

# HAMEVASER

Official Student Publication of RIETS and JSS

Volume VIII

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK, APRIL 1970

Number 6

## JSS Presents Resolutions To Dr. Belkin: Catalog Criticized

by DANIEL GANTELL

Meeting in Rubin Shul on Thursday, April 2, 1970, the James Striar School Student Council voted unanimously to have the new JSS catalogue withheld from distribution. The catalogue, among other things, lists various YC faculty members as instructors in JSS, and describes such courses as Vertebrate Biology and Childhood Development as JSS courses. Students had expressed a severe negative reaction to the catalogue at a meeting March 30.

A further source of irritation to students was the apparent phasing-out of the Associate in Arts degree, hitherto given all qualifying JSS students. Prof. Silverman, however, in a letter to JSSSC President Robert Sacknovitz, insisted that the offending paragraph had been printed erroneously.

Mr. Sacknovitz read a letter from Rabbi Israel Miller, Assistant to the President for Student Affairs, stating that the controversial "Form P2.1" (setting forth the double program requirement) had indeed been sent to Albany, and that if the students would agree to drop the A.A., a JSS catalogue would either be unnecessary or would not have to include YC faculty. (When questioned on both these matters Monday night, Rabbi Miller said he did not know the answers.)

Student reaction characterized the latter proposal as "extremely unfair, to put it mildly." It was noted that students could hardly be expected to give up a degree in return for the administration's retraction of a "mistake."

A resolution asking for a student-faculty-administration committee to investigate possible separation of JSS from YU, (to enable its religious character to be maintained) was also passed, but fears were expressed that the separation of the religious divisions could wreck the character of the University.

Students, said Mr. Sacknovitz, have a right to know the legal status of the school; at present they do not know what is going on. It was mentioned also that there is no proof that Federal aid to YU is contingent on non-sectarian status; many sectarian (Catholic) institutions receive U.S. aid for "non-sectarian purposes," and after all, it was Federal Funds that in large measure built the Gottesman Library and the Belfer building. The current controversy, of course, arose only in connection

with the "Bundy" money, which is state funds. There was also much criticism of YU's Public Relations Department and of the legal counsel.

The Council passed further resolutions calling for Student-Faculty-Administration Committees to investigate the problem of the A.A. and to review all University publications that might affect the public image of JSS vis-a-vis the Jewish Community. Finally, the Council called for the formation of committees of lawyers and CPA's (composed of YU alumni) to conduct an impartial investigation of the school's financial needs and its legal posture.

Declaring "Our goal is to maintain the religious standards of the school," President Sacknovitz emphasized that none of the above resolutions would adversely affect YU's posture in Albany or elsewhere if carried out. In answer to concern that the JSS catalogue would be distributed "by mistake," he stated that the catalogue "had a hold" on it, although it had already been sent to Albany.

The Council voted unanimously that a letter be sent Dr. Belkin, urging his agreement to the resolutions, and indicating respectfully but firmly that in the event of rejection further action would be considered.

Thursday's meeting was preceded by an open JSS meeting on March 30, at which time Mr. Sacknovitz and Rabbi Besdin addressed the students. Mr. Sacknovitz expressed the complaints and fears of the students in regard to the current tendency towards "secularization" of Yeshiva. Rabbi Besdin replied that certain changes were necessary due to financial reasons, and that the essence of Yeshiva is still being preserved. He suggested that we examine our internal problems before worrying overly about external images. Questions and criticisms from students followed the addresses.

**YESHIVA NEEDS YOUR HELP...**

**SUPPORT THE CONCERNED STUDENTS' COALITION**

**Rav Speaks Out—See page 2**

Elections for the Executive Councils of SOY and JSS were held Thursday, April 9.

Heshie Billet ran unopposed for the office of President of SOY, and won easily over the nearest write-in candidate. The races for the other positions were closer, with Joet Yarmak and Walter Maybruch elected Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively.

In the JSS election, Bob Miller narrowly defeated Alan Singer for the office of President, while Marvin Metzger and Brian Frohlinger won the positions of Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer.

Full details on the views and plans of the newly-elected officers will appear in the next issue.

## Lesson of The Four Sons; SSSJ Plans Exodus March

by EDWARD LEVIN

For the son who does not know how to ask, you begin for him...

Three million Soviet Jews are "kept by force in the USSR and threatened with destruction." (D.S. Drabkin, a Moscow Jew). They "are denied the possibility of learning their own language... because, unlike other peoples living in the USSR, the Jewish

... "What is this Exodus March to you? Why do tens of thousands of Jews have to spend three whole hours of their time? Isn't it enough to be concerned about Soviet Jews?"

The Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry had initially proposed a budget of \$30,000 for the Exodus March. This figure was slashed to \$18,000 when the



people is subjected to cruel discrimination... everything Jewish, in short, is silenced." (Mrs. V.I. Klazimer, V.I. Borukhovich, B. Shlein, three Moscow Jews).

But the Jews of Russia refuse to be silenced. They write open letters; demanding the right to emigrate to Israel, the land of their fathers. They dance on *Simchat Torah*, in Moscow and in Leningrad, in front of the barricaded shul. They tell American Jews: "Shum! Shum! ('Noise! Noise!')." They tell their government: "Let My People Go!" (the title of a Jewish resistance song smuggled from Russia).

What does the simple son say? "What is this?" You must tell him...

You must tell him that American Jewry cannot be silent, that these thousands of Jews marching past the Soviet mission to the U.N. remember that they were slaves to another Pharaoh, and that their brothers are slaves to the new Pharaoh...

What does the wicked son say? "What is this service to you?" "To you"—and not to him. Because he has separated himself from the community, he denies the basis of Judaism... Therefore, say to him, "This is because of what God did for me when I left Egypt." "For me"—and not for him. If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed.

(He asks) concerning all aspects of the mitzvot of Pesach to remember the Exodus from Egypt—"Why is this service and this extra trouble with which we are burdened necessary on this holiday? Isn't it sufficient to write to remember that this day we went out of Egypt?"... by this it is indicated to him that if he had been there, he would not have been redeemed" (Piyush Ha Malbin)...

American Jewish community showed itself to be totally unresponsive to the plight of Soviet Jewry, as usual, \$6,000 had been pledged by the first week in April; only \$500 had actually been raised. "But, what torments me most is not the Jews of silence I met in Russia, but the silence of the Jews I live among today. (Elie Wiesel, *The Jews of Silence*).

What does the wise son say? "What are the decrees, statutes, and laws which the Lord our God commanded you?"

Yasha Kazakov is a Russian Jew. He first became aware of the existence of Israel during the Six-Day War. He wanted to get to Israel. He made noise. The Russians told him to leave their country—they don't like troublemakers. Yasha is also a son. His parents are still in the Soviet Union. Yasha knows silence doesn't work. So he made more noise. For nine days, from March 25 until April 2, Yasha staged a hunger strike in front of the U.N. Yasha received no Jewish education in the Soviet Union. But, as Chief Rabbi Yitzchok Nissim said, he fully observed the mitzvah of *Kibud Av V'Aim*.

WHICH SON SHALL WE BE?

**EXODUS MARCH**  
For Soviet Jewry  
SUNDAY, APRIL 26th

Assemble:

11 a.m., Park Avenue  
between 65th & 70th

## HAMEVASER

Student Publication of RIETS and JSS  
Yeshiva University / New York, N.Y. 10033

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## Medical Ethics

The proposal for a college course in Jewish medical ethics which appeared in a recent *Tempo* editorial deserves the serious consideration of both administration and students. Aside from the necessary preparation it would provide for future orthodox physicians, such a course would also serve to give students in other areas an appreciation of the application of *halakbah* to modern problems. If planned properly it could help bridge the widening gap between the yeshiva and the college and make Torah-U-Madah a working reality.

## Purim Chagiga

Many have noticed a lack of yeshiva spirit at Y.U. *Ruach* is said to be missing from our *inei ha-yeshiva*. Therefore, the recent Purim *chagiga* is to be noted with pleasure, for it demonstrated that Y.U. students, too, are capable of great *ruach*. Shabbat itself was enlivened with *zmirot* at the meals, and the *ruach* broke loose in full force at the *chagiga*. The enthusiasm, singing and dancing were spontaneous and infectious. Those who were there could well appreciate the *simcha* of a *chag*. *Hamevaser* congratulates all those involved in the planning of the *chagiga*, and particularly wishes to commend the *inei ha-yeshiva* on their display of *ruach*.

## Lost Committee

The delicate subject of restructuring the RIETS program and schedule was recently a matter of debate again, as a result of the recent Surkenik proposal.

At a meeting with students on March 5, Dr. Belkin reportedly promised that a committee would be formed to investigate the entire matter of restructuring RIETS. At this time, we still await further news concerning this as-of-yet-unformed committee.

## LATE BULLETIN

Harav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, in a speech delivered at a luncheon preceding the Chag Hasemicha Convocation on Sunday, April 12, stunned and delighted an overflow audience by supporting the picketing organized by the Concerned Students' Coalition.

After praising the vast achievements of Dr. Belkin and YU to date, and acknowledging the desperate financial condition of the University, the Rav then proceeded to express, in strong terms, the fears also felt by students in regard to recent charter changes, and the general direction of the University.

The Rav's remarks were frequently interrupted by applause from the enthusiastic audience of rabbis and students.

The luncheon and Chag Hasemicha Convocation were part of a 3-day celebration, April 11-13, of the 85th anniversary of the founding of Yeshivat Eitz Chaim, the forerunner of Yeshiva University. The theme of the celebration was "Torah in the 70's; the Response to the Challenge of a New Decade."

From the Editor's Desk

## CHAG SAMEACH?



by MICHAEL SHMIDMAN

This issue of *Hamevaser* went to press in the midst of some highly significant developments. Deadline restrictions prevent adequate coverage of these events, but they are too important not to merit at least some preliminary mention and comment.

On Tuesday, April 7, a group of semicha students and some faculty gathered to discuss the problems of charter changes, secularization, and the methods of administration decision-making. The result was the formation of six tentative demands, presented the next morning to Dr. Belkin (and by this time distributed to the student body). Following Dr. Belkin's rejection of these recommendations, the newly-formed Concerned Students' Coalition began to lay plans for picketing of the Chag Hasemicha Convocation (see opposite column), as a means of dramatizing their demands.

This column will probably appear after the actual protest; yet whether the planned picketing is a complete success or a total failure; several points concerning this affair are already clear.

The long chain of events, commencing with Stern's battle for the BRE and BHL degrees last term and continuing through administration-student meetings, SOY and JSS student council meetings, and letters and proposals presented to Dr. Belkin, has apparently reached a new peak. While actual public protest has been considered and threatened before, it has never visibly materialized. Sunday's protest is the first evidence that students will, if necessary, commit themselves to positive action.

It is clear, therefore, that the administration can no longer simply protest that nothing has changed, while continuing to release conflicting and incomplete statements of fact; it can no longer reject legitimate demands without granting them the full, impartial hearing they deserve; and it can no longer present controversial fait accomplis to students without encouraging further, perhaps more drastic forms of protest.

Picketing is a fairly mild form of protest, yet to therefore regard it as inconsequential or transitory would be a tragic miscalculation of the current mood. I sincerely hope that whoever constitutes the source of decision-making in the University will respond promptly and positively to legitimate complaints. If not, then an elusive administration may soon suffer the consequences of its own indifference.

The communications gap at yeshiva may be wide, but if pales in comparison to the physical abyss separating Israel and the Galut. Last year, I wrote a series of articles presenting what I thought to be the essence of the philosophical, historical, halakhic and emotional arguments setting up aliyah as a personal and national imperative—personal in terms of complete spiritual fulfillment, and national in regard to realizing Jewish destiny. I also attempted to refute the objection that the spiritual needs of Galut override the aliyah imperative, by pointing out the precarious religious situation in Israel, which for various reasons must take precedence even over similar poor spiritual conditions in Galut.

Yet whether aliyah is an imperative or simply an existential choice, I would be more than remiss if I passed the entire year without once again pressing the need for Western college-educated religious youth in Israel, and once more urging everyone to consider the possibility of aliyah when determining future plans. Those who are not presently nearing graduation and who consequently are not in a position to act upon any such imperative, might heed the successful examples of others and ease the perplexities and pressures of four years at Yeshiva by learning for a year in Israel.

Information pertaining to aliyah and to a year of studies in Israel may be obtained through the Israel Aliyah Club or directly from the Jewish Agency.

The 27th day of Nissan is officially observed in Israel as "Yom Hashoah V'haZicaron" (Holocaust Memorial Day). This year, Yeshiva will join Israel in a "Holocaust Memorial Day Observance" to take place, God willing, on Sunday evening, May 3rd at 7 p.m. in Lamport Auditorium. Pulitzer Prize-winner Herman Wouk will address the assembly.

*Hamevaser* urges all students to take a few moments to join in this observance and honor the memory of six million martyrs.

## The Next Step

In the March issue of *Hamevaser* we remarked extensively about the serious communications gap in decision-making between administration and students. We also pressed for consideration of a number of demands which we thought imperative.

We were hoping for some indication of administrative concern for these demands. Instead, the confusion of the original situation has intensified. Another objectionable catalogue (JSS) is printed without student consultation, and the question of whether form P2.1 was sent to Albany, supposedly clarified at the last administration-student meeting, was recently still an unresolved issue, even among administrators.

The need for more and immediate communication between students and those who actually make the decisions is evident. Failing this, we call upon concerned student councils to act, using whatever measures necessary to check the rising tide of secularization and to create better communication for the present, and firm guarantees for the future.

## A Worthy Venture

Every Monday and Thursday evenings a small contingent of Yeshiva students sacrifice several hours to give classes in *tanakh*, *halakbah* and *pirkei avot* to eager audiences at Stern College. This study program, sponsored by TAC and SOY, began and has continued as an unqualified success.

*Hamevaser* wishes to commend all those participating in the program. We look forward to the day when the Stern Jewish Studies program will be expanded and improved enough to provide its students with the Jewish education they need and deserve without the necessity for outside help.

# What Is A Jew: Behind The Controversy

by JACK BIELER

(ED. NOTE: Jack Bieler, presently learning in Yeshivat Korem B'yaone, is Hamevaser's Israeli correspondent.)

Although Mrs. Meir's government has passed a law that "solves" the Shalit question, to think that the essential conflict has been resolved is little more than foolish optimism. Issues in this country are tightly contested and when debate turns to something so emotional and so basic as the future relationship of the *Medinah* and the Jewish religion, riots in the streets are not beyond expectation. Trouble in the past has been avoided, as in effect was the case last month, by neatly side-stepping the issue, retiring to the back-rooms to engage in the game of political compromise and brushing away problems by dismissing them as legal technicalities. But the time draws nearer when Israel's leadership will be forced to take a stand; whether the organic ties with traditional Judaism are to be maintained and strengthened, or whether a course of secularism is to be embarked upon, will have to be decided sooner or later.

Perhaps the opposing positions can best be defined by working within the context of the current case. Surely, Benjamin Shalit is more than a lone individual out to obtain the rights that he feels are his due as a citizen of a modern, democratic state. He is a representative of his times, and a member of a generation that has shown itself willing to oppose what it considers to be out-moded institutions and traditions, even when small groups must take the initiative to confront the silent, well-entrenched majority. And in Israel, a country which has not been intellectually isolated from the trends of the twentieth-century West, for her theoretically-orientated laws to come under fire is to be fully expected. Within the briefs of the Supreme Court Justices who ruled in a 5-4 decision, that the *Sar Ha Pnim* should show cause why the

Shalit children should not be registered as ethnically "Jewish", it was stated that the case was one "where justice demanded that he (the registration official) be prevented from trespassing upon the citizen's preserves. . . . Thus, whether or not the term "Yehudi" can have the connotation which an individual wishes to give to it, in this case, "identification with Israeli-Jewish culture and values becomes the symbol of a clash between those who sought to impose their opinions on others and those . . . who believe in the freedom of the individual and fight against any conformist tendencies."<sup>2</sup> And although when it comes to determining nationality, the employment of objective criteria is common (there is a legal difference between a native-born American citizen and one who is a naturalized citizen), one judge declared that to consult *halakhic* requirements in the case surrounding the Shalit children would "interfere with the individual's right of independent definition of his own religion."<sup>3</sup> As a result, despite the fact that the registration official does have the prerogative of not entering a "blatant falsehood" or something that is "patently untrue,"<sup>4</sup> he has no right not to follow the instructions given to him by the registrant, when told to fill in the space next to "ethnic grouping" with "Yehudi" after "none" has been written next to "religion," a *halakhic tarta de satra*.

The "liberal elements" in Israel hailed the court decision as a major step towards the freeing of the non-dati citizen from stultifying religious coercion. Those who supported Shalit's cause, claimed that the state has the obligation to allow every individual to live freely, as long as he does not pose a threat to his society. Furthermore, whatever implications and connotations a particular term may have held in the past, we are living in the present and not in the shadow of history. The arguments

are not original. They would be applied quite aptly to most situations where individuals find that their style is being cramped by the mores and standards of society. In Israel, they have merely been given a touch of currency by polemical rhetoric such as decrying the injustice of not allowing a man who has loyally served as an officer in his country's navy to register his children as Jewish, while the son of a Jewish mother who heads the *Fatuh* in the Old City is legally a member of the Jewish people.

And where do the "defenders of the faith" stand? Why is it so difficult for them to accede to the principle of "live and let live"? The answer to these questions is based upon two premises: namely, that declaring the Shalit children Jewish would set a precedent for the passage of future legislation that would stand in opposition to *Halakah*; and that the creation of such a body of laws will eventually turn Israel into a secular state. What must be understood is why the *dati*-Israeli views the potential disruption of the organic relationship now existing between the *Medinah* and *halakha* as a negation of his own life-style and as ultimately damaging to the future of the land itself.

It is difficult for the apatriotic, intellectual Westerner to empathize with the religious Israeli's attachment to his homeland. Aside from the constant physical threat presented by the Arabs, the *dati*'s personal theology and *weltanschauung* is verily rooted in *Arezt*. In other lands, a person's spiritual aspirations are not allowed to travel beyond the individual himself; in Israel, the places that can be frequented and the occupations with which one conceals himself complement the religious personality's inner make-up. And even beyond the personal life of the individual, many religious citizens of the state wish to feel that they are living in a place where the ideal society—as foreshadowed by the *Torah*—a culture based upon the highest

humanitarian and ethical considerations, can be realized, even within the foreseeable future. Rav Kook writes in *Orot* of a coming time when the state may be run on the foundations of wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and God's instruction.<sup>5</sup>

There are those who will settle for nothing less than the ideal—either the Jewish state will adhere totally to *Torah*, or it is better to have no state at all. Rav Yechiel Weinberg, though not an advocate of such a position, explains that the reason why those who still remembered what the first Temple was like wept while the second *Beit HaMikdash* was being constructed, was because they feared that the new structure would not measure up to what they remembered of its predecessor.<sup>6</sup> When a people has dreamt for two thousand years, to replace that dream with an inferior reality does more harm than good. But for the many *dati*-Israelis who are not obsessed with an "all-or nothing" mentality, and are willing to place their faith in the powers of education and time to develop the latent religious sympathies that briefly showed themselves following the Six-Day War, the court's decision came as a real blow. If secularism is to be officially condoned by the government, then the dreams begin to fade and living in Israel, if no longer physical *Galut*, becomes a spiritual exile.

So the two sides confront one another, each accusing the other of holding back the coming of a brighter future. Perhaps one has no choice but to declare *Taihu*.

## Footnotes:

1. Justice Cohn
2. Justice Weikol
3. Justice Sussman
4. Justice Sussman
5. Rav Avraham Kook, *Orot*, Mosad HaRav Kook, Jerusalem (1963), p. 14
6. Rav Yechiel Weinberg, *Sridei Aish*, Mosad HaRav Kook, Vol. 4, p. 375.

## On Evolution

To the editor:

I would like to comment on an article which appeared in the March issue of *Hamevaser* entitled "In the Beginning," in which Mr. Wolfish discussed the very crucial problem of the Torah vs. the evolutionary theory.

Mr. Wolfish suggested that we accept some sort of a compromise. That is that the world is in reality millions or billions of years old, however, the creation was guided and controlled by God. Man was of course, endowed with a *n'somo* which separated him from the rest of the cosmos. His reasons for presenting such an approach are given in the article. I believe, however, that the compromise that Mr. Wolfish makes can satisfy neither those who believe in Torah nor those who believe in evolution.

We have a general principle that "*Ain mikro, yotzei mydei p'shuto*," that is used in the basic (*p'shat*) understanding of *chumash* and *nach*. The Gemara in *Chagigah* (12b) states that ten things were created on the first day including "*midas yom u'midas laylah*"—the length of the day and the length of the night. Rashi (ad loc) explains "*Esrim varbo shaos l'isnaihem*" the twenty four hour period for them. This shows that the Gemara took the six days of creation literally. (This gemara also explains

how there could be time, during the first three days, as the sun was not put in orbit till the fourth. Any physicist knows that any time-dependent physical law can serve as the basis of a clock.)

Sometimes it is argued that *Chazal* possessed a knowledge of *Sod Maaseh Beraishis* which is a detailed account of creation not available in the *p'shat*. The Rambam explains that the *Sod Maaseh Beraishis* was in addition to the *p'shat*, as are all *sodos hatorah*, rather than an explanation which negates the *p'shat*. He says in his commentary to *Beraishis* 1:3 that though the days mentioned in creation were literal days composed of regular hours and minutes, they also represent the *spheros* and from the *sod* level we can obtain additional knowledge, about the past and future, which is consistent with the *p'shat*.

The Rambam in the *Moreh Nevuchim* II:25 says that one may not deviate from the literalness of a text in the torah unless two conditions are met:

- 1) That the departure from literalness is forced by the *chumash* itself in order to be logically consistent (i.e. anthropomorphism; saying that GdH has a body, would contradict other statements, that GdH has no form).
- 2) That the deviation from the literalness is necessary in order to affirm a *yesod* of torah (i.e. the incorporation

of God) rather than to contradict a truth (i.e. we must accept that God makes miracles which, by definition, are scientifically impossible). He specifically refers to the creation which, he says, is the greatest miracle of all, and taking the creation story only allegorically would logically cause one to deny miracles.

In regard to the scientific aspects of the problem, the problem of the age of the universe could be dealt with very nicely even if one wants to accept all the scientific "evidence" used to support the evolutionary hypothesis. For instance, if the horse which was created on the sixth day was brought to a veterinarian on that day, the veterinarian would show the physical development of a mature horse. The fact that the horse is physically five years old would not contradict the fact that chronologically it was less than one day old. In other words—the physical age of an object or even the world, does not indicate its actual age. Similarly the Midrash says that *Adam* was created as a twenty year old man. All radioactive isotopes used in dating the age of the earth are subject to the same reasoning. If the rocks that are reputed to be 4.5 billion years old were created initially with a smaller

amount of radioactive material in them than assumed, the whole dating process would be inoperative. Thus the world could have been created 5730 years ago in a fully developed state that is equivalent to 4.5 billion years of physical development. God created a finished product.

This explanation is sufficient even for one who finds the evolutionary hypotheses consistent with and supported by the evidence. However many orthodox scientists go further and have attacked the evolutionary theory on scientific grounds, (see for example the article by Dr. L. M. Spetner in "Proceedings of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Scientists," Vol. I, or the one by Dr. Goldman in *Jewish Youth Monthly* Jan. 5, '70, which is less technical and easier to follow than the one by Dr. Spetner). It is ironic that those Rabbis with doctorates in the sciences have uniformly rejected the theory of evolution while those whose backgrounds are in the social sciences and humanities have tried to make compromises, since they find evolution "scientifically proven."

One last point, Dr. Samuel Solovitchik zt"l was also my professor of chemistry. He represented the ideal combination of Torah and Madah. He used Madah as a tool for understanding

(Continued on page 5)

## Letters To The Editor

# Dienstag Discusses Gottesman Library

(Ed. Note: Gottesman Library has been a source of controversy in recent years. Hamevaser presented a list of questions concerning the library to Prof. Jacob L. Dienstag, head librarian, and his answers follow.)

1. What programs does the library engage in for the procurement of the ever-increasing volume of books and periodicals being published in the past few years? Plans for the future.

The normal procedure is to examine publishers' and booksellers' catalogues and put in the orders for them. This goes well for American and Western countries which periodically issue catalogues. There are, however, thousands of *Sefarim* which are published or reprinted annually, but are not even mentioned in book lists and catalogues. To remedy this situation, I spent the entire summer of 1969 in Israel during which time I examined major book warehouses and succeeded in acquiring thousands of books purchased at reduced rates, saving thousands of hours of paper work. Not only this—I have arranged a standing order with some book distributors to automatically send us copies of a work pertaining to Jewish scholarship.

2. What steps are taken in the procedure of processing new books?

This is a major problem in cataloging of Judaica for which courses in Library schools are not offered. We have invited the known bibliographer Shlomo Shurant from the Hebrew University to give a year with us and teach prospective students of Library Science (those who intend to pursue courses for Masters in library school) the rules of descriptive cataloging in Hebraica and Judaica and classification of books. We hope to succeed in recruiting a sufficient number of students with a background in Jewish scholarship to take advantage of this opportunity. This will greatly help us to catch up with our backlog. (More on this in question 9.)

3. Are there any unique qualities that the Gottesman Library has over other libraries of Hebraica and Judaica?

a. Most libraries of Hebraica and Judaica (e.g.) Hebrew Union College in New York City and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Hebrew University, Mosad HaRav Kook, Rambam, Yiddish Scientific Institute (YIVO), and the New York Public Library have their books in closed stacks. It is only through the paging service that a book is obtained. (This applies likewise to recent, out of print, or rare books.) This was so in the past with the Mendel Gottesman Library in the old building. We succeeded, once we moved into the new building, to establish an open book section where readers can browse and acquaint themselves with the ever-increasing number of volumes added in each subject. This is a major development in Jewish librarianship. The educational aspect of this feature cannot be overemphasized. It took thousands of hours to change the shelf marks on the cards of the many thousands of books which were in the closed shelves in the Old Building to designate their location on the Open Shelves. These books are all standing in a classified order on Floor 5A. All of these books are for circulation (normally for 4 weeks.)

b. Without any exaggeration, the Reference Floor (Floor 5) contains the largest collection in any library of Hebraica and Judaica where the classics

and basic works of each subject is represented on its shelves. Wherever possible we hope that the vast resources of Jewish classics, which are produced by offset method, should find their way to the Reference Floor.

c. The classification scheme which makes it possible to arrange books on shelves by their subject is broken down to the minutest detail. It is an expansion of the Dewey Decimal System. The library resources are broken down to about 2,500 subdivisions which make it possible for the reader to find exactly those books he is searching for on the shelves.

d. Those books which are rare and out of print will be placed on floor 4 as soon as the shelves will be constructed. These will be obtained through page service—we hope a shute will be installed through which books will be sent up to the fifth floor where the Charge Desk is located.



4. How valuable are the holdings of the bookroom?

Books of this nature have no fixed price. During a recent auction sale of Hebraica at Parke Benet, I found that some of the incunabula (books printed before 1500) were sold between \$5,000 or \$8,000 per volume. The Library is fortunate to possess 41 incunabula. But there are many rare books which are not incunabula, but are still considered rare. The tragic fire in the Jewish Theological Seminary of America caused a tremendous inflation in the price of books printed even during the last century. The Holocaustist consumed not only 6,000,000 lives but millions of books as well. Never was there a people like ours, the fate of whose books was so closely linked to the fate of its owners.

5. Does the catalog have at least 3 cards for each book—Title, Author, Subject; if not, why?

For books for which Library of Congress Cards are readily available (which saves us the work of typing and original cataloging), there are as many cards as necessary (author, title, subjects). Books for which there are no Library of Congress cards must meanwhile suffice with one card. The Library of Congress caters more to popular libraries to whom they can sell more cards for the stock they print. Also, Library of Congress complains that they too are short in help having a scholarly Jewish background for preparing cards in Hebraica and Judaica. This brings us back to the problem described above.

6. Does the library employ a sufficient number of staff members? If not, why?

As explained above, there is not a

sufficient amount of professionally trained staff members. And worse than that, because of the financial squeeze, we were not allowed to replace people who have left us. Three people have left which slackens our services in the library and causes hardship to readers.

7. What measures do you think should be introduced to attract people to work in your library?

An open publicized scale of wages, increments, fringe benefits, promotions. I find that some people with less experience, background and specialized qualifications obtain a higher salary than those with a wider background. There were cases where an applicant whom I interviewed declined to accept the position because she received \$1,000 more from another division in the same University—a thousand dollars more than a person in my department is earning with eight years seniority. This is a most demoralizing situation.

graduates of the BRGS to enter the profession of Jewish librarianship.

d. The introduction of Jewish studies on the various non-Jewish campuses has greatly increased the need for professional librarians with a scholarly Jewish background. Of course, these librarians would qualify as general librarians, if they desired to switch to other divisions.

10. How does the Mendel Gottesman Library relate to the Jewish community?

We are the continuous recipient of inquiries pertaining to Jewish life and literature; not only from the Jewish community but also from non-Jews. Many of the facts and details behind "stories" printed in such magazines as *Life* and *Time* were checked with us before they went to print. Our uniqueness—our Jewishness—imposes upon us the duty to relate to the whole community (even the non-Jewish community) information which very few institutions can offer.

11. Do you encourage organized tours to visit the library?

Whenever we are called upon by Public Relations, we arrange to meet with visitors and if their schedule permits to talk to them and show them some of our unique objects and old prints.

12. We understand you give a course in Reference Resources of Judaica. Please describe its features and its effect on the students.

a. The purpose of the course is very practical: to acquaint students with the major references works in Judaica and Hebraica, and to guide them in the use of these books; to develop a thorough acquaintance of bibliographical tools.

b. It is difficult to describe effects, but I did receive letters from former students who would like to enter the library profession; also one student recently told me that as a result of the course, last term, he has purchased several hundred books. The purchase of books is an integral part of scholarly interest and this news gave me much pleasure.

13. Do you think librarians should do research or compile bibliographies?

a. A librarian of a specialized library is also a teacher. He supplements where the standard references books leave off. A librarian who is not involved in research of a subject related to his profession can be likened to a teacher who does no research. Involvement in research widens his background. There is a close relationship between the professional execution of a librarian's duties and the amount of research he is engaged in. It is very often the librarian who is constantly engaged in research who can best advise graduate students in the writing of their dissertations; even the very topic for a masters or doctorate is sometimes the product of lengthy discussions between such librarians and graduate students.

b. A librarian engaged in scholarly research should, however, not be simply a book-worm or an intellectual egotist. He should love his readers; he should share with them his knowledge and guide them in their quest for it. He should take time off to discuss various aspects of the student's research and advise him accordingly. It is the librarian, who is, in many cases, the intellectual father-confessor, who can be the ideal advisor for those students who may be reluctant to discuss the same problem with their professors.

c. In as much as bibliography is an

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LITERARY EDITOR

# Horowitz's Complaint: Alienation of Modern Jew



by HAROLD HOROWITZ

The alienation among many modern Jews which takes the form of abandoning traditional religious beliefs and practices has been extensively examined in the past decade by religious philosophers and students of modern society. On a purely existential level one notes, as did Rabbi Soloveitchik in his opus magnum "The Lonely Man of Faith," that a type of dual relationship and dual role is inherent in man's nature, reaching for God in the Cosmos and conquering the forces of nature on earth,—oscillating between the covenantal community and majesty, as it were. This has always been a source of tension and conflict to the man of faith and to the faithful Jewish community. This inner-conflict has been present for the Jew since the Divine Revelation, indeed since the creation of Adam.

Modern man and especially the modern Jew experiences a sense of alienation which has been precipitated by many factors, not the least of which is their religious ignorance and insensitivity. In discussing this occurrence among modern American Jewish intellectuals, Dr. Walter Wurtzburger<sup>2</sup> expresses the opinion that this has been brought about by people who have emancipated themselves from the yoke of *Mitzvoth* and are left with nothing in Judaism except the state of living in

*Galat*. Hence, there is a relationship between a feeling of alienation and the expression that exile is a supreme religious virtue.

The feeling of alienation and the sense of estrangement from Judaism has expressed itself forcefully in the writings of many Jewish novelists in the 1960's. However, their alienation does not lead to an ideal which glorifies the *Galat* existence of the Jew. Rather than assuming a different manner of fulfillment in Judaism they prefer to reject all the foundations of the Jewish faith and grope for a new basis for belief in God and His rule. The modern American reader, however, does not take note of the writer's basic sense of alienation and estrangement from Judaism and views the writer as one who actually is searching for a reinterpretation of Jewish ideals and beliefs based on an accurate description of the ones that have been accepted by the Jewish people. Hence, the denunciation of the Jewish religion which is so often expressed is viewed by the readers as a genuine rejection of Jewish values based on the writers' knowledge and exposure to traditional learning and knowledge.

The abundance of novels by Jewish novelists over the past decade which are psychoanalytical and self-searching is also a manifestation of the alienation which plagues many modern Jews. Many novels of late have taken on the form of a type of *Cheshbon Hanefesh* examination of one's life, thoughts, and actions. In confusion and bewilderment one tries to retrace the causes which led up to his present state and to attribute the present condition to external forces which disturbed and destroyed the individual. This form of soul-searching narrative also accounts for the appearance of many neurotic or disturbed descriptions of Jewish characters in the novels of the 1960's. One would be tempted to induce from the frequency of appearance of such characters that neurosis is correlated to the ethnic background of certain people. It is common today to speak of someone who is overprotective as "Mrs. Portnoy" implying that she is a typical, foolish type of Jewish mother. However, in actual fact the prevalence of neurotic characters in Jewish writings is due to the fact that many writers use

this as a tool which enables them to engage the character in extensive self-analysis and introspection rather than as a true indication of the mental health of most Jewish people.

*Herzog* by Saul Bellow was published in 1964 and was widely heralded by literary critics as a great novel and accepted by the public to the extent that it was a long running best-seller. Indeed, Bellow serves the reader with an intriguing expedition into the mind of one Herzog, who has naturally abandoned any remnants of Judaism since they are meaningless to him, and now is full of frustration and bitterness. In trying to find a meaningful existence for himself he seeks faith, love and friendship. He desires a metaphysical fulfillment of his life but is unable to achieve it. However, he looks back at his father and his Jewish upbringing with cynicism, animosity and disdain. He makes no secret that he is alienated from his heritage and from his religion, but he does not openly profess his ignorance of the Jewish faith and the Jewish people.

The most recent work which I would like to examine in this respect is the latest work of Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint*, which was also a wide best-seller and evoked many and varied responses in critical circles. Alexander Portnoy is alienated from Judaism and he is a neurotic. Unlike Herzog, however, Roth builds the central thesis of his book around the Jewish upbringing of Alexander Portnoy by his mother Mrs. Portnoy. Much has been said about the relationship between the Jewish son and his mother as expressed by Portnoy, but this writer would like to concern himself more with Roth's relationship to Judaism vis a vis Portnoy.

The best description of the book in terms of a literary genre is 'Jewish Style', much as we have Jewish style food which isn't really kosher. Many Jewish terms are used such as 'Schlimmel' and 'Milchig' but there is no real presentation of Judaism or Jewish life. This is to say that many terms were heard by Portnoy in his home and he got to know them as manners of speech; just as many of those words have become widely used in the English language by non-Jews. However, this does not mean that Portnoy or Roth

have any grasp of the meaning of the dietary laws simply because they use the terms 'Milchig' or 'Fleishig'. The greatest exposure Portnoy ever had to a Jewish holiday was that his father went to the Synagogue on Rosh Hashanah. Surely then, he does not understand the significance of Jewish holidays, and he certainly cannot be sensitive to their beauty. In a certain sense therefore, his parents were guilty in not providing him with a true and authentic Jewish education which led to his declaration of atheism at the age of fourteen. However, in a broader sense Philip Roth as a mature intellectual is completely alienated from the Jewish faith and the heritage of his people. When he speaks of his dislike for Judaism in particular and religion in general he is doing it from the standpoint of one who hasn't been exposed to Jewish knowledge or traditions. Perhaps it is this underlying factor which causes him to be called by many, a self-hating Jew. He expresses hatred and resentment in order to glorify his alienation and estrangement from Jewish values and ideals.

It is this crucial aspect about a writer's perspective which must become clear and evident to the intelligent reader of many modern American Jewish novels. A disdain and hate for Judaism has not been caused by an intellectual rejection of the Jewish tradition; rather it is an expression of the metaphysical 'galut' existence of the writer—his existential alienation from all aspects of Jewish tradition and learning. Thus, perhaps the time has come for an expression of the sensitivity and the beauty of Jewish tradition by one who recalls the beauty of his home and upbringing. This has been attempted by Chaim Potok in his two works *The Chosen* and *The Promise* but there is still much to be desired (this will be a topic of examination in a future article). The American literary scene is ripe for novels that portray Jews who are not alienated but are fulfilled, intellectually and emotionally, through Judaism.

1. "The Lonely Man of Faith", Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik *Tradition* Summer 1965.
2. "Alienation and Exile". Dr. Walter Wurtzburger *Tradition* Summer 1964.

## Library

(Continued from page 4)

auxiliary to scholarship, librarians should deem it their duty to compile bibliographies and publish them in the professional and scholarly journals. In fact, I have been looking forward to a library journal, published by the library, on the style of Hebrew University's *Kiryath Safer*, which would also be dedicated to bibliography and booklore, and to which members of the library staff could make their contributions.

14. How do you envision the future of the Mendel Gottesman Library within the context of Yeshiva University during the next ten years?

In my opinion, it depends upon the position of the American Jewish community. I believe that the next ten years will be very crucial for the political and social condition of American Jewry. If our non-Jewish neighbors will be sufficiently enlightened to be able to distinguish between the wide Jewish masses of law-abiding and democracy-loving citizens, and those members of the New Left with Jewish names, then there is a hope that the Almighty will give us the opportunity to improve ourselves and better serve a thriving Jewish community. If, however, the political situation will bring about a polarization of two extremes, with a Silent Majority who will not remain silent any more, the danger may arise that some demagogue will be able to arouse the "silent ones" to pursue a course which could bring about radical changes in the political and economic status of American Jewry. Under such conditions, scholarship will not be able to thrive. And in such an era of uncertainties, there will be two types of reactions among the Jews: 1) those who believe that they will weather the storms and 2) those who will draw the necessary conclusions.

## Letters To The Editor

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the Torah, not as an end as some would, nor as a weapon against Torah. When our class was discussing evolution (before the class began), Dr. Soloveitchik told us in a very firm tone that evolutionary theory must be rejected in favor of the six days-of-creation taken literally. It was a great dishonor to his memory that an article such as Mr. Wolfish's was dedicated to his name.

Sincerely yours,  
Joel Waxman '69

### Mr. Wolfish Replies

In response, I should like first to cite a few excerpts from an introduction to the *Agaddah* by Abraham, son of the Rambam, which are relevant not only to the question at hand, but also to a recent historical controversy at Yeshiva. (The entire text may be found at the beginning of most editions of *Ein Yaakov*):

Know that it is your duty to understand that whoever propounds a

certain theory or idea and expects that theory or idea to be accepted merely out of respect for the author without proving its truth or reasonableness pursues a wrong method prohibited by both the Torah and human intelligence. From the standpoint of intelligence, such a method would be worthless for it would cause one to minimize the importance of those things which, after scrupulous observation and proofs, ought to be believed, and from the point of view of the Torah—because it inclines from the true path and from the straight, level road. The Torah says: Thou shalt not respect the poor person, nor honor the great person; in righteousness shalt thou judge (Va-yikra 19, 15). And it also says, Ye shall not respect a person in judgment (Devarim 1, 17). And there is no difference between him who accepts an idea without any evidence as to its integrity, and him

who believes a person's statement simply because he respects the latter and therefore contends that his idea is undoubtedly true simply because it emanates from a great man. For all this gives no evidence as to the merits of the subject in question and is therefore forbidden. According to this preamble, then, we are not in duty bound to defend the opinions of the sages of the Talmud concerning medicine, physics, and astrology (and, I may add, history—J.W.) simply because we know the sages to be great men with a full knowledge of all things regarding the Torah, in its various details. . . . We, as well as all wise and thought ful men, must consider and ponder with all possible care and then decide each thing upon its own merits; to preserve that which deserves preservation and destroy that which deserves destruction; and to refrain

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# The Jewish Interest In Vietnam

by MICHAEL GORDON

(Ed. Note: The following is an excerpt from a larger, as of yet unpublished essay by Michael Gordon, '70, on "Jewish Responsibility and Vietnam.")

What is the specific Jewish interest involved in the conflict over the War in Vietnam? Many Orthodox Jews tend to side with the political right. This is because of both the danger to Jews from left, and the fear of the right itself. In examining the issues, we will move from left to right.

Mr. Milton Friedman writes that "an apparent victory of the National Liberation Front in Vietnam would encourage (Arab) guerrillas to intensify terrorism." Supposedly, Arabs would strive to turn Israel into "another Vietnam." In an immediate sense, this is absurd. Americans do not fight for Israel. Arabs do not face the American military machine. Israel does not even want the aid of American troops. Arab aggression and terrorism are deterred by the superb military arm of a people fighting for their right to exist.

In a broader sense, though, the Middle East can be viewed as just one notch in the East-West power struggle. The question is, then, how East-West relations will be affected by a U.S. pull-out in Vietnam. We can only take educated guesses. It is likely that East-West relations will generally improve. Vietnam has been a source of tension for over a decade. Improved relations does not mean Russian advancements in the face of a weakened U.S.A. The war is an enormous waste of American manpower and money. Financial cutbacks in vital areas of American life are being implemented steadily. The war is the source of a deep political rift internally, and of deep disrepute abroad. Within the Communist camps, opposition to American involvement in Vietnam provides the main, if not sole point of unity. Russia and China are jockeying for influence in Southeast Asia, and both are trying to capitalize on the unique opportunity offered, paradoxically, by the U.S. presence in Vietnam. As America escalates the war, so is North Vietnam's reliance on the big Red powers for aid increased. Vietnam, however, is an historic enemy of China. In modern times, the Vietnamese have ward off the domination of the major powers France, Japan, and the United States. There is no reason to suppose they would oppose Russian or Chinese domination any less fiercely. Vietnamese diplomacy with the two Red giants indicates a strong wariness of falling under the boot of either one. A strong, Communist Vietnam is seen by many analysts as a sturdier roadblock against Russian or Chinese imperialism than a weak, non-Communist Vietnam. Senator J. William Fulbright refers to what Bernard Fall called "the 2,000-year-old distrust in Vietnam of everything Chinese."<sup>1</sup> The senator concludes that "Vietnamese communism is therefore a potential bulwark—perhaps the only potential bulwark—against Chinese domination of Vietnam."<sup>2</sup> Some Jews assert that since Russia is the common enemy of the U.S. and Israel, we must continue fighting in Vietnam. Russia and China are not being hurt through our fighting. We are harming ourselves and the Vietnamese.

Jewish war supporters are quick to point out that Arab guerrillas receive training in North Vietnam. This may be true, but an even greater certainty is that Arab pilots are trained in the United States. Still, neither Viet-

nam, nor the United States is a threat to Israel's security; Israel gains nothing from their fighting.

There is a worry that withdrawal from Vietnam might engender an isolationist mood in the U.S.A. This is seen as perilous to all nations dependent upon U.S. arms shipments. This is probably what Friedman has in mind when he writes of Arab attempts to turn Israel into "another Vietnam." True, America will withdraw from Vietnam only as a result of a fundamental change in Americans' attitudes. Withdrawal will follow the realization that we should not oppose every revolution in the world simply because it is Communist. Similarly, we can not and should not support every anti-Communist government. When we decide to support a government, we must guard against a commitment beyond our capacity or initial designs. This realization will hopefully spring from the war itself. It is ever more evident that, "so recklessly have we committed our strength and resources to this unwinnable war that we are now scarcely capable of honoring our legally valid and politically warranted commitments to other countries."<sup>3</sup> This does not mean turning our backs upon the world's troubles: "A wise accommodation to the realities of the 20th century must be one of involvement in the world, to be sure, but of selective involvement, selective according to our interests and our resources—by which I mean our moral and intellectual as well as our material resources."<sup>4</sup> Senator Eugene J. McCarthy strikes a similar note:



"Today our potential foreign obligations are almost unlimited. We have moved from a position of isolation and rejection of world responsibility to a position of isolated, almost singular responsibility for the whole world.

We must, therefore, attempt to assay our real power as compared with our assumed responsibilities. We must reassess our obligations, formal and informal, legal and extra-legal. We must establish, if we can, standards for selection of responses, both as to place and degree. We must set priorities and continue to seek, with other nations, a broader and more realistic distribution of responsibility for this world."<sup>5</sup>

The American commitment to Israel might very well be strengthened after withdrawal from Vietnam. In an analysis of Arab resistance movements, Michael Hudson writes:

The Palestinians are encouraged by the difficulties of the U.S. in Vietnam and the resulting disinclination among Americans to get involved in new protracted conflicts in the world.

This disinclination, they feel, allows them to cause continual disruptions within Israel. . . .

Israel's government is democratic and progressive. While Israel's army is fighting to keep the country alive, it is combatting Communist-backed troops. American arms support could have no more fitting recipient. The two anti-war candidates in the 1968 primaries were Senators McCarthy and Kennedy. During their televised debate, they seemed to be locked in mortal combat over who could pledge greater support to Israel. New York leaders Javits, Goodell, Goldberg, and Lindsay are united on two issues: they are against the war in Vietnam, and are pro-Israel. What if, God forbid, a situation were to arise in which America intervention were needed to save Israel. It is difficult to imagine such assistance forthcoming with America simultaneously engaged in the Vietnam War. James Reston writes that "there is strong feeling here that the United States must somehow get out of Vietnam in order to deal with the much more serious problems of Soviet penetration into the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean."<sup>6</sup> An America more cautious before entering conflicts will be more eager to support nations willing to fight for themselves. America must be convinced that a strong Israel is the surest way to prevent a big-power showdown in the Middle East from evolving. Israel might easily prove the beneficiary of a post-war America's quest for new markets for surplus war facilities. America can not police the world. It can

fully inclined. Extremist groups fade into the background of a truly mass protest. The opinion of moderates will be decisive in determining the war's course.

Let us swing from the left to the right. Many Jews fear a sweeping backlash against the left. If Jews are identified with the left, waves of anti-Semitism supposedly will be created. The syllogism concludes that, regardless of the evils of the war, Jews must remain silent. This argument is valid only in that there is a never-ending danger of an explosion from the right. The danger, however, lies not in the war's termination, but in its continuance. Woodrow Wilson fearfully depicted the dangers of war:

Once lead this people into war and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. To fight you must be brutal and ruthless and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fiber of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policeman on the beat, the man in the street. . . .<sup>7</sup>

The greater our losses in the war, the greater will be our need to gain a sense of revenge. Scapegoats will be sought. Every new American death increases the difficulty in admitting that the war effort was in vain. This, in turn, makes the war more difficult to stop. The spiral parallels the Jewish notion of one sin leading to another. This mistake of our having become involved will become more and more clear, but the difficulty in admitting the mistake will grow proportionately. Fortunately, the cycle can still be broken. The American ego can still easily afford withdrawal. On this account, comparisons with Nazi Germany are specious. Post-World War I Germany was stripped of its border provinces, strangled in a relentless economic blockade, and crushed under staggering war reparations. The post-Vietnam war United States will remain the world's top economic and military power. Withdrawal means admitting that we over-rated the South Vietnamese regime and under-rated its opponents. Middle class opposition to the war is increasing. In this opposition, lies the chance to end the war before the difficulties become insurmountable. Milton S. Eisenhower, chairman of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, remarked that the Washington marchers were determined to remain peaceful. Of equal significance was that the police smelled the crowd's mood. Eisenhower commended the D.S. police force. He contrasted their behavior to the "excessive force"<sup>8</sup> used by Chicago police during the 1968 convention. Massive peaceful protest by moderates can avert a fascist reaction.

The passions unleashed in a righteous backlash will not be based on the actual extent of Jewish participation in war protest movements. It will be a blind, irrational, unleashing of hatred; Jews somehow feel that if they keep silent, the waves of hatred will pass over them. We ignore the fruits of passivity displayed by World War II. A fascinating incident occurred in November, 1969, at Far Rockaway's HILL Jewish Center. During Sabbath services, Rabbi Morton Berkowitz deplored the United States' role in the Song My massacre. The elderly crowd reacted with unanimity. They shouted, "It will prove to be false!" and, "they don't know all the facts yet!" The Holocaust grew a degree

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# Levy Rebuts Kishon's Biting Attack On Orthodox Theology

by NOEL LEVY

In the wake of the recent "Who is a Jew?" controversy a number of articles hostile to Orthodoxy have appeared—particularly in the Israeli press. The anger the irreligious segment of the population felt was apparently so acute that it was even reflected in the column of Ephraim Kishon, noted Israeli satirist, in place of the usual mild, although funny analysis of current events. Kishon, in an attempt to bare what he sees as the inanities of religious observance, has, in fact, epitomized a wide range of attacks on Orthodoxy—and sugar-coated it with a satirical interview with God. As such, the column in question deserves some inspection and it will be instructive to air some of the fallacies involved.

In a back-handed attack on the principle of *haskhacha*, Kishon has God observe that "of galaxies with billions of celestial bodies I've got at least several millions, so, you must understand that my attention is somewhat divided." (This excerpt and those following are from the translation by Yohanan Goldmann in the *Jerusalem Post* of March 27, 1970.) Furthermore Kishon has God worrying about the expansion of the universe and adjusting the universal gravitational constant. Important problems—too important, in fact, for God to bother with Man. The thought here is particularly interesting. It would appear that even Kishon grants the ability of the Creator to attend even to the minutiae of the universe, but still, He occupies Himself with "important" problems. Apparently the change in the universal constants is very important. But why? Is it because of the effect this change will have on the gases and solids of the universe? A moment's reflection convinces one that the importance, if any, of the changes in the structure of the universe, if they exist, is only due to the effect these changes have or will have on Man. At least, it's dubious whether Kishon can attach some other significance to these changes. We are led to the conclusion that, even according to Kishon, God worries about the ultimate effect the expansion of the universe will have on Man. Why, then, should God not "worry" about Man directly? Kishon's line of thought is elusive—perhaps even imaginary?

The second point raised by Kishon is that of prayer. He has God complain that "On the one hand, they credit me with the giant works I have set up, with the superhuman laws which keep Nature ticking along marvelously . . . on the other hand, they expect me to listen every morning to the same story and the same Byzantine praise which they heap on me as if I were some sort of artist starved for applause. . . ." The point here is an old one and philosophical in nature. Kishon's error lies in the simplistic approach to this complex question. Kishon is either deliberately misrepresenting the Orthodox position or his lack of education (or perhaps his miseducation) is appalling. To anyone even passingly acquainted with Jewish philosophy, particularly the *Sefer HaChofim* of Rav Yoseph Albo or the introduction to Rav Kook's *Sidur*, the inanity of Kishon's approach is acutely vexing. Kishon asks "Does the Creator of the World need such transparent flattery?" and entirely misses the point of *Tephilla*—which is for Man and not for God.

The next point raised by Kishon is

particularly amusing. He demands ". . . how can you ask today . . . that men and women should not pray together." Furthermore, he castigates the Orthodox because they "demand in all earnest the strict observance of all 613 of the Commandments, as if nothing had happened in the meantime, as if, in the meantime they hadn't invented electricity. . . ." At another point he has God comment that "For quite a while now you have been traveling to the moon and yet you have the temerity to declare that I, you hear, that I have forbidden transportation on the Sabbath! I, whose every move spells logic! God's every move, may spell "logic"; however, it is becoming ever clearer that the same is not true for human beings. It is pathetic that Kishon should see any connection between space travel and sabbath observance, between the discovery of electromagnetic phenomena and the binding character of *Kabbalat HaTorah*, and/or between "this day and age" and mixed seating during *tephilla*. Kishon seems to think that the theories of electromagnetism and/or Quantum Mechanics and religious observance are mutually exclusive. In point of fact, this view could only be held by one who knows little or nothing of either "science" or "religion," or both. Only one unaware of both the content and the empirical formulation of scientific theories could think that they in some mysterious way "prove" or even hint that there is no place for sabbath observance. Furthermore, if Kishon's contention is that a human mind capable of formulating electromagnetic theory or plumbing the depths of Relativity must *ipso facto* reject religious observance it need hardly be pointed out that people who have delved into neither are in no position to hold such a view. However, many who have, can testify to the contrary.

In the final analysis, Kishon's article is humorous, as usual. This time, however, the humor lies below the surface and is inherent in the position of the columnist and not in the position of those he chastises. This time the humor, unattended, evokes more sympathy than mirth.

The Governing Board of Hamevaser and the SOY extend a hearty mazal tov to Melvin Pearl, SOY representative, and Berg Last upon their recent engagement.

## Letters To The Editor

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from deciding such things that cannot be decided either way, irrespective of who says it. (translation by S. H. Glick.)

Directly in regard to the present issue, I wish to note the following:

a. Although I myself am neither an historian nor a scientist, I see no reason why I should not accept the testimony of hundreds of historians and scientists who are *Maisiach Levi Yano*, that is, providing information of a purely objective nature. I would have to be suffering from acute intellectual schizophrenia were I to accept their testimony with regard to all facts which follow the date of Creation and then reject all evidence of the pre-historic period. Indeed, I cannot understand why Mr. Waxman has chosen to denounce my article instead of

# Megillah, Man's Desires Are Rav's Subjects In Shiurim

by EZRA LIGHTMAN

(Ed. note: The following is a synopsis of the *Yahrzeit shiurim* delivered by Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik in Boston, Mar. 14, and at YU, Mar. 18.)

March 14

The Rav began by stating that Judaism is concerned with three intense aspirations of man: his desire to enjoy, to know, and to love. Judaism accepted all three as legitimate but placed certain requirements on each, for, if uncontrolled, they can lead to great difficulties.

What are the requirements? Man wants to enjoy the world, yet the universe and all it contains—both objects and experiences—belong exclusively to God; "the earth and everything therein are the Lord's." Any unauthorized enjoyment is an act of embezzlement; hence we must purchase our enjoyment. The medium of exchange is the *bracha*, a blessing. Through a blessing man displays humility and truth: that he is insignificant and dependent and that only God is Master of the Universe. If man must first purchase his enjoyment, the enjoyment is immediately and automatically regulated.

Man desires knowledge, and it, too, has its price. For the search for knowledge involves a search for the Source of knowledge and a desire to be like the Source of knowledge; man wants to become divine. The price man pays is that he must acknowledge his human situation of dependence and ignorance. And he must make a statement of commitment. He must implement the norms required by scholarship. Befriending the Lord require one to follow His ethos, for man without commitment can be satanic. Thus man may participate in knowledge, a participation which evokes a response from God. God began teaching the Jews at Mt. Sinai and has continued ever since. Hence one's learning is a cathartic, almost mystical experience; it is a communication between the seeker of wisdom and the Source of wisdom. It must be a total experience involving one's whole being.

But there is another requirement to learning, and that is that one then teach. Just as God shares His wisdom with man, so man shares his wisdom with his fellow man. Learning and loving then become synonymous, because teaching is an act of kindness and love. One must recognize that he learns in order to help others, not to rule others.

The Rav concluded by explaining the

*halakha* which says that after one has used a Torah, he must close it with the seams showing. Why are the stitches so important? They symbolically represent the human condition. Man is replete with inner contradictions; he knows no real harmony. His physical being often clashes with his spiritual being. He is rational and irrational, torn between joy and despair, defeat and victory. He believes, yet he is a skeptic. Torah wants us to sew up the tears, unite the parts, and reconcile the inconsistencies between man the vulgar and man the spiritual so that they can become one in their service of God.

March 18

The Rav began by explaining the statement in the *Talmud* that the *Megilla* is called both a Book and an Epistle. An Epistle is an objective, precise chronicle about specific events and people in history. A Book of the Canon, however, written under the influence of Divine inspiration, deals with the general and universal. Events are symbols; characters are archetypes of people of all times. A Book of the Canon, then, relates to Jewish destiny and is predictive. A careful reading of the *Megilla* as a Book will give us a reflection of the present day world situation.

Several of the events in the *Megilla* border on the absurd. Ahasverush passed a decree to exterminate a people without even inquiring about them. Strangely, no Gentile objected; they were simply perplexed. And yet, but a few weeks previously, they had been feasting side by side with the Jews in the royal palace.

The Rav explained that the answer to these apparent contradictions lies in the nature of man. Man can be rational, irrational, or non-rational. The roots of such behavior lie in man's finiteness and his finiteness-awareness. He is existentially imperfect. One course modern man has chosen to avoid his feelings of finiteness is an immersion in pleasure. He has become orgiastic man, living for the present moment only. The result is a loss of rationality, for hedonic society is non-reflective and non-meditative.

Western society is an hedonic society. The Torah's reaction is the tenth commandment—the prohibition against unbounded pleasure.

Man has developed a second escape from his finiteness-awareness; he tries to enhance his I-exist awareness. He idealizes himself to the point of extreme arrogance. His society, like the Marxist society, is duty-oriented and norm-conscious and almost tyrannically forces compliance with its rules. Arrogant man is irrational man.

The *Megilla* opens with hedonic man indulging himself. Then, as twenty-five years ago, hedonic society fell to the irrational leader of an arrogant society.

The Rav then explained how Judaism meets man's existential problem of finiteness. His feeling of limitation in the physical, moral, and metaphysical realms leaves him insecure and uncertain about the future. His response is prayer. From the depths man calls out to God and admits that he is always in need.

Through prayer, man reflects a whole way of life. It is both a consecrated life, dedicated to the service of God, and a courageous life, requiring strength and sacrifice to withstand the prevailing tides. Judaism's answer to man's problem of finiteness-awareness is "to walk humbly with the Lord".

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## Letters To The Editor

(Continued from page 7)

d. The Torah should not be regarded as a scientific treatise and hence the account of the Creation should be seen as reflecting the universal and timeless metaphysical and moral truths which form the substance of *Sod Ma'aseh Beravshit*. It is in this sense that the account may be taken literally since the days of the week as we count them signify these metaphysical truths.

e. Lastly, I think that Mr. Waxman should have understood that I was in no way aware of Dr. Solovitchik's view on this question and indeed had received the opposite impression from one of his lectures in the last term before he passed away. Had I suspected that, he would in any way have found objection with my views. I certainly would have not mentioned his name in their connection.

**Bernard Revel**

To the Editor:

With the advent of a new administration at Bernard Revel, we were told that they would be more responsive to students' needs. This has turned out to be a mendacious joke, flaunted in the eyes of naive students. The administration tells us that they are there to help the students for a school exists for students, and then they go out and plan a summer session with only morning courses, making it impossible for students to attend. Furthermore in view of a new ruling by the state, which regulates credits by class hours, the administration offers one half credit less each session per course, instead of extending each session one week, or having four two week sessions.

When confronted with their actions, instead of being honest, they give us the simpler rationalizations for these acts: 1) In the past evening session had poor attendance, and 2) It is not good to give courses in the evening, for students are tired and do not have time to prepare for their studies. The first reason is invalid because though in the past this might have been true (the last time it was given in the evening, it was not given in an air-conditioned building), now the overwhelming majority of Revel students have expressed their desire for evening sessions. (As a matter of fact, it did so as far back as last year in reply to a student questionnaire, and no action was ever taken on it.) The second reason is equally invalid because during the year many courses are given in the evening, and many other graduate schools give evening courses. What is their real reason? It is because it costs Y. U. too much to have First Hall open in the evening, or is it because summer courses are only for visiting rabbis and

not working students? Perhaps their real reason is a selfish one, not interested in the concern of students at all. Perhaps the real reason is that professors would rather, for convenience sake, give courses in the morning than in the evening.

Accordingly, the administration further says that they don't want to extend the summer session one week because the rabbis who attend the school need time to prepare for *Rosh Hashanah*. But what about this year when *Rosh Hashanah* comes out so late? What is the reason this time? Does it justify leaving many students with the unpleasant choice of either taking courses and losing a summer job, or taking a job, forfeiting valuable summer credits which would have enabled a student to spend more time in his studies the following year (as a matter of fact, it is during the year that students need more time to do scholarly work at Revel, but during the summer one is home from work at five o'clock and not pressed with other studies to detract from his Revel work).

Perhaps the *issur of "lijnei iver"* can be applied to those of us who naively trust in this administration's unbridled power, and are naively appeased by the election of student representatives and statements that the administration's offices are always open to us. They have become blinded by their power and our docile acquiescence. But let me be fair to them and state their final arguments or rationalizations.

The administration argues that it is not fair to make rabbis who come in to take summer courses wait around the whole day for them. This is absurd because when courses are in the morning they have to wait around the rest of the day anyway, and the "wasting around" time is a reality for studying. Their final argument is that four two-week sessions enabling one to take one or two credits more (and in many cases enabling one to graduate in time or earlier), is not educationally sound. If this is true, then as expert administrators truly concerned with the needs of a majority of the students, why not figure out a way where an extra credit or two can be possible for students, and yet sound educationally. There is a simple solution: But instead, the administration's answer was that rather than extend the program this summer, they would prefer a standard program for each summer. Is this not the easy way out, is this not for convenience? Is this effort expended for the sake of the students?

Sincerely,

A concerned student

### RIETS Graduates Serve Jewish Community

Seventy percent of graduates of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary are actively engaged in full-time service to the Jewish community, according to a recent survey.

According to Rabbi Morris H. Finer, director of the Community Service Division, the survey considered 1,014 living graduates of the Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University. President of the alumni is Rabbi Meir Felman, spiritual leader of Judea Center Synagogue, Brooklyn.

The study was conducted by Rabbi Herbert C. Dobrinsky, associate director of the Community Service Division

and director of rabbinic placement, who reported that most of the alumni—35.5 percent—are serving as spiritual leaders of congregations throughout the United States and abroad. Another 14.9 percent are members of the faculty and administration of Yeshiva University; 3.3 percent are in Jewish organizational work; 2.1 percent are military or civilian chaplains; 0.7 percent are directors at B'nai B'rith Hillel Organizations and other student groups; and 4.4 percent are working in Israel.

Of the remainder, 1.5 percent are in graduate studies; 21.0 percent are in business and professional life; and 8.2 percent are retired, ill or unclassified.

## Gordon On Vietnam

(Continued from page 6)

more understandable. By muzzling our own dissent, we are merely abetting fascist tendency. A Fascist onslaught can only be fought against actively.

It is even felt that kowtowing before the President on Vietnam will win his support for Israel. In reality, the President is governed by considerations of international politics. The Nixon cabinet's cool attitude towards Israel (accentuated immediately after Golda Meir's announcement of support for America in Vietnam) is easily understandable. He desires to ease tensions with Russia (a motive explicitly stated), and to curry favor of the Arabs (nearly explicitly stated). The same motivations were behind Johnson's reluctance to sell Israel Phantom Jets in 1968. When Phantoms are sold, it is to stop Russian-backed encroachments, not to please the American Jewish Congress. The will of the public can affect executive decisions, but no clear-cut will exists on Israel. We have not done enough to arouse mass support for Israel. Toeing the government's line will not kindle this support. It is thought by some that, at least, we can prevent the government from taking revenge on Israel for cool Jewish attitudes towards the Vietnam war. It is difficult to imagine a President discarding the considerations of international politics in order to spite a small minority group. Such speculation was prevalent when, on September 6, 1966, Johnson issued his famous "blackmail" statement. The White House claimed Johnson's statement was misunderstood by the person quoting him. This may or may not be so. Regardless, on November 5, 1966, Johnson announced that the U. S. would lend Israel 6 million for the expansion of electric power facilities. The White House release specifically stated that the President's decision was to disprove inferences drawn from his previous statement. Johnson's 1967 support for Israel was applauded. Jewish support for, or opposition to the war in Vietnam proved to be far removed from the Middle East policy-making process.

There is no absolute guarantee that protest by Jews will not strike some anti-Semitic nerves. No one can predict with certainty the course of international relations. However, the greatest danger to survival as a people is the

abandoning of our moral imperatives. When Rabbi Akiva was warned that studying the Torah might prove dangerous, he replied that deserting the study would bring certain disaster. Possible risks do not justify indifference to human suffering. Trying to avoid all risks makes a sham of our effort to be concerned human beings as well as good Jews. It is no less a perversion than would be denying our Jewish identity for the sake of being good "citizens of the world." We are willing to cry out for specifically Jewish causes. President Nixon has been aptly informed that his definition of "even-handedness" does not coincide with ours. Our protest against the incarceration of the "Damascus Two" was a warming tribute to man's concern with his fellows. Yet this protest appears shallow in an atmosphere of gross indifference to the agony of Vietnam. The war is too real to be cast aside because of conjured-up dangers to our people. To borrow an aphorism from Shraga Silverstein's fine collection; "It is not whether we keep our noses but our souls clean which interests God."<sup>12</sup> By working for an end to war, we will not only be giving our souls a good cleaning, but may be giving our noses a bit of polish as well.

### FOOTNOTES

1. From JTA news service in Cleveland Jewish News, Oct. 24, 1969.
2. Sen. J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*, p. 114.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
4. Sen. J. William Fulbright, *Look magazine*, Dec. 2, 1969, "The Wars In Your Future," pp. 82-88.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-88.
6. Sen. Eugene McCarthy, *The Limits of Power*, pp. 4-7.
7. Michael Hudson, "The Palestine Arab Resistance Movement: Its Significance In The Middle East Crisis," *The Middle East Journal*, Summer 1969, p. 302.
8. James Reston, "The Big Power Nightmares," *New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1970.
9. Max Frankel, "Parade Marshals Keep It Cool," *New York Times*, Nov. 15, 1969, p. 1.
10. Milton Wieder, *N.Y. Times*.
11. *N.Y. Times*, Dec. 4, 1969.
12. Shraga Silverstein, *Hear My Son*, p. 58.

## YU Musicians Form "Alumim"



The "Alumim," an orchestra and singing group led by three YU students (from l. to r. Itzy Weinberger, Jay Bensinger—leader and writer for the group—and Romie Dean), have attempted to move the level of traditional Jewish music to more contemporary standards. They have played successful concerts at Carnegie Hall and Brooklyn College, and are planning a national tour. They currently record on the "Rivka" label.