments for institutions presently being aided. To implement this Drive, it was decided to set Tuesday of each week as Tzedakah Day, at which time SOY alder representatives will collect funds. All students are urged to give generously.

That this kind of answer should be our prime response to aspersions cast on the RIETS method of study is, I believe, manifest. Whether it can prove convincing to the majority of students, however, is another matter. To begin with, the tide of intellectualization in our day is growing ever stronger. The emphasis placed on the purely intellectual force of religious experience, the entrenchment of rational doubt as a legitimate religious expression, has engendered a concomitant depreciation in the experiential and emotional. For all the stress on the contemporary Jew's expressions of yearning for the personal encounter with God which will allay his doubts

and anxieties, the fact remains that it is an inflexible rationalistic bias which gives rise to those doubts, and makes such an encounter all the more elusive.

A second factor militating against the acceptance of the response outlined above is the specific character of the "experience" in question. The religious awareness attained by the *matmid* is not the rapturous communion of the mystic, but rather the acceptance of a religious discipline, the shouldering of *ol Torah* and *ol mitzvot*. Now there was a time when the most profound—and perhaps even the most philosophically sophisticated—spiritual gesture of all was considered to be this simple, unquestioning act of submission to *mitzvot*. But today law, authority, and discipline have become objects of contempt. Indeed, a whole new apologetic literature has been forced into existence to provide, in popularly digestible form, all sorts of rational or aesthetic justifications for observance. Coupled with this is the general aversion of students to rigid, disciplined study and class schedules.

For these reasons, I doubt that asserting that *limud Torah* molds the sensitive religious personality will convince many to alter their estimation of the study of Talmud. The notion may be ably vindicated during a year of study at a yeshiva in Israel—many YU boys can bear testimony—and there is currently a gratifying number of students who do exemplify this philosophy; but generally speaking, such an outlook is not readily attainable here, where other pressures are so overwhelming, and where other currents of thought are so popular.



Under these circumstances, it might be advisable to resort to what I have termed "the second approach," that is, to meet the critics on their own ground, and to explore the premise that the current RIETS program is hopelessly irrelevant to the tasks demanded of us by the modern age. The alternative suggested by upholders of this claim is, of course, a *haskafah* couched in contemporary intellectual and social terms.

The fallacy underlying this position, I believe, is that its proponents appear to assume the accessibility of a neatly codified and readily intelligible literature of *haskafah*, thereby diminishing the need for extensive familiarity with other sources—such as Talmud and *rishonim*. What the critics fail to appreciate, in other words, is that Jewish scholarship—and hence intellectual and spiritual leadership—can never be dissociated from what is generally termed *lomdus*; and that accordingly, in point of fact, the men who have provided this leadership to date—the principal expositors of the "relevance" we prize so highly and which, as noted, critics posit as the antithesis of the RIETS ideal—are, quite contrary to this popular "image," *musmakim* of RIETS, or even of yeshivot we would be prone to dismiss as more "right wing" than our own. Let us not ignore, either, that the men to whom we at YU habitually turn with our most pressing halakhic and *haskafic* problems, from issues of universal moment to matters of student affairs, are certain of the Roshai HaYeshiva. Indeed, throughout history, our great traditional Jewish philosophers and *poskim* have—of necessity—been great Talmudists as well. And the reason is obvious. For it is the Halakhah, together with all the complexities of Talmudic thought which shape it, which has always been and remains the central repository of the rich and profound insights of authentic Judaism into the realm of the jurisprudential or social or economic or political or moral or scientific. And while other sources—Aggadah, Tanakh, and works of philosophers—may provide important theological or moral concepts, the comprehensiveness and authoritativeness of Halakhic thought is crucial to any meaningful program of "relevance."

The lesson in all this should be clear: We are guilty of a severe inconsistency if, on the one hand, we call upon *Gedolim* to formulate *pesak* or *haskafah* on contemporary issues, and, at the same time,

we downgrade the indispensable resources of any responsible thinker dealing with these issues. This is not to say that knowledge of Talmud alone identifies an individual as one qualified to rule on the cardinal intellectual, moral, social, or scientific problems of the age. Clearly, it is no mean task to develop scholars whose depth of Talmudic learning is matched by the sensitivity to Talmud and cultural currents that is required of a contemporary *posek* exploring these areas. What I do maintain, however, is that we dare not, out of our discouragement—and we have had cause for discouragement—forget about the first requirement altogether. The arrogation of leadership in our day by self-proclaimed spokesmen of dubious credentials—even to the point where secularist organizations now issue pronouncements in the name of "Judaism"—has frequently proved tragic in its consequences. What these men lack is not simply a facility with Halakhic texts—an authoritative grounds for disqualification in its own right—but also another element which only years of immersion in the Halakhah can provide: a thorough and genuine appreciation of Torah—its integrity, its depth, its complexity, its uniqueness.

None of these remarks should be construed as an attribution of infallibility to the current RIETS program. I do not intend to rob the RIETS critics of cogency where they possess it. Accordingly, I fully recognize that, heartened though we may be by the attainments of RIETS graduates in Jewish scholarship and contemporary leadership (and I admit we cannot be too heartened), other boys will graduate YU with nothing to show for four years of religious education but a vague acquaintance with about a hundred *blat gemara*, material which may soon be forgotten anyway, and which almost certainly will not be conceptualized into the larger *haskafah* formulated by those who will devote their intellectual energies to intensive Torah study. Furthermore, I admit that, even during the college years, the sheer waste of time that takes place in some instances appalling and tragic, and that administrative coercion tends only to deepen the alienation into resentment. At the root of this difficulty is an agonizing "gap" between *rebbe* and *talmid*, a breakdown of communication which warrants the self-effacing concern of student and administrator alike.

Given these circumstances, I think it is time that we granted unbegrudging legitimacy to the institution of a systematized program of Jewish *haskafah*—a program which would stress not simply knowledge, but understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation. Hopefully, such a course, as outlined in HAMEVASER last May, would not only inspire greater numbers of students than we have until now been reaching, but would serve to broaden the comprehension of even the stronger *talmidim*. It is time, too, that we gave serious recognition to the often appalling ignorance among the student body of Tanakh or history or philosophy. "Serious recognition" means ceasing to waste our time bemoaning the lack of personal initiative which is generally at the base of such ignorance, and ceasing as well to pass the blame on to yeshivot *ketanot* and high schools. It means facing up to the reality of the situation, however deplorable it may be, and working earnestly to do something about it. In the long run, it is true, the best solution may lie in a re-examination of our yeshivah high school curricula; but this does not excuse us from the urgent task at hand.

However, there is a reverse side to the coin. And this is my major intent in writing this article. For it is one thing to point to deficiencies in a system and call for supplements, it is another to dismiss the system entirely and to undermine its basic concept; it is one thing to point out that some boys abuse their religious education, it is another to hold up their lack of diligence as a grounds for impeaching the effectiveness or validity of the entire program.

What is not always what ought to be. That realization could be the first step towards rethinking our criteria, re-forming our value structure, and ultimately, reshaping and refining our attitudes and aspirations.

The Governing Board of HAMEVASER joins with the religious division councils in extending Mazal Tov wishes to George B. Finkelstein and Fredda Hoenig upon their recent marriage.

# Varieties Of Theological Models

by RABBI DAVID HARTMAN

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following is reprinted with permission from Yavneh Studies In Parshat Hashavua (Copy-right 1968; Yavneh), a series of essays dealing with philosophical problems raised by the various parshot. Rabbi David Hartman, whose essay deals with Va-Yairah, is Rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem in Montreal, Canada, and a member of the philosophy department at McGill University.

In this study, I will briefly discuss in outline form different theological models that have emerged out of the Abraham story. Each of these models is related to different episodes in the life of Abraham. My purpose is not to present a detailed discussion of each of these models, but rather to offer notes meant to guide the student in the studying of such models in general.

Maimonides, in *Hil-khot Avodah Zarah*, chapter one, writes:

After he was weaned, while still an infant, his mind began to reflect. By day and by night he was thinking and wondering: "How is it possible that this (celestial) sphere should continuously be guiding the world and have no one to guide it and cause it to turn round; for it cannot be that it turns round of itself." He had no teacher, no one to instruct him in aught. He was submerged, in Ur of the Chaldes, among silly idolaters. His father and mother and the entire population worshipped idols, and he worshipped with them. But his mind was busily working and reflecting till he had attained the way of truth, and knew that there is One God, that He guides the celestial sphere and created everything, and that . . . there is no good beside Him. He realized that the whole world was in error, and that what had occasioned their error was that they worshipped the stars and the images. . . . Abraham was forty years old when he recognized his Creator. Having attained this knowledge, he began to refute the inhabitants of Ur of the Chaldes, arguing with them. . . . He broke the images and commenced to instruct the people that it was not right to serve any one but the God of the Universe, . . . and that it was proper to destroy and shatter all the images, so that the people might not err like these who taught that there was no god but these images. When he had prevailed over them with his arguments, the king sought to slay him. He was miraculously saved, and emigrated to Haran. He then began to proclaim to the whole world . . . and to instruct the people that the entire Universe had but one Creator and that Him it was right to worship. He went from city to city and kingdom to kingdom, calling and gathering together the inhabitants till he arrived in the land of Canaan. There, too, he proclaimed his message, as it is said, "And he called there on the name of the Lord, God of the Universe" (Gen. 21:33). When the people flocked to him and questioned him regarding his assertions, he would instruct each one according to his capacity till he had brought him to the way of truth, and thus thousands and tens of thousands joined him. These were the persons referred to in the phrase, "men of the house of Abraham." He implanted in their hearts this great doctrine, composed books on it, and taught it to Isaac, his son (Hyamson, Translation).

Abraham is the Maimonidian hero. It is important to notice the following aspects in Maimonides' treatment. Abraham initiates the movement towards God. Out of his own reflective process he is able to arrive at the truth of God's presence. The process does not grow from a reflection on history but rather from the nature of existence. Abraham's ability to think beyond his own experience is shown in the conflict between what he does and what he thinks. His thought process goes beyond his experiential process. The rational in man takes on a critical rather than justificatory function. The truth about God's existence doesn't leave Abraham with neutral information. The truth he finds forces Abraham to encounter his civilization. This theoretical truth has profound social and political implications. Just as he, Abraham, cannot remain neutral with his truth, so, too, his environment does not respond calmly to Abraham's vision. The centrality of this truth, its practical implications, is something Maimonides is very aware of.



It is essential to be aware that in Maimonides' treatment, Abraham cannot remain alone with his truth. The truth he knows must be communicated. His very encounter with God must be shared. Abraham's truth moves him to confront his civilization. Furthermore, Abraham can make his position intelligible and reasonable. He can appeal to the reasonable faculty in man. He can be understood. This is crucial to Maimonides' theological model.

How different is the Kirkegaardian model that is developed in his book *Fear and Trembling!*. To both Kirkegaard and Maimonides, Abraham is a lonely figure. Abraham, to Maimonides, faces a world alone. The Kirkegaardian Abraham is alone on the mountain with his son Isaac. However, this is the only similarity; as we reflect further, they part very radically. To Kirkegaard, the loneliness is a permanent feature; to Maimonides it is only a temporary aspect in the "faith experience."

To Maimonides, Abraham is lonely because he is opposed to his environment on the basis of his convictions. To Kirkegaard, Abraham is lonely because his very actions are totally incomprehensible. Abraham is the lonely man of faith who makes the infinite resignation, who lives in the paradox, whose very action and total commitment make it impossible for him to communicate what he feels. He can't even communicate to Isaac. The man of faith is alone in his infinite resignation. He is the single one. But to Maimonides it is not the existential act of faith that creates loneliness, it is rather the environmental ignorance that creates the loneliness of the man of faith. Faith by its very nature doesn't create the lonely figure; it is rather idolatry that makes the man of faith alone. Maimonides constructs his model out of the Midrashic Abraham. To Maimonides, Abraham is the philosopher in search of truth. Abraham is the philosophical iconoclast. The rational in Abraham finds its fullest realization in the knowledge of God.

Kirkegaard uses the *Akedah* as the central model of the man of faith. He who holds a knife to slaughter his son must remain alone. The loss of the rational reduces the faith experience to desperate loneliness.

Let us leave these two models and see how another model was constructed out of the covenant moment in Abraham's life and from his encounter with God on behalf of the people of Sodom.

Out of the covenant and Sodom, the emphasis is upon mutuality. Man confronts God, argues with God, and demands from him that he act not in a way that defeats his own principle of justice. Man wins out of this encounter that God will act not only by justice but equally as well by *chesed*.

Eric Fromm, in his book *You Shall Be As Gods* (Chapter 2), loves to choose this experience as the true indication of the break with authoritarian religion in Biblical experience. Here man comes of age. Man doesn't feel himself to be insignificant, worthless, helpless before the total authority figure of the God of the flood. He doesn't submit without a battle. He questions his God; his God must make sense to him. God is bound by his own principles; he cannot act arbitrarily. I am not concerned now with evaluating critically these different models in detail. I throw them out just for the sake of indicating how different moves are made and different emphases stressed as a result of focusing on specific events in the life of Abraham. To Maimonides and to the religious humanist tradition, the man of faith is not a lonely figure—it is not indigenous to the faith experience that he remain a single one, incomprehensible in his movements. On the contrary, the man of faith talks, the man of faith can communicate, the man of faith can reason, the man of faith can support his position, the man of faith acts within history, the man of faith is found on the battle ground for social justice.

On the contrary, as opposed to Kirkegaard, he is duty bound to do this if he genuinely encounters God.

There is an urgency to communicate as one reads the Maimonidian treatment of Abraham. Equally as well from the Frommian position, he must communicate, he must be concerned; God demands from him a love for man, a going out into the social. Must the *Akedah* model become the exclusive model of religious experience? If it does, then the man of faith must remain a lonely figure. "The single one" is incomprehensible, pushed on to a movement of action which he himself cannot understand and to the world he appears absurd, his actions meaningless and often unethical. The emphasis upon *chukkim* as the ultimate in religious commitment to the exclusion of *mishpatim* and *adot* indicates a preference for the *Akedah* model above all others. I don't believe that one is forced to select one exclusive model. I think we all function with many models and there are different moments in life when different models operate for the individual. There are times when faith consists of the "leap of the alone to the Alone," where our loneliness is essential, where our need to make ourselves understood to others is not crucial. At other times one must go out to history, go out to the social world, and protest against the injustices of the world. God then is in the marketplace and my own single "I" is grounded in the social "we." At other times, the commitment to God demands the iconoclastic posture of rejecting the false gods that pervade the culture: to communicate, to teach students, to inspire people, to be concerned about their indifference to Torah. It is important to realize that one cannot achieve wholeness with one faith model. The multiplicity and complexities of life demand the right to allow for variegated models of the God-encounter. Those who claim exclusiveness of model usually distort the richness of the whole faith experience and become indifferent and blind to many aspects of life that cannot fit their exclusive model.

Rashi was equally as well sensitive to the change in the faith posture of Abraham as a result of the covenant experience. Rashi remarks that before the covenant, before the *Brit Milah*, Abraham could not stand before the *Shekhinah*. When he encounters God, Abraham falls upon his face, Rashi writes, "because before he was circumcised he did not have the strength to stand on his feet because the Holy Spirit stood over him." A different Abraham emerges as a result of the covenant: an Abraham who is able, according to the Midrash, to say to



God, "please do not go, I must welcome some poor strangers who are standing outside my door," an Abraham whose intimacy with God enables him to speak as one does to a personal friend who would understand and not insist on social amenities. The Sodom encounter is only a continuation of this Midrashic theme. Covenant man does not experience God in a way that makes him feel insignificant, unworthy. The theme of mutuality, of the significance of human actions, of God's need for man, grows out of the covenant experience. I would like now to indicate how the covenant experience influences the way Abraham moves toward the stranger, toward the "other." As a result of the covenant, all men can feel of Abraham that he is their father. He can become their father if they share in his faith commitment and his destiny in history.

The *ger* (convert) is *maivi v'koreh*, the *ger* can say, "the God of my fathers." His kinship with Abraham is not born from blood but rather from sharing in the

(Continued on page five)

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

# The Problem Of Theodicy In The Book Of Psalms

by BEZALEL SAFRAN

The problem of theodicy has long preoccupied the minds of people. The following essay is an attempt to trace an aspect of the theodicy theme in the Book of Psalms.

The very first chapter in Psalms classifies two types of personalities: Tzadik, the righteous man, motivated by his faith in God, and Rasha; the evildoer.

Tzadik is depicted as an individual who shuns contact with the wicked ("hath not walked . . . nor stood . . . nor sat in the seat of the scornful").<sup>1</sup> He feels that in order to maintain his religious integrity, he must guard against internalizing the values of Rasha. This is the "negative" aspect of his personality; the positive is reflected through a desire to be absorbed in the study of God's Revealed Word.<sup>2</sup> The religious instinct in Tzadik is sated through learning Torah; his quest to find God is accomplished through a personal involvement with God's law.

The qualities of Rasha are not defined precisely in the first chapter. However, through the juxtaposition of Rasha and Tzadik, Rasha can be identified as one concerned primarily with the secular, whose world outlook is materialistic, and who is apathetic or insensitive to religious meaning.

These general attitudes are at the root of Rasha's behavior (described in Psalm 10). Rasha rejects the concept of God's intervention in human affairs: "God hath forgotten; he hideth his face; he will never see it."<sup>3</sup> He is a tyrant: "In the secret places doth he murder the innocent; he lies in wait to catch the poor."<sup>4</sup> He is the epitome of fraud and deceit: "Under his tongue is mischief and vanity."<sup>5</sup>

These two opposing human forces will ultimately resolve themselves through reward and punishment. When an objective judgment<sup>6</sup> will be pronounced upon Tzadik and Rasha, the personifications of good and evil, Tzadik will naturally bloom "like a tree . . . whose leaf doth not wither; and in whatever he doeth, he shall prosper."<sup>7</sup> Rasha, however, will dissipate "like the chaff which the wind driveth away."<sup>8</sup> It is evident that reward and punishment are not haphazard accidents, nor caprices of fate; they ensue as a direct consequence of man's deeds.

How, then, does Tzadik justify to himself the misfortune which befalls him? Often, he feels that his trials occur in order to atone for his infrequent transgressions: His unhappy lot is God's reminder that he, too, had temporarily deviated from the path leading towards the Divine.

A Psalm illustrative of this attitude is 107. Those who "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death"<sup>9</sup> were punished "because they rebelled against the word of God."<sup>10</sup> These men do not bemoan their fate; they know that their misfortunes are essentially a message from God, admonishing them to return. Realizing this, "they cried unto the Lord in their trouble."<sup>11</sup>

Their prayer is coupled with the realization that they have erred; it contains the element of repentance. Thus, the suffering which they have experienced purifies them. But the effect of the suffering is even more far-reaching.

## Abraham As A Theological Model

(Continued from page four)

destiny and mission of Abraham. A very profound negation of blood identity emerges out of the covenant. The covenant is not a tribalistic move. The particularistic aspect of the covenant is not a separation from universal man, a separation that can never be bridged, but rather a separation grounded in the conflict of value, in a conflict regarding one's ultimate concern. Those who share in a common vision, who participate in a common destiny, can experience a common brotherhood. Therefore, it is not paradoxical that in the very separatistic move of the covenant the possibility of a universal brotherhood of man emerges. The "other" becomes my potential brother as a result of the covenant. The covenant is a self-transcending experience. Your identity is no longer a biological one. You define yourself not on the basis of birth alone but above all on the basis of your standing in the presence of God, on the basis of your commitment.

Abraham's *hakhnasat orchim* grows out of his covenant. He moves toward the stranger, towards the "other" who stands outside of his tent, to people whom he doesn't know, to people he is in no way related through blood. He suffers pain at other people's hunger. His own ability to transcend his biological pain is made possible because his identity is now covenantal. One must not forget that in Sodom, Abraham is not only praying for the righteous, he is equally as well identified with the wicked, those

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."<sup>12</sup> The prayer (originally evoked by suffering) which links Tzadik to his Creator, motivates him to explore the possibility of a more intimate association with God and His Torah.

In which context does Tzadik view the bliss of Rasha? He is convinced that the success of Rasha is ephemeral. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flower; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever."<sup>13</sup> In his comment upon this verse, Rashi propounds the traditional explanation that the wicked are rewarded through their material success, for the measure of good which they do, only to be subject to unqualified perdition in the world to come.

This idealistic rationale for "reward and punishment," as valid as it may be objectively, could not stem emotional outbursts of disappointment on the part of Tzadik, at the sight of the topsy-turvy state of the world. The classic statement of disappointment appears in Ecclesiastes: "There is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness."<sup>14</sup> The reason for this statement and for more emotional parallels in the Book of Psalms is not difficult to discern.

The confines of the mind do not permit man to see the rationale of "reward and punishment" borne out in the daily experience. Tzadik, more often than not, perceives a discrepancy between the ideal and the actual states of the world. This discrepancy evokes heart-rending cries, for Tzadik, overwhelmed by his suffering, undergoes faith-shattering experiences.

Tzadik's balance is upset when "he saw the prosperity of the wicked."<sup>15</sup> He observes that Rasha "increases in riches,"<sup>16</sup> while Tzadik who "cleansed his heart"<sup>17</sup> is "plagued and chastened every morning."<sup>18</sup>

The anxiety of Tzadik manifests itself in a crisis of faith: "How does God know, and is there knowledge in the most High?"<sup>19</sup> How can God, Who is All-Good, permit such a situation to exist?

The Tzadik's dilemma assumes even greater dimensions. On the one hand, he attempts to critically analyze God's treatment of His Creation. On the other hand, he is apprehensive lest he be culpable for entertaining "heretical" notions: "If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children."<sup>20</sup> Tzadik experiences an emotionally trying period: The rebellious urge and the submissive inclination, the human instinct and the "divine spark," battle within his personality. The struggle reaches a climax when tormented Tzadik enters "the sanctuary of God."<sup>21</sup>

The serene, sacred aura permeating the chambers of the sanctuary, induces tormented Tzadik to ponder his plight calmly. His mind suddenly flashes with an insight: he recognizes that life is analogous to "a dream."<sup>22</sup> In the mind of the dreaming sleeper, nothing could be more real than the image which he perceives; in the mind of the living man, life is the ulti-

mate reality. However, man's conception of reality is limited, for man, at best, can view reality only in relation to himself.<sup>23</sup>

The immediate problem of Tzadik is resolved. He realizes that the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual is only apparent. How can one describe a painting as black or white, when the canvas is imaginary? Tzadik finds a meaningful reality possible, only in intimacy with God: "But it is good for me to draw near to God."<sup>24</sup> He is constantly motivated by his renewed faith: "I have set the Lord always before me."<sup>25</sup> However, the spiritual affinity with God which Tzadik experiences on earth is only a stepping stone towards the ultimate reality: Eternity. The tormented soul in the "sanctuary of God"<sup>26</sup> intuits that real existence transcends the relative, limited framework of this world, into the realm of the Infinite, Divine, and Absolute—into the world to come—where the human soul will find its redemption.

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For Tzadik, Eternity is the actualization of his most elevated spiritual aspirations. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."<sup>27</sup> The imperfect framework of this world precludes spiritual perfection, despite strenuous efforts by man. The perfection of Eternity will afford Tzadik an opportunity to fully experience God's glory. "In the world to come the saintly will recline, adorned with crowns, and experience the splendor of God."<sup>28</sup>

The "beatific bliss" of Eternity is exceedingly appealing to the tormented Tzadik, even here on earth. Again, however, there are indications of tension in his personality. The desire of Tzadik to live the physical life cannot be squelched. He recognizes that only while he exists physically can he realize, through his own efforts, his God-given potential. "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."<sup>29</sup>

The conflict raging in the depths of Tzadik's personality is reminiscent of an apparent contradiction between two statements in Ethics of the Fathers:<sup>30</sup>

"Rabbi Jacob said: This world is like a corridor before the world to come; prepare yourself in the corridor, so that you may enter the palace." The implication of this statement is that this life is to be viewed only as a stage preparatory to the ultimate life.

The very next statement (by the same Rabbi Jacob) is: "One hour spent in repentance and good deeds in this world is better than the whole life of the world to come." This statement indicates that a religiously elevated life in this transitory stage of existence far surpasses (qualitatively) the bliss of Eternity.

These two statements reflect restatements of the tension between the opposite inclinations in the Tzadik's personality. These two opposites are not reconciled; in order to alleviate the resultant conflict, a balance must be struck between them.

Psalm 16 (in which the commentators sense intimations on spiritual immortality) is concluded by Tzadik with a request: "Thou shalt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."<sup>31</sup> Tzadik craves for Eternity, but desires the physical life as well. He asks God to show him a "path of life" which he will follow, able to maintain an equilibrium of the warring forces within him.

1. Psalms 1:1. 2. Psalms 1:2. 3. Psalms 10:11. 4. Psalms 10:8. 5. Psalms 10:7. 6. Psalms 1:5. 7. Psalms 1:3. 8. Psalms 1:4. 9. Psalms 107:10. 10. Psalms 107:11. 11. Psalms 107:13. 12. Psalms 119:71. 13. Psalms 92:8. 14. Ecclesiastes 7:15. 15. Psalms 73:3. 16. Psalms 73:12. 17. Psalms 73:13. 18. Psalms 73:14. 19. Psalms 73:11, check Malbim. 20. Psalms 73:15. 21. Psalms 73:17. 22. Psalms 73:19, check Malbim. 23. Ibid. 24. Psalms 73:28. 25. Psalms 16:8. 26. Psalms 73:17, check Malbim. 27. Psalms 17:15. 28. Berakhot 17a. 29. Psalms 115:17. 30. Ethics of the Fathers, Ch. 4:21-22. 31. Psalms 16:11.



# The Limits Of Intellectual Honesty

by ARTHUR LEVENGLICK

Maimonides, in the second chapter of *Hilkhot Avodat Kohanim* (the third *halakha*), writes of "any thought that causes one to uproot one of the foundations of Judaism," that "we are admonished against considering (such thoughts) even for a moment, nor may we seriously advocate arguments against our theology, or think independently and follow our own ideas." The Torah forbids us all of these adventures, for fear that, because man's mind is limited and in many cases cannot approach a clear understanding of the truth through its own efforts, independent individual thinking could have drastic consequences. Such intellectual pursuits fall under the category of a "lav."

At first sight, the Torah appears to have exceeded its logical bounds through this command, in reference to both the committed and the non-committed. We could, after all, argue that the authority of the Torah derives only from its acceptance by the committed. Had the religious man not accepted the Torah, it would have no logical basis for legislating his behavior. Had the religious Jew accepted a different discipline, then he would in no way feel obligated to observe the Torah, nor should the Torah expect to dictate a code of behavior for him. The Torah thus appears to deny him the very choice which invested it with authority.

Besides this problem, the Torah seems to have further overstepped itself in the case of the non-committed Jew. What possible force could a prohibition against considering other religions have to a man who denies the right of the Torah to command him? Worse still, the Torah might easily find itself destroying any chances of its adoption by the non-committed. For example, a man contemplating religions might argue that the Torah outlaws intellectual honesty; therefore, in conformity with his espousal of intellectual honesty, he will reject such a system at once. He could further bolster his case by pointing out that without intellectual honesty, he could never arrive at acceptance of the Torah. Thus the Torah supports a position which can only be self-defeating.

Or so it would seem. Actually, the question of intellectual honesty is but incidental to Judaism. The Torah, interested only in advancing its own code of laws, has use for independent thought only when such thought could possibly enhance its position. And the Torah has a right to take such a relative position on the issue, because it does not depend at all upon the acceptance of man for its authority to command.

## LETTERS

(Continued from page two)

To the Editor:

On Sunday morning, October 27, a television program appeared, ostensibly to honor Dr. Belkin on the 25th Anniversary of his accession to the Presidency of Yeshiva University. Appearing on this program were three distinguished representatives of the administration and trustees.

One wonders what these gentlemen were trying to accomplish. They praised Dr. Belkin to the skies, and deservedly so. However, if they intended to impress the viewer with the unique nature of Dr. Belkin's accomplishments, they failed miserably. They talked ceaselessly about the Medical School and how it was serving "the world." (One speaker even noted that we may soon have to serve other planets as well.) They mentioned all of the famous people who admire Dr. Belkin (e.g. "Rockefeller would do anything Dr. Belkin wants"). The Belfer Graduate School was also mentioned. If the viewer concentrated very carefully he might have caught a reference to an "undergraduate college."

No one spoke of the Yeshiva itself. The only Jewish element visible was Dr. Emanuel Rackman's skullcap. At the end of the program, one of the guests asserted that he could talk on and on of Dr. Belkin's greatness, and was ready to do so "over some whiskey." For the first time, I was ashamed to be associated with YU.

I am not criticizing the program because of an obscurantist prejudice against the secular schools of the University. From a strictly public relations point of view, the show was a fiasco. Any institution can found a medical school or a graduate school of science. If Yeshiva wants to impress the general community, it should play up its uniqueness—the interplay (or co-existence, if you will) of traditional Jewish scholarship and secular learning. Or could it be that we no longer stand for such an approach? If so, the situation is grave. As one astute observer put it, YU is becoming another Harvard, except that the latter has a better theological school.

A CONCERNED STUDENT

The Torah claims to be the representative document of objective truth. Since only God is capable of knowing everything and knowing it objectively, only He can create a system of laws dealing with this objective truth, and combining it with the world of subjectivity. The Torah, which embodies this system of laws, represents a perfect and true bond between the two worlds. By observing the Torah, man can relate the two worlds; he can surpass his natural limits through a code set up to direct him in an objective world beyond his knowledge.

Indeed, any illogicality involved lies on the part of the man who presumes that he knows enough to construct his own code. He cannot deny that his understanding of the world about him remains, by nature subjective; yet he insists on determining his own relation to it. The Torah certainly has more right to legislate a code of laws than does man, for even if the Torah's veracity be subject to question, at least it could logically claim to present an objective ethical and legal code, while man never could.

As for other religious codes, which apparently have the same claim to objectivity, the Torah, by insisting on being the only representative of the truth, need not worry about challenges in this sphere. Once its authority to legislate is understood to stem from God and not man, it can legislate for man, regardless of any counter-claims he may posit against it from any outside discipline.

Now, if the purpose of the Torah is to show man how to relate to God and the objective world outside him, it can afford to waste no time and take no chances in achieving its goals. God composed and

presented the Torah with the express desire that it serve as a guide; once its authority becomes subject to doubt, the entire relation which it describes would be endangered. If man had the right to doubt the Torah, to question its right to guide, he would be left guideless, at least as far as Judaism is concerned, in his need to relate to the world about him. It is these dire possibilities that the Torah seeks to prevent when, according to Maimonides, it outlaws independent thought which may lead to a denial of the authority of the Torah.

As to the question of how the Torah could expect the non-committed to adhere to such an injunction against intellectual freedom, we could ask this question in regard to anything which the Torah commands. How does the Torah expect the non-committed to live in a *sukkah* or say *kriat shema*?—yet it does. Nonetheless, we must conclude that one's acceptance or rejection of the Torah's right to legislate morality in no way impairs this right. Whether the non-committed will be punished for his refusal to keep the *mitzvot* remains another problem, one which need not concern us now. Nor does the Torah have to worry about the reaction on the part of the non-religious towards its negation of independent thought, for the Torah never does negate this idea. Instead, it regulates and limits such freedom to those instances when it can be of use in advancing the purposes of the Torah. We could not expect anything else.

The limits of intellectual honesty serve to insure that the aims and goals of the Torah not be endangered. Why should the Torah not be entitled to its own defense? Especially when, objectively, the defense defends only the attacker?

As I See It

## The Jew, Israel, And Destiny

by MICHAEL SHMIDMAN



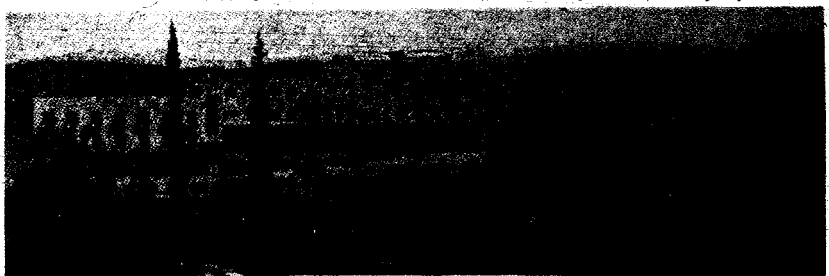
"Vanity of vanities, saith Kohelet, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Kohelet, 1,2).

In one immortal declaration—echoed by many a modern philosopher—the wisest of kings sagely underscored the futility of the effort and ambition of man. Unlike certain philosophers, however, King Solomon understood that there are some goals, in Judaism, for which it is well worth striving. "The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man" (Kohelet 12, 13—Soncino translation).

Thus, there is meaning to be found, on the individual level, in the religious experience, the all-encompassing intellectual and emotional encounter between man and his Creator. In this encounter, man preoccupies himself

thusiastically; instead, he appears to be imprisoned in a world of personal vanities. Specifically, the American Jew has remained—voluntarily—in Galut.

By refusing to act upon the necessity of *aliyah* to Israel, the American Jew fails in achieving, both the individual and national aims. On the national level, a mass influx of settlers to Israel is a necessary step in the redemptive process; the Jewish people must return to its Divine heritage to realize its Divine destiny. And on the individual level, can a Jew consider his religious experience complete without the opportunity to fulfill the *mitzvot* that are dependent upon being in the land? Can a person acquire and preserve a personal sanctity more readily in Washington Heights or Boro Park than he can in Jerusalem, the holy city from which



Ponovitcher Yeshiva in Bnei Brak

with Torah and *mitzvot*, and, through an eventual knowledge of God, ultimately attains the highest plane of existence—"and to Him shalt thou cleave" (Deut. 10, 20).

Meaning is to be discovered, too, on a national level, through the linking of individuals and their particular faith experiences in the formation of the faith community, with the ultimate aim of living together before God in the Messianic era, the age of Redemption when the Messiah is destined to arise and restore the Davidic dynasty to its former glory and dominion... (Maimonides, Code, Melakhim 11, 1).

It would appear likely, therefore, that an intelligent, concerned Jew, faced with the universal problem of purpose, would do everything in his power to achieve these most meaningful of goals. And yet, incredibly, the American Jew has done just the reverse. He has, indeed, forsaken the path to these ambitions, though he continues to preach them en-

sanctity has never departed (Maimonides, Code, *Beit Haba'arah* 6,16), and where he may live among his own people, surrounded by reminders of his nation's past history and future destiny?

It is a source of constant amazement to me that one who realizes the necessity for *aliyah* can solemnly proclaim "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem," and come no closer to Israel than Kennedy Airport. I wonder how many discerned this depressing aspect in one of American Jewry's greatest annual events—Simchat Torah in Boro Park. The throngs of people—young and old—singing and dancing in the shuls and streets, were enough to gladden any Jewish heart; that is, until it is remembered that those who exclaim "Next year in Jerusalem" most fervently are the ones who uttered the very same words last year and the year before; and also the ones who will shout it next year—in Boro Park, not in Israel. The state of *simchah* and *bedushah* that could exist were

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Literary Editor

# The Commandment Of Auschwitz



by ABE KINSTLINGER

Twenty-three years after the European holocaust, Emil Fackenheim wrote, "If in May, 1967 the Christian community did not cry out against a second Auschwitz, it was not because of its indifference to the words emanating from Cairo and Damascus, but rather because it did not hear them. It failed to recognize the danger of a second Holocaust because it has yet to recognize the fact of the first." (*Commentary*; August 1968) Before we begin to assimilate the shocking truth of this statement, we must first accept our complicity in making it true. For too long we have been unwilling to face our past; and if we have found Christians insensitive to the holocaust which threatened to destroy us in the Spring of 1967, then we are also to blame for not articulating a response to the one which did destroy us in the nineteen-forties.



For with typical modern glibness, we have endeavored to supply purposefully facile answers to the questions of our past, answers which have more often skirted the issues than confronted them. Too many of us have accepted with blind faith the epic myth of death and regeneration and applied it to twentieth century Jewish history. Such a view accepts the rather unfortunate European debacle as a necessary prerequisite to the establishment of the State of Israel, and the almost apocalyptic victory over our enemies in the Six Day War as a signal that, once again, God's in His heaven and all's relatively right with the world. Not quite. For the indescribable sufferings of millions of innocent victims, while forever inexplicable, does in itself have a spiritual and existential significance which is too ominous to be shunted aside by apologetic platitudes. But before we can apprehend the significance of the Holocaust, we must first recognize its uniqueness: that it stands alone as a crime *sui generis* in the history of mankind. We must resolutely repudiate such odious comparisons as Hiroshima, Leningrad or Dresden, which liberals have tried to foist upon us, because as the calculated consequences of specific military objectives they are irrelevant in the face of the systematic, irrational, and brutal slaughter of the Jews. As Fackenheim puts it, "Where else and at what other time have executioners ever separated those to be murdered now from those to be murdered to the strain of Viennese waltzes? Where else has human skin ever been made into lampshades, and human body-fat into soap—not by isolated pervers but under the direction of ordinary bureaucrats. Auschwitz is a unique descent into hell. It is an unprecedented celebration of evil: It is evil for evil's sake."

**We must face the most traumatic experience of the Diaspora in all its grisly horror, not objectively, not**

**antisepitically, but rather with every shred of human compassion that we possess. And we must come away from this confrontation with an awe for the dead, and not mefely with a firm, but a visceral commitment to the moral imperative which is the legacy of Auschwitz.**

The first step toward recognition of this moral imperative is voiced in the Hassidic Rebbe's anguished cry in Elie Wiesel's *The Gates of the Forest*.

The man who goes singing to death is the brother of the man who goes to death fighting. A song on the lips is worth a dagger in the hand. I take this song and make it mine. Do you know what the song hides? A dagger, an outcry. Appearances have a depth of their own which has nothing to do with the depth. When you come to our celebrations you'll see how we dance and sing and rejoice. There is joy as well as fury in the hassid's dancing. It's his way of proclaiming, "You don't want me to dance; too bad, I'll dance anyhow. You've taken away every reason for singing, but I shall sing. I shall sing of the deceit that walks by day and the truth that walks by night, yes, and of the silence of dusk as well. You didn't expect my joy, but here it is; yes, my joy will rise up; it will submerge you.

This is a first step precisely because it is so endemic to the Jewish soul; the rejection of nothingness in the face of nothingness, the dogged assertion of moral order in the face of chaos, the sanctification of life even in the maw of death. The Rebbe, by virtue of his commitment to joy, has opted for life.

**The commandment which arose from the human rubble of the crematoria gave a new dimension to Israel's role as a "light among the nations," for "the Jew after Auschwitz," writes Fackenheim, "has a second shema yisrael, no second Auschwitz, no second Bergen-Belsen, no second Buchenwald anywhere in the world, for anyone in the world." Once in history, Israel saved man from worshipping his handiwork; now we must save him from worshipping himself. Once, the gemon to be excoriated was the diabolical divinity of nature; today it is the diabolical divinity of technology.**

The horror of genocide numbs the imagination, and yet it is a painful fact of life in the twentieth century. In light of what is now happening in Biafra, and indeed, what can happen anywhere in the world, Hannah Arendt's words in 1959 were chillingly prophetic.

It is in the very nature of things human that every act that has once made its appearance and has been recorded in the history of mankind stays with mankind as a potentiality long after its actuality has become a thing of the past. No punishment has ever possessed enough power of deterrence to prevent the commission of crimes. On the contrary, whatever the punishment, once a specific crime has appeared for the first time, its reappearance is more likely than its initial emergence could ever have been. The particular reasons that speak for the possibility of a repetition of the crimes committed by the Nazis are even more plausible. The frightening coincidence of the modern population explosion with the discovery of technical devices that, through automation, will make large sections of

the population "superfluous" even in terms of labor, and that, through nuclear energy, make it possible to deal with this twofold threat by the use of instruments beside which Hitler's gassing installations look like an evil child's fumbling toys, should be enough to make us tremble. (*Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Viking Press, p. 198)

Here is where the commandment of Auschwitz bears upon every Jew. Indeed, it has seared its message into the collective soul of the Jewish people. And Fackenheim tries to formulate its essence.

Jews are forbidden to grant posthumous victories to Hitler. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of Auschwitz, lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish.



The Holocaust, then, should not be viewed as an unfortunate prelude to the establishment of Israel; but rather Israel should be viewed as a necessary consequence of the Holocaust. Israel is symbolic not of the world's pity, but of the resolution of a broken but determined people not to grant posthumous victory to Hitler. The Six Day War can be seen as the super-human effort of the Jewish people to reverse the trend of history, and again "to deny Hitler a posthumous victory." (The phrase is far from figurative. The words that flowed so maliciously from Cairo were very probably written by the same men who, twenty-five years earlier, had broadcast them from Berlin.)

**But there are other ways of denying Hitler a posthumous victory, and regrettably many of us have failed in that denial. Whenever a Jew decides not to attend the yearly memorial service for the Six Million and the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, he is tacitly acknowledging victory to the forces of Hitler. (After all, was not the whole point to wipe out even the memory of the murdered Jews?) Just as we were and are witnesses to the world of God's revelation on Mount Sinai, so must we now also be witnesses to the barbarity of man, serving, not to chronicle a gruesome past, but rather to preserve a tenuous future.**

The events in May and June of 1967 have taught us just how great is the task which lies before us and how awesome the responsibility. The greatness of the task was borne out by the profound silence of the Christian community in the wake of an impending second Holocaust; the awesomeness of the responsibility lies in the dire consequences of our failure.

## Affluence of Galut And Hardships of Aliyah Do Not Negate Mitzvah

(Continued from page six)

All those present in Boro Park on Simchat Torah to join with Israelis in a mammoth Yom Tov celebration in Jerusalem, challenges the imagination.

At this point, it seems superfluous to explore in detail the halakic and Midrashic literature stressing the imperative of *aliyah*. It is vital, however, that every Jew realize that settlement is, according to Nachmanides (Numbers 33, 53), a commandment of the Torah, and that all be aware of the attitude of Chazal towards this precept, as expressed in the Talmud (*Ketubot*, 110b) and in numerous Midrashim emphasizing the privilege of living in Israel as opposed to the disgrace of life in Galut (*Midreshai Eretz Yisrael*, Rabbi Yosef Zohavi, editor).

Historical evidence also implies the necessity of *aliyah*. Ever since the tribes of Reuven, Gad and half of the tribe of Menasheh settled on the eastern side of

the Jordan, the Jewish people has consistently maintained a self-imposed exile whenever an externally imposed exile has been temporarily lifted. Like those tribes, the aristocratic Jews of Babylon in the time of Ezra cherished material wealth too much to forsake it for the land of Israel. Their failure to return en masse to Israel is, according to Judah Halevi, "the sin which kept the divine promise with regard to the Second Temple, viz.; Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion (Zech. 2, 10), from being fulfilled" (*Kusari*, Part 2, 24).

More recently, the Jew has been faced with the tragedy of the Holocaust. In partial explanation of the Holocaust, the theory has been advanced that the great tragedy was necessary for the eventual establishment and settlement of Israel. If this is indeed the case, then western Jewry has missed a rather conspicuous hint. Current political turbulence in America (extreme right clashing with the new left with the probable result of a backlash on some minority group) might become an unfortunate — but

necessary — second hint.

There are, of course, intangible factors involved in love for Israel that should encourage *aliyah*. The feeling when standing upon Mount Scopus and looking out upon Jerusalem, or when praying before the Kotel, must be experienced to be appreciated.

Be it for tangible or intangible reasons or both, however, any rationalization for remaining in Galut must fall before the necessity for *aliyah*. Academic degrees, jobs and careers can be had in Israel, if one will only persist in spite of difficulties. It is in Israel that the primary obligation to strengthen the religious community lies, for there lies our destiny. It is heartening to note, that among religious youth (and this is evident at YU), there is an increasing identification with Israel as well as an increasing desire to eventually settle there. Perhaps we will yet be the fortunate generation that is privileged to witness a return to Jerusalem, and the dawn of redemption.

# The Environmental Element In Jewish Education

by ELIYAHU SAFRAN

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Eliyahu Sefran is President of the Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY).*

Conversing with the young generation, hearing of their fate, and reading of the growing assimilation within the Jewish camp, one reaches the conclusion that every serious educator and every Jew must evaluate anew and measure with a refined yardstick our way of educating our youth. Where have we failed, and what is there to improve? What were our goals, and where must we reach today?

In the Torah we find a command to every father to educate his sons: "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children," and it is this obligation that brought urgency to every head of a Jewish household to continue the *mesorah*, and to guarantee the existence of our nation and heritage. Throughout generations, fathers and sons learned and taught, and made the Torah and its commandments an integral part of their lives. Thus, not only prodigies and scholars were produced, but a nation that wants and seeks the word of God.



H. Katz

Economic, social, and environmental conditions did not, however, permit the father to continue in his role as "melamed" and educator. The grave responsibility of educating the young was transferred to those able to devote their full time and energy to teach and mold new young Jewish lives.

Our great educators searched for easy, systematic, orderly means of teaching the Torah. They yearned for a "shirah" acceptable to the student. Thus, the Mishnah and Talmud were set down in sections, parts, and *mesikhtot*. Reb Shimon Kara, Reb Aaron Halevi, Reb Moshe Mikutzi, and Reb Yitzchok Mikurvil—everyone in his own method arranged the *mitzvat* of the Torah in an orderly manner. The Rambam and Reb Yosef Kara set down the pattern of Jewish law and life in a system easy to find and study. The Ramah and later *acharonim* aided us with their explanations and annotations. Since the appearance of the Shulchan Arukh, we have received a Chayei Adam and a Kitzur, so that every Jew, rich or poor, wise or simpleton, Yeshiva student or businessman, will be able to adhere to Torah and *mitzvat*.

"Generations were educated on the basis of the *mitzvat*. The roots of the *mitzvat* molded the realization of religious existence. The *mitzvat* were a shield, protecting the Jew from the outside influence, and at the same time united the nation under one dome." (Dr. Joseph Sefran, "Chinukh L'Mitzvat Bitfutzo Yisroel," Kohelet Volume, New York, 1966) In my opinion, there is no more basic study in our day than the study of *mitzvat*.

To our regret, the majority of American Jewish youth have never put on *tefillin* nor picked up a *lulav*, never have they heard the call of the *shofar*, nor have they ceased to work on Shabbat. Let us not come to the defense and proclaim that this is true only of out of town communities, but that we here in New York can breathe with more ease because of the many Talmudei Torah that we have, in addition to our yeshivot. We, too, must shamefully admit that few of our Talmud Torah graduates have ever tasted the flavor of genuine Judaism in any greater measure than their friends who remained at home, and therefore they assimilate.

If this is the true picture, then it is our obligation to reevaluate. What is lacking, and what is the ingredient to be added? How can we take our rich Torah and its genuine *mesorah*, and present it to our youth? How are we to serve the Rambam and the Mehaber, the Chofetz Chaim and Chayei Adam, to a materialistic society, rebelling and turning away from spiritual and ethical values? How are we to arrive at the day when we will see our youth observing Torah and *mitzvat*? Furthermore, it is our duty to reassess the present Talmud Torah programs, and ask

ourselves: Is this adequate spiritual maintenance, or is it barely enough to survive? Is four or five hours of the study of Jewish history and Hebrew language spiritual sustenance for a twelve-year old? And even if he studies a few verses of Chumash a week, what does it mean to the student? Do the heads of the Talmudei Torah actually hope to establish a new generation of Jews with their limited programs? Let us take a look a little further—What about Bar Mitzvah preparation? Why is so much valuable time dedicated to prepare the boys for a Bar Mitzvah performance? Why shouldn't this time be used for actual study of the *mitzvat* of the Bar Mitzvah boy must fulfill upon maturity? Furthermore, wherefrom the custom to award a Talmud Torah Bar Mitzvah boy a diploma? A diploma? For what? He hasn't yet started!

This critical situation places a serious obligation upon every Jew, and in particular on the educators responsible for our nation's future, to discuss the situation with earnestness. Of course, the ideal situation would be to encourage and provide for the masses to attend yeshivot and be educated, as all Jewish generations were, through thorough study of Talmud and Poskim. But, unfortunately, the day has not yet arrived for this kind of event. And until it does—what's in between?

The solution, in my eyes, lies in a program geared toward the study of *mitzvat* and their practical application. In previous generations every child lived in an environment of *mitzvat*. When yet in his tender years he was taught "Torah tzivah lanu Mosheh. . . ." When words were on his lips he already became familiarized with Siddur, with Chumash. Every day he saw his elders enwrapped in *talit*, adorned with *tefillin*. The child heard the voice of Torah, the melody of Kiddush and Havdalah. Passover was his chance to help with matzah baking, Sukkot with *sukkah* building. Boys participated in weddings, in funerals, and they even knew they were permitted to recite the Haftarah. Thus, the *mesorah* was passed from father to son, from generation to generation, and the flame of Yiddishkeit always was alive. Today, as is well known, the situation is very different.

If the program of study will be based on the theme of *mitzvat*, their meaning and application, there is hope that these boys will continue in the path of Torah. Instead of merely teaching about the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and describing them in beautiful terms—let us start with a program of prayer, which they instituted. Explain the meaning of communication with the Creator, of praise and pleading. In a period of a few months translate

J.S.S. President

## J.S.S. Comes Of Age

by ROBERT SACKNOVITZ

In the life of a young Jewish boy, there is no more significant occasion than his Bar Mitzvah, the ceremony which marks his manhood in the eyes of the Jewish religion. This year, J.S.S. is also celebrating its Bar Mitzvah. During its thirteen years of existence, J.S.S. has progressed from a small division of the University to a very successful school in its own right. No longer is our school derided as being merely a "Jewish Sports Program" (formerly, J.S.S. was known as J.S.P.); rather, it is now a respected member of the Yeshiva University community.

This year, the J.S.S. Student Council is planning several programs which are designed to meet the special needs of its student body. One such program is the J.S.S. Minyan. J.S.S. boys will be given the opportunity of leading the service. This will allow them to develop the skills needed to "daven from the *amud*." An important feature of this Minyan will be the explanation of the various *tefillot* by a J.S.S. Rabbi. Students will, as a result, gain a greater knowledge of the meaning of the daily prayers. Beginning on November 16, the Council will be sponsoring J.S.S. Shabbatons. Special weekend programs will be set up during the year through which students will be able to experience a real Shabbat atmosphere at various synagogues throughout the New York City area. Among the features of these Shabbatons will be discussions dealing with topics of Jewish interest; Hebrew singing and dancing, and the opportunity of meeting Jewish families in these several different communities.

Furthermore, a lecture series is being planned which will include speakers, both from J.S.S. and other divisions, who will speak on topics of Hashkafah and other pressing problems faced by both the students and the total Jewish community. Rabbi Besdin will be the first speaker

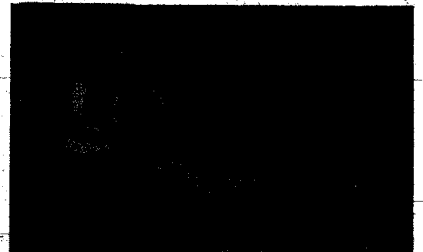
the major prayers, and obligate the students to attend services as part of the school curriculum. When speaking of *kedushah*, there are no better proofs than spending a Shabbat at the teacher's home, tasting Kiddush, participating in *zemir*. Where else should they see the cessation of labor, the forbiddance of thirty-nine categories of works, which they should study, in class, if not at the Rebbe's house? What is more befitting after discussion of Jewish marriage—the concept of *kiddushin* than actually observing a Jewish marriage? While there, and at the meal, the application of *berakhot* is certainly appropriate. All the illustrations, paintings and stories will not affect a child as the taking of *daled minim* in his own hand, the eating of matzah in his own mouth. Certainly, the pondering over the High Holidays is essential, but how impressed the student will be in the learning of the laws of blowing the *shofar*! And if he himself could do it—he too will tremble. Upon Bar Mitzvah it is our obligation to instruct the pupils in the wearing of *tefillin*. But, how impressed they'll be when taken to a *sofer*, and let them realize how different is the writing of *tefillin* *lishmah* than a popular pocketbook! Who is to show them our way of life if not their educators? At home they do not hear nor see Torah and *mitzvat*, and never will they if we don't lead them in their few years in Talmud Torah. *Tzedakah*, *Chessed*, and *Midot* must become part of their characters and personalities while they are with us.

If this is our purpose, why should we not use the English language, and aid ourselves with English translations and texts, as much as possible? Certainly, the Hebrew language is vital and important, but should we sacrifice precious days and months, until they comprehend our original sources? If we use translations and English texts, and after a year or two of training in *mitzvat*, we can then introduce them to our original sources, and get them used to real "learning." Translations of basic Jewish philosophy works, of Ein Yaakov, or of the Prophets, can certainly serve as an asset in the programs. Even translated works of traditional Hebrew writers such as Agnon can serve as models to our youth of the beauty of genuine Jewish life. Yes, it is an "Et la'sot," and we are obliged to use every possible method to save our nation from spiritual destruction.

My sole purpose in writing the above has been to open a crack in the gates of Jewish education. Let our great educators enter, devise and plan programs and techniques, methods and materials, to put the thoughts to real use and practice.

in this series. Requests by students for topics to be discussed are most welcome.

J.S.S. Council is also actively seeking closer ties with the Administration. At present, there is a student-faculty



J.S.S. Council Meeting

H. Fried

committee composed of five J.S.S. students and five Rabbis. Its purpose is to discuss the problems faced by the students and to recommend changes or additions in the curriculum which are designed to better educate and meet the singular needs of the student body.

This year, J.S.S. has come of age. If it is to continue to grow and to improve, I ask all of you to take an active interest in your student government. I urge you to bring your problems and complaints either to me or to your class representative, whether they deal with the classroom or the programs of the Council. The J.S.S. Student Council was created with the express purpose of serving the needs of you, the students; only through your concern, interest, and participation can your student government carry out this function.