

HAMEVASER

A Student Publication of Traditional Thought and Ideas

Published by The Jewish Studies Divisions of Yeshiva University

VOLUME XII

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY NEW YORK CITY

Monday, November 26, 1973

Number 3

New Shiurim Instituted

by Joseph Rosenbluh
For the first time, Chumash and Halakha L'maaseh shiurim during the morning seder have been opened to RIETS and YP students. Rabbi Zevulun Charlop, director of RIETS, said in an interview that attendance at these Shiurim was made voluntary, so that each student can decide for himself whether to not to devote some of his time to them. That kind of decision, of loss of chazarah time, cannot be dictated by the administrator.

The Chumash shiur is taught by Rabbi Alpert on Monday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 in Room F316. Rabbi Alpert chooses one topic in the sedra of the following Shabbat and elaborates on it. He pointed out that he wants to teach "Chumash L'maaseh" that is, he wants to show how relevant Chumash is to our daily lives. For example, the first commentary of Rashi in Genesis provides proof for Jewish possession of the land of Israel. Rabbi Alpert would like students to go over the sedra with Rashi before coming to his shiur.

Rabbi Melech Shachter teaches the Halakha L'maaseh Shiur

Wednesday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 in room F305. He says he will dwell mostly on the subjects of brachot, tefillot and Shabbat,



Rabbi Melech Shachter

concentrating on parts of those topics that are not commonly known. The fact that 37 students showed up for his first shiur makes Rabbi Shachter optimistic about this class. All that is needed for class, he said, is an Orach Chaim with any commentary such as the Mishnah Brurah. (JR)

Lower East Side Jews Organize To Preserve Community

By Aryeh Guttenberg & Steven Staum

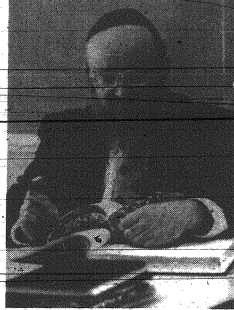
The Lower East Side of Manhattan is not just an etrogim and Lulavim capital. It is a place where years ago, thousands of arriving European Jews, in desperate need of jobs and money, decided to settle. A gradual decline in the once immense Jewish population of this area has taken place during the past two decades. Religious Jews have been moving out steadily, and today, only one Yeshivah with all eight elementary grades remains to service the educational needs of the community. Where there were once over 200 shuls, less than 50 survive. In many areas of the Lower East Side, Jews live in constant fear of their lives. Remaining residents must decide whether to move to safer neighborhoods, or stay and help protect the remains of a once proud Jewish community.

Firebombing Incident

The seriousness of the situation was recently underscored by the firebombing of the Congregation Chevra B'achurim Bnei Menashe Ahavas Achim at 297 East 3rd Street. This was the sixteenth incident of arson or vandalism of a Jewish synagogue on the Lower East Side in the past two years. The shul was a short distance from the Jewish section and was situated in the predominantly Puerto Rican section of the Lower East Side. Many members of the congregation could not attend services there in safety. They had been harassed and intimidated by Puerto Rican and Black youth gangs enroute to shul for the past few years. Just two nights before the firebombing, the huge iron gates of the synagogue were knocked down by someone driving a stolen car.

Residents of the East Side were shocked and disturbed to hear about the firebombing, but as in the past, the furor surrounding this incident will probably die down after a few weeks. It has become an all too familiar series of events: after a mugging in the streets or in an elevator, after a fire in a shul,

everyone is deeply concerned, but as the impact of an incident wears off, the old apathy returns. Direct



Rabbi Nissan Alpert

action, unfortunately, is taken only after a particularly shocking event.

Demonstration Held

After this latest incident, action was taken. A protest demonstration and memorial service for the destroyed Congregation Ahavas Achim was held on Sunday, November 4th, at Strauss Square on the Lower East Side. After opening remarks by Rav Moshe Feinstein, shlitza, Rav Nissan Alpert, shlitza, rabbi of the shul and a Rosh Yeshivah at RIETS, delivered a eulogy for the 75 year old congregation. "If the burnt walls of our shul could speak," said Rav Alpert "they would tell us to root out the evil surrounding us and apprehend those connected with this senseless outrage." He spoke of how in the 1880's and 1890's, poverty stricken immigrants from Austria and Hungary moved to the Lower East Side and made the shul the local point of Torah dedicated Jews. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised by the congregation to help the poor and needy, both here and in Israel. Rav Alpert concluded by saying, we must not be discouraged, but we must, on the contrary, continue to battle the enemies who seek our destruction.

Following Rav Alpert's speech, Harrison J. Goldin (speaking for Abe Beame), Inspector Blumenstein (Commanding Officer of the

7th Precinct), and Rabbi Sherman D. Siff of JSS, an organizer of the rally, addressed those assembled. Rabbi Siff suggested the starting of a letter writing campaign to the American Jewish Congress and the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies demanding they "Come to the aid of the elderly here who live in a sea of terror, like the silenced Jews of Russia," and that they "make the situation on the Lower East Side a focal point of their concern."

One can't say whether the rally will be the basis for further action. Sustained action is of course necessary if the exodus of Jews from the East Side is to be halted. Continued pressure is necessary if the community is to be saved.

Plan of Action

Rabbi Joel Preis, Community Organizer of the United Jewish Council of the Lower East Side, mapped out a possible plan of action in an interview with Hamevaser. Firstly, Jewish philanthropic organizations should give assistance to the East Side Jewish surviving Yeshivot and Hebrew schools, the pillars of any Jewish community. The Federation and the American Jewish Congress should provide funds for the establishment of centers for the elderly, to be run by the community. These elderly,

Rabbi Preis pointed out, "are locked up in their homes like prisoners in a concentration camp." These programs are to be started immediately if communities are to be salvaged.

It is essential to note that the phenomenon of Jews being pushed out of their communities is not unique to the East Side. Other Jewish neighborhoods such as Crown Heights, Washington Heights, and Boro Park, have problems similar to those being experienced by East Side Jewry. One cannot have much hope for the survival of a tree's branches if its strongest root dies, and the survival of these neighborhoods, is, therefore, dependent in some measure on the East Side's survival. Preservation of the Lower East Side is thus important for not only that old and proud community, but for other Jewish communities as well.

Arab Oppression Of Sephardic Jews Persists

by Yaacov Kaplan

The world in general, and Jews in particular, have been treated in the past few days to a steadily emerging picture of brutal atrocities committed upon Israeli P.O.W.s by their Arab captors, especially Syria. Our thoughts are inevitably turned to a far larger number of Jewish hostages in Arab lands, not prisoners of war, but civilians. These are the men, women and children who are the pitiful remnant of the Sephardic communities in Arab lands that numbered over a million members before 1948.

Today, that number has dwindled to less than 65,000. The plight of these Jews varies from one country to another. In Morocco, the Jewish community enjoys protected status granted by the government of King Hassan, and Jews still serve in some government positions. Schools, synagogues, charitable organizations, and even a yeshiva are still functioning, and dayanim preside over courts given sweeping authority by the Moroccan government. In spite of this, the Jews live in a constant state of fear, surrounded by a generally hostile population, and the Jewish community has dwindled from 300,000 to perhaps 40,000, a figure which is likely to drop still further.

Serious Situation

The Jewish communities of Syria and Iraq, on the other hand, number 5,000 and 350 respectively, and live under conditions similar to those of Nazi ghettos of World War II. The Syrian Jews carry yellow passes stamped "Mussauiri" (Faith of Moses) and cannot travel more than three miles without special permission. Severe restrictions are placed on the rights of Jews to conduct business; over 200 families in Damascus and almost all of the 500 Jews in Quamishli have been reduced to begging, or live on

pitances awarded them by the Jewish Community Council. In spite of this, the Syrian Jewish community led by the thirty-four year old rabbi of Damascus, Ibrahim Hamra, maintains several synagogues, charitable organizations, and some sort of education; though these are considerably under the thumb of the Syrian government.

In Iraq, the situation is even worse. The handful of Jews remaining there are the last of a proud and thriving community (150,000 in 1948) dating back to the end of the First Commonwealth. In the land of Sura and Pumpeditha, the land which produced the Babylonian Talmud, there is no longer even a regularly functioning synagogue. The Jews are afraid to gather together in public, and are not safe even within the privacy of their houses, as the machine gunning of the Hishrensh family earlier this year demonstrates. An undetermined number of Jews still languish in prison while the Iraqi government denies any knowledge of their whereabouts.

JSS Student Interviewed

Until recently, a similar situation existed in Egypt. The life of Albert Gabbai, currently a student of JSS-YC, and a native of Cairo, Egypt, almost exactly spans the tragic story of Egyptian Jewry from 1948 to the present. When Albert was born in 1947, Egypt had 120,000 Jews, mainly in Cairo and Alexandria, with smaller communities in Port Said, Suez, and Ismeilia. "The Jews took an active role in the life of Egypt, and were in all professions. One Cabinet Minister was Jewish," said Albert. All this changed in 1948, when Israel secured its independence in the face of overwhelming odds. "King Farouk needed a scapegoat. The Chief Rabbi of Alexandria, Dr. Moshe (Continued on Page 5)

B'sorot: Rabbis, Rebbetzin Speak

Due to the situation in Israel, the Agudas HoRabonim declared Monday, October 22, a fast day. That night, Rabbi Herschel Shachter, speaking in the Main Beit Midrash, said that the purpose of a fast is to arouse repentance. Just as a single person fasts because of a disaster which involves only him, so the entire Jewish community fasts when calamity threatens it. In Pirkai Avoth, war is listed as the punishment for Bital Torah. Therefore, in the present situation, where we are outnumbered and overpowered, we must employ our most potent and effective weapon: Torah study. (JR)

On Thursday, November 1, Rav Moshe Tendler lectured in the Main Beit Midrash during club hour. Quoting Rav Moshe Feinstein, he

discussed a Medrash which speaks of four Biblical kings: David, Asa, Yehoshafat, and Chizkiah. Each fought his wars in different ways. David prayed that he may pursue his enemies and catch them. Asa prayed that he may pursue his enemies but that He should bring about their defeat. Yehoshafat prayed that he may sing and God should fight his war. Chizkiah prayed that he not even sing but merely go to sleep. The last three each refrained from using all their power in order to bring about a Kiddush HaShem, by showing that a war could be won solely by trust in God. Rav Tendler emphasized that each Jew must feel an individual responsibility for Jewish survival, and stated that if Israel had lost the

war in 1967, Jewish assimilation would be worse than it is now. Thus Israel's fate is inextricably tied to the fate of Jewry and Judaism the world over. (JR)

Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis visited Yeshiva once again on November 4 for the purpose of recruiting Torah counselors for the Rock and Soul Rally. Recently held at the Felt Forum, the rally was geared to bring back lost Jewish youth to the fold by strengthening their weakened ties to their cultural heritage. The Rebbetzin found many volunteers in YU to man the mitzvah booths which were set up in the Felt Forum. These booths were established to explain the significance of the mitzvot to all interested passers-by. (ME)

HAMEVASER

300 West 185th Street, New York, N.Y. 10033; 568-8400. Editorial and Advertising Office: 92-146B. Published monthly during the academic year. Sponsored by the Yeshiva University Jewish Studies Divisions' School Student Council, published by the Student Organization of Yeshiva and the James Strain School Student Council. Printed at K.C. Automatic Printing Systems, Inc. The views of signed articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of HAMEVASER or of Yeshiva University. Editorial policy is determined by a majority vote of the members of the Governing Board. Advertising rates are available upon request. Subscription rate: \$ 2.00 per year.

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and the continuance of a Torah life that we must give up! The sacrifice of giving must be felt by us. We must sacrifice from our luxuries-even necessities; but we cannot afford to compromise on the standards of Chinuch, synagogues, and all other Jewish institutions and services. The money we give must not be a normal donation or investment. It must not be a shifting of our allocated charity fund.

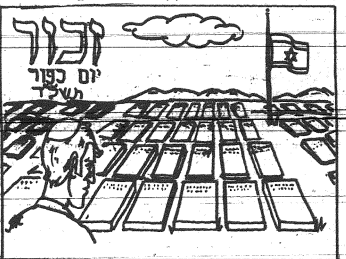
HAMEVASER calls upon the American Jewish community not to forsake our Jewish institutions while continuing to support Israel. Our sacrifices must insure both Israel's survival and the survival of our heritage.

"Middle East Cyclone"

It was our forefather Joseph who was the first Jew to become second in command in the government of a major international power. Since then the list has been long and illustrious. Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordechai, Shmuel Hamaagid and Abaranel are only some of the better known Josephs of later generations. Today another Joseph has come to the heights of world government in the person of Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Of course the difference between Kissinger and the Josephs of old are blatant. Nevertheless, Kissinger is a Jew, a Jew who lived in Hitlerian Germany and lucky enough to have left in time. Kissinger is aware of his past and aware of the relationship between the Holocaust and the State of Israel.

One cannot be sure that Kissinger's "Jewishness" will be a factor in his performance as Secretary. Reports on his actions and reactions during the Yom Kippur War are conflicting,



and assessments are therefore difficult. It is also difficult at this time to judge whether or not Kissinger will reverse or modify the State Department's traditional pro-Arab stand.

It is clear, however, that the new Secretary is an additional factor, and potentially a positive one, in Israel's and Jewry's survival. It will be to his credit if Dr. Kissinger does become a positive force on Israel's behalf. If not, Israel's salvation will come from another source. Jewry and Israel, therefore, are not dependent on Henry Kissinger, but like the Josephs of old, he can play a vital role in the Jewish people's welfare.

From the Editor's Desk

Leaderless and Divided



by Joseph Epstein

"Rabbi, I want to name my grandchild. He was born ten days ago. No, he was not circumcised-my son-in-law wouldn't allow it. And anyway does it make any difference; Dr. McCullah did the procedure-it's cleaner that way. But you see I still want my grandson to have a Jewish name-like Abraham or Moses. What? You say you can't give him a Jewish name until the religious ceremony is performed? Drawing blood? My son-in-law will not permit it. You see he doesn't understand these things. He never did. You see Rabbi, he's not Jewish-he's Catholic."

"Rabbi, we want to go to Israel for the summer. We want to experience Judaism. We are the Jewish youth and we feel that the Judaism we learn here is hypocritical. We are taught one thing and our parents tell us we shouldn't do it. What? You'll arrange for us a kosher tour? No we don't want that. We heard all about the old fashion Jews in Israel. We want to go to a kibbutz and work. Shabbat? It's too tedious. Kosher? It's not necessary. You see Rabbi we want Judaism not religion."

"Al eyleh ani bocheya. Over these I cry. My heart is shattered my mind disbelieving. Yet these are incidents which occur every day in every city. Even worse situations and challenges arise. Hatichyen Haatzmot haeyleh? Will these bones come alive? Will these bodies without a soul return to Judaism? Will Judaism come alive in the hearts of the Jewish masses and save the man from spiritual death."

Assimilation is widespread. Inter-marriage is rampant. Loss of Jewish identity the rule, rather than the exception. The present day Jewish revival is too small, too little and too late. The largest Jewish community of the world is falling prey to the forces it helped create a good life with good circumstances in a good country.

The problem is immense. Who will challenge this situation? To whom can the Jewish youth look for religious leadership? From whom can the Jews of America draw religious inspiration? The fact is that there are too few places to turn to and too few people to speak to. Why? Because the American Jewish Community is fragmented by internal squabbling and shattering debates. It is powerless against the overpowering secular influences for its resources are split, its leaders divided. The community as a united force does not exist. In essence there is no American Jewish Community. There are however 1001 Jewish organizations which have but two things in common. They are are in America, and their members are Jewish.

Within the Orthodox community, should be even more disturbed by this situation. Not a day goes by in which we do not hear one of our religious leaders condemn one another. Every week we listen to the shocking abuses hurled by one religious organization at another. The festering distrust, even open hatred, of one Orthodox group against another is frightening. Roshei Yeshivot, rabbim, rabbis condemn one another in the press, in the media, from pulpits and on billboards.

We stand back appalled. Is this what Judaism teaches us? Is this what we learn from our Torah? Certainly not. But why then, do our leaders engage in and encourage such quarrels?

Al eyleh ani bocheya. On these I cry. But over whom should we cry more? Over the Jewish youth who forsakes our religion or over the failure of our leaders to unite in strength? Hatichyen Haatzmot haeyleh? Will these bones come alive? Should we hope more for the Jews to return to Judaism or for our leaders to come alive and leadnot fight?

It takes a crisis to make us come together. On support of Israel, all agree. It takes the threat of persecution and imminent destruction to still the voices of disunity and the cries of distrust. Soon the current threat will pass and the internal fights will begin again. But the casualties of the internal battle will be much higher than any war. The spiritual dead will litter the campuses, the cities, the organizations, the temples and shuls. None will be immune; all will be guilty. All this while our leaders continue their petty squabbling and divisive debates.

We are also to blame. Must we wave the flag of our groups and tear down the banners of others? We must realize the blatant dangers and problems confronting the Jewish scene. We must prod our leaders to unite towards the common goal—unity.

K'doshim Ut'horim

We are terribly grieved by the shattering news of our war dead in this, the latest battle in the Middle East. Although exact details are not known, it becomes apparent that the toll amongst Yeshivah students serving in the army is disproportionately high. It is almost too great of a shock to bear when we hear of the abrupt end of the life of a developing talmid chacham. We cry out to the Lord, "Ayli Ayli why hast thou forsaken us? But all we hear is the apparent stillness. It is an emptiness which parallels our innermost feelings. Yet, our only N'chamah can come from the realization that these K'doshim have given their lives for the sanctification of His name and in the hope that there will be shalom al Yisrael.

The Third Front

There was a third front in our most recent war. This front continues to be fought here in the United States and the world over. It is the front of strengthening our people, educating our people, and imbuing within our people that spirit which enables one hundred to chase ten thousand. This is a battle which continues despite the peace plan. This is the struggle carried on by synagogues, educational centers, and all other Jewish institutions.

These Jewish institutions are presently experiencing severe financial difficulties because of our increased support to Israel. Yes, we must put Israel soundly back on her feet. We must sacrifice in this time of crisis. But it is Chinuch

Letter To The Editor: Judgement

To the Editor:
Ephraim Buchwald, in his "Reflections on the Yom Kippur War" (HAMEVASER, Oct. 30), presumes to account for the Arab attack on Israel as a Divine visitation for the religious deficiencies of Israeli society and the collective failure of K'hal Yisrael to correct them. I am appalled and outraged at the arrogance of such a judgment. How can any man be presumptuous enough as to claim knowledge of God has Shem Il-re'ay? From time immemorial, the problem of human tragedy, tsaddik ve-ra lo, has baffled sage and seer alike; but apparently for Mr. Buchwald the issue is resolved simply by pointing a finger at those he deems worthy of Divine wrath. Does any man have the right to pass judgment on any segment of Keneset Yisrael? On cannot help but recall the Rambam's severe rebuke, in his Iggeret ha-Shema, of the man who

would cast aspersions on any Jewish community, whatever his assessment of its religious state. Mr. Buchwald takes Israeli Chief of Staff General David Elazar to task for what is called his typical cockiness and braggadocio. In the early days of the war, Mr. Buchwald complains, while Israel was suffering its costliest setbacks, General Elazar was declaring, nonetheless: We'll break their bones. We have begun the destruction of the Egyptian army." Mr. Buchwald's irritation speaks the callous critique of a dispassionate outsider. Would any Jew so truly feel the peril of those early days react with cynicism over the general's words at that critical hour? Surely, anyone who was genuinely mishtafet be-tsaar ha-tisbuv at the time shared the emotion of defiance expressed by General Elazar in the face of the treacherous Arab attack? Indeed,

were not similar words uttered prophetically in the Torah (Bamidbar 24:8)? Mr. Buchwald's call for teshuvah is, to be sure, in place. In the wake of the war, a serious process of introspection will undoubtedly take effect within the hearts of Jews everywhere. When Jewish existence is threatened, the neshamah of the Jew is spontaneously aroused to a deeper affirmation of its identity. But any effort to explain the theological implications of the events of the past month is a profoundly forbidding task. Each of us restlessly seeks the answer, but inevitably, certainty eludes us. These are devarim ha-omedim be-rumo shel olam, and they are not resolved by Mr. Buchwald's flippant invocation of Divine wrath. Rabbi Martin L. Gordon, Judaic Studies Faculty, Stern College

America of Gold

As the war in Israel rages on and as all Israelis sacrifice themselves for their country, the American Jewish community has tried to do its share. Every Jew has felt a personal responsibility for his brethren and has attempted to help in any way possible. The United Jewish Appeal and Israel Bonds have raised over one billion dollars; countless volunteers have given blood and some have even left for Israel. The Satmir community of America has raised \$600,000. Five hundred thousand dollars has gone to the Beth Din-Zedek of the Aish Chabad of Jerusalem, to be distributed mostly to widows and orphans of the war. Some \$100,000 was given to Shaare Zedek Hospital also of Jerusalem. Although individuals have given before, this represents the first large-scale effort of the Satmir community in this area. According to informed

sources, there had been a consensus of the members of the Satmir community that "this time they should make a special effort in this matter of life and death. The solution to this problem could only be enacted through 'achdus'. It was also noted that boys from the Satmir Yeshiva in Brooklyn had left for Israel to assist in various capacities. For those of us who remain in the United States at this time, aside from more intense 'learning' and reciting T'hillim, we can aid greatly through our financial support. There are very few in YU who have not ended a week with less money than usual. The latest Mideast war has been a tremendous burden on the Israeli economy and foreign donations are needed to maintain existing humanitarian and social welfare projects in Israel. In this area, Jews through out the world have shown an outpouring of 'achdus' for Israel.

SOY President My Darkest Fears



by IRWIN GROSS

I don't know what makes "student leaders' experts on Israel's political situation, but I'd like to share with you my own thoughts on the subject. . . .

B'rechah Hafeva, Israel's situation remains gray. The Arab oil boycott has already isolated Israel from the rest of the world with the exception of the United States, and it is very uncertain how much longer the United States will support Israel unconditionally. A military victory by Israel is impossible because the Russians will do whatever is necessary to prevent an Arab defeat. The United States will try to impose an unacceptable settlement on Israel in order to preserve detente. This will leave Israel with the following impossible choices; either to stand alone against the world, which it cannot do, (Israel could not have won the latest war without massive United States aid.) or accept a settlement which will threaten its very existence, which it also cannot do. When gas and oil rationing in the United States becomes a reality, it will foster a new wave of anti-semitism. The average American is not accustomed to the slightest inconvenience and will ask himself why he should have to suffer because of those "damned" Jews, and the everpresent underlying anti-semitism of the American public will be felt by us as well as by Israel.

Our prospects are very grim and we must realize that there is very little that we can do for ourselves. True, we can and must collect money for Israel and write our Congressmen and President. We must still realize the futility of these efforts if **hashem** is not with us. As believing Jews, we know that nothing ever occurs haphazardly to the Jewish people; neither success nor **Chas V'shalom** clammy. We have **Hashgacha P'ratt** and right now we are faced with the possibility **Chas V'shalom** of future tragedy. We must therefore appeal to **Hashem Yitbarak** to save us. We must rededicate ourselves with new vigor for **Limud ha'torah**; we must daven and say **Tehillah** with added **kavanah** and we must give more **tz'dakah** because **U'Shuva'h**, **U'f'elah**, **U'tz'dakah**, **Maaverim Es Roah Hag'Yerah**.

Yolanda Benson Honor Society Comes Of Age

by Eric Fettman

Late every year, signs are posted around the Yeshiva and Stern campuses announcing the annual Music Festival of the Yolanda Benson Honor Society (YBHS). Although this event is attended by more than 500 people annually, the activities of the Society remain, unfortunately, unknown to much of the audience.

By way of introduction to those for whom YBHS is merely another group in the myriad of Jewish youth organizations, the Yolanda Benson Honor Society is the honor society of the Youth Bureau's Torah Leadership Seminar (TLS) program: the program that necessitated the formation of, and has sent a great percentage of its participants to, the JSS division of Yeshiva University. Founded in 1959 to honor Seminars who have become committed to Orthodox Judaism through TLS, the Society is named after one of the most inspiring persons ever to take part in Seminars. Yolanda Benson was born in the Poland of World War II, and was secretly committed to a non-Jewish family by her parents, who were sent to Dachau. The young girl was raised as an observant Catholic, and remained completely ignorant of her true parents and religion. After a long and difficult struggle, which included legal maneuvering and even kidnappings, Yolanda was brought to America by her parents, who had luckily survived the war.

Anxious to educate their daughter about Judaism, the Bensons sent her to Yeshiva's first Seminar in 1955. Yolanda soon was entranced by her new knowledge, and became an observant Jewess. She returned to Seminars every year, and became a popular advisor. Tragically, during **Chol Hamoad Sukkot**, 1959, she was killed in a bus accident. She was 18 years old.

The Honor Society, dedicated to her memory, serves Jewish youth across the nation. At each session of Seminar, participants who meet age and observance requirements are inducted into YBHS. In the past 13 years, the Society has grown to a membership of 300; at present, about 4 percent of the students at Yeshiva and Stern are Society

members.

The chief function of the Society is to encourage youths to attend Seminar, and thus to be exposed, in many cases for the first time, to traditional Judaism. To that end, the Society's finances go mainly to awarding scholarships to people who would otherwise be unable to attend this program. Last year, over \$1000 was awarded to Seminars across the country. At Seminar, the Society furnishes the **siddurim** and **chumashim** that are used at each Seminar. Every first-time participant is given a new **siddur**, a **mincha-maariv** booklet, and **t'fillat haderekh** card by the Society to serve as daily reminders of TLS.

Community Service

The Society is as much involved in the Jewish community as it is in the Seminar community. Throughout the year, the Society sponsors and coordinates **Shabbatonim** in varying communities. Already a major **Shabbat** has been planned in Stamford for the weekend of Nov. 16-18, and smaller "Torah Tours" are being arranged in communities like Reading, Pennsylvania. Last year, YBHS co-sponsored **shabbatonim** in Toronto with NCSY.

This year's executive board, which consists of president Richard Bieler and secretary Paul Gorginkel from YU, and vice-president Toby Macy from Barnard, recently hosted the first in what is hoped to be an annual reception for Yeshiva and Stern freshman Seminars.

Since, unfortunately, Seminar comes but twice a year, and **shabbatonim** never number enough, the Society has a multitude of programs designed to keep Seminars in touch with **Yiddishkeit**. For many Jewish teenagers, Seminar is the first place where the beauty of **Shabbat** can be truly experienced. Unfortunately, when many of these people return home, the difference is most evident on **Shabbat**. To help ease the loneliness many Seminars feel YBHS runs a **Shabbat Housing Program**, where Jewish teens can spend a weekend with young married couples, themselves past seminars, in many cases also from non-observant families.

Rabbi Harold Kanatopsky z"l (1922-1973)

by Neil Danzig

Editor's note: Beloved and admired by all who knew him, Rabbi Harold B. Kanatopsky z"l was a well known figure in the YU community. A rebbe for many years in RIETS and BTA, he inspired his talmidim and all who came in contact with him. A great talmid chacham, an understanding rebbe, and a dear friend, he will be fondly remembered in the hearts of many. One of his many talmidim, Neil Danzig, discusses below, the feelings associated with the inspiring life of Rabbi Harold B. Kanatopsky z"l.

I dare perform the impossible. I cannot use language nor try to weave a tale. His essence is impossible to capture in a few paragraphs — or for that matter, in a million words. The talmid cannot reduce the rebbe to a gracious sentiment, to a sympathetic eulogy. The sun still shines although nothing seems to matter any longer. I can't face a decent mile. Why should I? I still face every new day with a profound nostalgia never imaginable in a young person as myself. Nothing can more effectively destroy the young idealist, bright with admiration and euphoric love, than the death of the one he admired. A robust happy smile turned into a frightfully solemn grimace. **Chacham shemet lanu k'yotsei bo**. Even the rabbi felt that no **nechama** is appropriate — the life of a **chacham** is irreplaceable in that there is no one like him. There will certainly never be anyone again like Rabbi Kanatopsky. This is not just a polite overstatement but a very sorrowful truth. No one could combine the honesty, integrity, and sincerity that he had. No one could be as affected by real issues as he was. He never glanced aside to duck a problem, never gave a pat answer,

never spoke indifferently. He was sensitive to all life and incapable of committing a moral wrong. He was almost paranoid in his concern for others, receding into himself if he felt that a friend was suffering. He seemed to be meek and timid, never enjoying crowds or appearing terribly sociable. He was not concerned in the "relevant modern issues" sense, whereby many rabbis force themselves to appear troubled by contemporary problems. He was vexed by Vietnam and civil rights. These issues gnawed away at him and he suffered at times of injustice and immorality. He remarked to me at the time of the Kent State incident that he felt he can no longer live here but must opt for a more emotionally tolerable environment.

Rabbi Kanatopsky was one of the first talmidim of the Rav. He once revealed himself to me and confided that the Rav was difficult to get along with but he withstood insult and temperament while he sought a deeper relationship with his rebbe. He looked to the Rav as a child looks to his father — with love, respect, and complete frankness. He developed into a singular talmid chacham, combining the traditional Brisker approach with total honesty in learning. He never said a **p'shat** to avoid later complications or to appease an inquiring talmid. His torah was, as his life, pure and sincere. Rabbi Kanatopsky spent many years as a rebbe in BTA, often suffering abuse from hundreds of talmidim who, despite all, loved him dearly. He became famous as the school's religious counselor and teacher of Jewish philosophy. When he came to RIETS in 1967, his popularity resounded in the **bet Hamedrash**. His **shiurim in parshat hashvua** were among the greatest and most creative in the yeshiva. In the text of **chumash**, **Rashi**, **Ramban**, and an occasional **Netziv**, he brought to life a world of

meaningful Jewish ideas. I can almost again hear his voice rising as he became excited during a **shiur**, his feet stomping in glee when he understood a **Ramban**, and his words, "Rabbotai, listen . . . please listen."

In 1970 Rabbi Kanatopsky and his family went on **aliyah**. He was unsure of the future but his excitement thrilled all of us. I could not imagine myself being without him and went to Jerusalem to learn in a **yeshiva** a few minutes walk from his apartment. It was not uncommon for me to arrive unexpectedly late in the evening, and he would answer the door in his bathrobe insisting that I come in. The concern he had for me, for my development in learning, and especially to see that I resolve my inner conflicts, cannot be forgotten. He was too sensitive to stifle any creativity or uniqueness in a talmid and encouraged students to explore and think.

Rabbi Kanatopsky loved being in Israel. He remarked to me that he felt like a child every time he went on a bus in Jerusalem. He loved and was loved — his students at Hebrew U. and **Mikhlal** constantly praised him as their best teacher. Last year, a new program opened at Bar Ilan, in which students of **yeshivot g'dolot** and **hesder programs** attended university and were able to learn in a half-day **kollel**, of which he was the **rosh yeshiva**. It was a revolutionary idea and they knew that it could take only Rabbi Kanatopsky to insure its success. I never saw him as happy as he was this last year of his life. The last time I spoke to him this summer, he seemed full of optimism and was convinced that his work will begin a new era in the yeshiva system in Israel. He wasn't granted the opportunity to see the fruits of his labor. He died on 19 Menahem Av 5733, 51 years old.

EDUCATION

Besides such activities, the Society puts a major emphasis on education. To this end, a home studies series is a key project, whereby one can take courses geared for those with limited background dealing with both text and **hashkafa**, prepared by Seminar rabbinical staff. In addition, the Society sponsors a bi-monthly lecture series, which has in the past featured speakers such as **Rabbi Shlomo Riskin** (who also serves as YBHS's advisor), **Avi Weiss**, **Saul Berman**, **Morris Besdin**, **Robert Hirt**, and **Macy Gordon**, among others. A new project is the YBHS Book Club, which, in addition to making available dozens of Jewish books and records at Seminar and **Shabbatonim** to participants, at special discounts, maintains a specialized selection of books by mail on a regular basis.

The Yolanda Benson Honor Society, which operates out of its own office in the Community Service Division complex of First Hall's 4th floor, works on a relatively small budget. Fund-raising projects are limited, and, while raising money for the year's operating expenses, also provide services to Jewish youth. The aforementioned Music Festival, which will take place this year, on March 24th, is the major fund-raiser. In addition, a carnival whose proceeds go to YBHS is held at the summer sessions of Seminar, and the Society sells **t'fillat Kippot**, buttons with the Seminar insignia, and sweatshirts.

Ex Libris Hamevaser

A Passion for Truth, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Farrar, Straus, Giroux \$8.95

A Passion for Truth is Heschel's last, and perhaps his greatest work. In this fascinating volume, the late Rabbi Heschel brought forth the figure of the Kotsker Rebbe, one of the main influences of Heschel himself. Heschel found himself torn between "the joy of the Baal Shem and the anxiety of the Kotsk." These two models for Heschel had two very different goals in their teachings. "The way and the message of the Kotsker were meant for the elite; the way and the message of the Baal Shem were intended for all."

The thesis of Heschel's last work is the comparison of the Philosophies of the Kotsker Rebbe and Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish Philosopher. While Kierkegaard is the father of modern existentialism, the Kotsker is the father of religion existentialism. The similarities between these two philosophers are truly remarkable, as is the presentation of these similarities by Heschel. Theoretically the Kotsker and Kierkegaard were as different as night and day. Yet though their basic practices were different their theological problems were often similar, as were their answers, to these problems. Kierkegaard wrote these problems. In the last year of this life that in the last year of this life that "Quite simply, I want honesty." When asked what quality may be identified with the Divine, the Kotsker maintained that it was truth.

Rabbi Heschel's last book is an emotional as well as intellectual experience and permanently secures his place in the world of Jewish philosophy.

A Crown of Feathers, Issaac Beshevi Singer Farrar, Straus & Giroux \$8.95

I.B. Singer has again given birth to a new collection of fascinating stories. They all are a unique mixture of world of the Holocaust and the modern world. In many of these stories Singer attempts to deal with the unbelieving survivor of the gas chambers who in turn is attempting to deal with his new found home. Singer glides effortlessly from the starkest reality to the wildest fantasy. Each of the stories is a self-contained entity of theology, history, and fantasy. As a whole, the newest collection of stories by Singer is a truly great addition to the already marvelous collection of works by this great author.

By Gary Kirstinger

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Torat Eretz Yisrael Vis-A-Vis Torah In The Diaspora

by Azarya Berzon

"U'z'ehav Ha'aretz Ha'hee Tov'
Melamed Shechin Torah K'Torat
Eretz Yisrael". (Medrash Rabba,
B'rashit 2:22)

"And the good of that land is good.
This teaches us that there is no
Torah like the Torah of Eretz
Yisrael." (Medrash, Genesis 2:12)

What is the exact meaning of this Medrash? In what sense is Torat Eretz Yisrael special or superior to the Torah learning of chutz la Aretz? Wherein lies the direct relationship between Eretz Yisrael and Torah study? It is known that there is a specific group of commandments whose observance is confined to Eretz Yisrael, discussed in the Mishnah in Kiddushim 36b. It can also be said that, in a general sense, Eretz Yisrael has a connection with all the mitzvot; performance of a mitzvah in Eretz Yisrael adds an extra element of Kedushah to the mitzvah. But to what effect is Eretz Yisrael specifically related to the learning of Torah? How is the study of Torah in Eretz Yisrael basically different than learning in the diaspora?

Although we cannot claim to have the ability to arrive at a complete understanding of the concept of Torat Eretz Yisrael, we can at least begin to investigate it, by considering the general area in which its meaning might lie.

Two Modes of Human Reason

Philosophers have recognized that the human faculty of reason is a process which consists of two distinct operations of the human mind. One is logical, or cognitive, reasoning, which is the ability to use logic to understand reality. The cognitive reasoning may be purely abstract reasoning, not dependent upon the reception of sense data (a priori), or it may be the process of abstracting concepts from sense data. A second mode of human reasoning is the intuitive one. Through this faculty, man is able to intuit things without sense perception or the use of logic. One becomes conscious of some reality or truth through an a-rational, mystical sense. The first mode of thinking is rational, i.e. intellectual; the second is intuitive, or emotional. It has been a point of disagreement among philosophers as to which faculty of human reason is primary and makes up the real essence of human reason. Some philosophers mistrusted the intuitive or mystical ability, while others regarded it as the highest expression of human reason.

In the Jewish Realm

These two aspects of the mental process function in the religious sphere as well. When Jewish philosophers examined the religious experience, they distinguished between the two aspects of the human soul which facilitate man's relationship with the Divine. We can find a description of these aspects in the writings of two Jewish philosophers, each of whom has defined what he considered to be the backbone of the divine soul of man. Maimonides, on one hand, identifies man's rational soul as primary, and states that philosophic or logical knowledge gained through the

Thus, Talmud Torah, at its ideal level, is a combination of the logical process of conceptualization and the intuitive process of relating the concept to the reality which surrounds us.

rational powers endows man with immediate communion with God. Maimonides views the intellectual process as the road to God. He did not deny the limitations of the human powers of intellect, but nevertheless, he emphasized these powers as primary in the religious experience. Rav Yehuda Halevi, on the other hand, describes an intuitive ability, whose source is a divine power of the human soul, which functions as the psychological organ of divine revelation. Halevi believed in the immediate certainty of intuition, while denying the possibility of rational certainty in the metaphysical sphere. Many other Jewish thinkers were in accordance with

Halevi's view, most notably, the Kabbalists, and later, the Chassidim.

The Ideal Religious Experience

It would not be our place to decide an issue which divided the great Jewish thinkers into two camps for so long. We cannot say definitively what is the primary faculty of human reason. What is allowed, however, is to regard the ultimate religious experience as one in which the individual utilizes all his abilities and faculties. A religious experience which consists of a blending of both a rational understanding as well as an emotional awareness, would be more complete and intense than one which



was a product of only one of the two faculties. A Judaism which combined both of these realms would be a well-rounded, powerful experience, simply because it involved the entirety of human response.

The faith experience would entail a blending of an intuitive knowledge of God with a rational, philosophical knowledge of God; in other mitzvot it would mean an understanding of the mitzvah together with an emotional awareness of the mitzvah.

Talmud Torah

How would this synthesis of responses apply to the study of Torah?

The Torah experience, at its highest level, would be a combination of an abstract analysis of the Torah idea, interwoven with emotional experience of the idea. When the abstract concept is understood in terms of its application in the real world, its truth can be "tasted." This will be an emotional experience which results from the utilization of all the responses of human reason.

"Experiential Torah"

Although generally, with regard to the study of Torah, one begins with the process of abstracting a concept, and then one proceeds in applying the concept to the concrete, the process could conceivably be reversed. The Torah student might undergo a very concrete experience of reality, and, as a result of an intuition of the truth, he may abstract from it a Torah concept. This would explain how it was that Abraham was able to know all of the Torah (see Mishna, Kiddushin 82a) without having received it at Sinai.

Thus, the mitzvah of Talmud Torah, at its ideal level, is a combination of the logical process of conceptualization and the intuitive process of relating the concept to the reality which surrounds us. The order of the process is not of primary importance.

The Power of Eretz Yisrael

Having examined the ideal of Limud Torah, we can now move on to examine the idea of Eretz Yisrael. Here, again, we will want to consider Halevi's description of the metaphysical. Halevi tells us that just as in the physical world, where plants and living creatures find suitable, natural niches in particular lands, so too, in the metaphysical world, the superior divine power of the Jewish soul finds its natural habitat in the "climate" of a particular land, namely, the land of Israel. No place outside this land could affect the Jewish soul with the influence of the Divine power in the way that Eretz Yisrael can. Chazal tell us that the presence of the Shekhina is limited to Eretz

Yisrael and that the prophetic spirit exists only in Eretz Yisrael. In Eretz Yisrael, the Jew can find a happy, natural relation with God.

The atmosphere of Israel allows for an acute sensitivity and a sharpened awareness of the intuitive capacity which we have described above. It would not seem that the influence of Eretz Yisrael should have any direct effect on the purely rational soul, which Maimonides has described. It would rather be an effect limited to man's arational consciousness, to his mystical (intuitive) awareness of reality, which, in Halevi's description, is the divine power of

the start, the student is ready to relate to the system and to deal with its problems. Rather than shrink from what seems overwhelmingly difficult, he is eager to be guided by his vivid sense of intuition and is prepared to explore the sugyah's abstract concepts. He will use his logical faculties, but these are never working independently. There is, rather, a merging of the conceptual and the intuitive modes of reasoning. The student's comprehension of the sugyah will have gone through a process which began with the intuition of simple and clear ideas, and developed to the level of more precise abstraction, and concluded with a system of abstract ideas which are intimate and vibrant. In effect, he has reached deep into his soul, bringing to the surface penetrating concepts which he can relate to personally and subjectively; he has uncovered ideas which he can experience emotionally, and consequently internalize again into his soul.

The meaning here should not be misunderstood. It is not the intention here to maintain that these features which are being used to describe the respective "torot", are definitive and could never be otherwise. That would be a misleading oversimplification of a complex experience. There is no doubt, for example, that any talmid chacham, no matter where he is, has an intuitive perception which is with him from the beginning of his study of a sugyah, and remains with him throughout. To be sure, the more Torah one has studied properly, the stronger and more effective is his intuitive sense. We do not mean to deny this fact. Nor is the meaning here a claim that a student of Torat Eretz Yisrael will necessarily have the effective guide of his intuitions working for him throughout his studies. We mean no more than to try to characterize the tendencies and the potentialities of the two types of Torah study at the level of the theoretical and the ideal, without commitment to its application to the particular and the actual.

Possible Advantage of Torat Chutz La'Aretz

This strong intuitive ability acquired by the student in Eretz Yisrael may, however, tempt him to remain at the simple level and feel no necessity to define the concepts of the sugyah precisely and adequately. He may fool himself into thinking that his "feeling" the ideas of the sugyah is the same as "knowing" them. He may not realize that the highest level of limud Torah can only be reached after the logical capacities of the mind have dissected and analyzed the intuitive understanding of the heart. The student of Torat Chutz La'Aretz, on the other hand, precisely because he is so reliant on his logical capabilities, may have developed his ability to conceptualize to a higher level than his counterpart in Eretz Yisrael. It is for this reason, I believe, that it is halakhically permissible to leave Eretz Yisrael for the purpose of studying Torah in chutz la'Aretz. Thus, a qualified student of Torat Chutz La'Aretz, when he comes to Eretz Yisrael, may be of superior quality. This is why the Talmud states in K'tuvot 75a: "One of us (students in chutz la'Aretz) when he goes there, is as great as two of them (students of Eretz Yisrael)."

Torat Eretz Yisrael II

There is a second characteristic of Eretz Yisrael which is relevant to the other type of Limud Torah, that which we have called "Experiential Torah." The secret of the Land of Israel lies in the relationship between its physical and spiritual aspects. In Eretz Yisrael, the absolute division between sacred — Kodesh, and secular — chol, does not exist. In Eretz Yisrael, there exists the potential to break down this dualism, and to transmit the spiritual realm to the mundane. Especially in the Holy-Land can the totality of human existence be suffused with religious significance. The whole realm of daily life, of "this worldly" matters, can become incorporated into the transcendental and Divine realm. In the Holy-Land, one can feel that even a Jew selling apples on the corner, or cleaning the streets of Jerusalem, is participating in the performance of a mitzvah; in a sacred, exalted duty.

(Continued on Page 5)

Reform Jews Split On "New Direction"

by David L. Perkins

Editor's Note: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations recently held their 50th Biennial Convention at the New York Hilton from November 9th to 15th. David L. Perkins, who attended several of their sessions, files this report for HAMEVASER.

I step through the revolving doors of the New York Hilton, in the midst of a heated argument with Rabbi Gluckman (of my home-town reform temple) and we continue until we reach the main lobby where a large-size crowd is milling around. Most of the people are moving towards their meetings for the morning and my argument ends abruptly. This is the 50th Biennial Convention of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations seeming to celebrate and/or commemorate 100 years of its existence. I have a choice of which Seminar-Planning Session to attend and finally decide upon one entitled: "Mitzvah: Authority and Freedom, The Problem of the Modern Jew." Having come to the convention in an attempt to get at least a hint of its religious direction or directions, this session seemed to be the logical place to begin. Rabbi Gunther W. Plaut (Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, Canada) began with the premise that the original foundations upon which Reform Judaism were based are all but gone. His projected solution was one which I heard repeated many times over in various forms at the convention. Rabbi Plaut pointed to the need expressed by many Reform Jews: they feel they ought to do "some things," but have no "foundations." However, he made

"People don't come to temple because the Reform service is still based on just those foundations which the average Reform Jew disavows."

it extremely clear that whether concrete bases are found now or not, reform Jews need to "freely accept the disciplines of a contemporary Mitzvah system." He argued that these Mitzvot, "freely accepted," had become the reform Jew's method of meeting the eternal Mitzvah. Addressing himself to those who cannot believe in a G-d as a Commander, he suggested that they accept *Am Yisrael* or the Jewish *Masorah* in this capacity. I realized that it would be useless to start telling reform Jews to follow Mitzvot because G-d commanded them when many of them cannot conceive of this type of historical or immanent deity. But I sensed that Rabbi Plaut unlike many of the other people in the room did have this conception and was declaring that the participation in or the actualization of a Mitzvah is the "way" to attain this experience of closeness with the G-d of Israel.

Personal Liberation

Dr. Alvin Reines, professor of Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio spoke next and began a 40 minute denunciation of Traditional Jewish thought, classical reform ideas and practices and the suggestions of Rabbi Plaut. He characterized this era as a period being inundated by the "flood-tide" as the need

"of an individual person to live in the manner that accords with the way he understands himself truly to be." Reines considers this need to be inherent in the human being and to be an outer manifestation of its inner "strivings for authentic existence." The audience which had previously remained pretty calm and passive, began to come alive after Dr. Reines stated that "a human being should be able to behave in his own way in public, no matter what, as long as the rights of others are not abrogated." "Man's modern mode of consciousness demands freedom from the authority of the community" if he considers it unreasonable. Reines extended his claims into the realm of Judaism and demanded that the people free themselves from these kinds of restraints, which entail coercion and punishment by the community. He blamed the failures of the Reform movement on its adherence to beliefs in a super-natural deity who performs miracles and can command rituals and practices. "People don't come to temple" he said, "because the Reform service is still based on just those foundations which the average Reform Jew disavows."

Condemns Mitzvah System

Reines deplored Rabbi Plaut's Mitzvah system as a bad copy of the traditional use of authority which only tends to "expropriate the individual from himself." He maintained that this type of usage is "immoral" and concluded that reform Judaism should become a "polydoxy": a compendium of widely-ranging beliefs and practices based solely on the individual's self-determination. Other Rabbis on the seminar panel spoke out in disagreement with him and one lady from the audience asked very pointedly: "What's Jewish about it?" Some of the people did agree with him but it was clear from the majority of the reactions that they were the smaller group.

These two very divergent opinions represent two factions in the movement. Interviews that I conducted following the seminar and other personal observations led me to the conclusion that the establishment or at least the "traditional Reform" philosophy had fallen apart. I sensed a need among the representatives at the convention for a new direction, a differing thrust to answer the problems facing them.

Youth Reaction Varies

I walked into the youth lounge on the 5th floor of the Hilton looking for what the young people were saying about what was occurring at the convention. They were singing a folk song that was recorded in the early 60's and there was a lot of laughing. Then I spoke to Bill Bishop of Commack, New York; he told me that he put on Tephilin every morning and davened. His shoulder-length hair gave one a whole different impression than what came to the surface in our conversation. He had a grandfather who was religious and used to go to his shul for Shabbat. "People are looking for their Jewish traditions but they want to set their own standards as far as discipline goes." He invited me up to see his grandfather's Tephilin which he had inherited and was obviously very proud of. Next year, he hopes, like others I talked with, to be in

Israel, studying and discovering.

Sherry Horowitz and Barbara Rader are both 17 and live in Yonkers. They were bitter about their lack of a Jewish education and told me that many others in the Reform Youth Movement (NYFY) felt the same way. Barbara's mother was brought up as a religious woman but her father was completely secularized. She grew up in a contradiction, a confused mixture of love for her faith and its traditions alongside the doubts of a secular world in its basic truths. Her grandparents lived in Williamsburg and she said she learned a great deal there and wanted more. She explained that "Reform Judaism is an easy way out for many people." She too, is searching for Jewishness. According to Barbara, Sherry and others that I spoke with at the convention, they are **not alone**. We talked for about an hour. Sherry was embarrassed when she asked what a *M'chitzah* was. . . she was ashamed, she said that she didn't know. Lloyd Weintraub is from San Jose, California, a wilderness on the west coast. When he was younger, he didn't want anyone to know he was Jewish: "In San Jose, you just don't go around asserting your religious identity." They all seem the same in the suburbs. Two years ago, he went to a Jewish summer camp and came back wearing a teshirt with a big Magen David. Lloyd is one of the many young people from reform homes looking for symbols of their Jewishness. Our group got bigger and one guy with a guitar started singing "Upharatzah" Maybe they will spread out and find what they need in our Torah.

She explained that "Reform Judaism is an easy way out for many people." She too is searching for Jewishness.

I spoke with Gary Blair, president of the National Federation of Temple Youth. He agreed completely with Dr. Reines and his call for "personal liberation." It can safely be said that their view is not the majority opinion. Still, they represent a portion of the movement and their arguments must be answered. This group, at least, will not be returning to Torah for some time; they are the extremists and as one Rabbi said in response to Reines' speech: "You are calling for hedonism and we need a discipline for the future."

Closer to Tradition

The Reform Movement is now ready to break-away from its past history of rejection of Tradition. They are beginning to diagnose some of the ailments of the movement but are still reticent at admitting its inherent contradictions. We must not expect them to become orthodox religious overnight; that will never happen. However, we can increase our *Mekorav* activities and open ourselves up in various capacities as educational resources for reform Jews who show an interest in learning more about Torah Judaism. The eagerness of their children is great and the choices are clear. Standards, disciplines, obligations, mitzvot, the past, pride, identity: to learn more, to come closer: their voices in the youth lounge are calling. It is unnecessary to suggest the answers. I think my readers understand.

Torah Study in Israel

(Continued from Page 4)

This close connection between the very real world and the very holy world has a direct bearing on the nature of Torah study. In Eretz Yisrael, where all mundane experiences can be religious experiences, there is a great possibility that one can extract from these experiences Torah concepts. The world outside the Belt HaMidrash becomes a viable source of knowledge as the books inside it. Expressed differently, the activity outside the Belt HaMidrash can become a counterpart of the activity within the Belt HaMidrash. In chutz la'Aretz, however, it is difficult, if not impossible, to derive Torah concepts, something sacred, from reality, something secular.

Rav Kook, ז"ל, made this point in an incisive comparison of two Talmudic texts. The Babylonian Talmud (Brachot, 32b) says of the Chassidim Rishonim that despite the fact that they were unable, for lack of time, to concentrate sufficiently on their Torah studies, yet, "Toratan Mishameret," their knowledge of Torah remains intact. The same text appears in the Jerusalem Talmud, but with one textual change. Instead of "Toratan Mishameret," the text reads "Hayta Brakhah Nitenet B'Toratan," a blessing was bestowed upon their knowledge of Torah. Rav Kook explains this change. For the Babylonian Talmudists, studying outside the land of Israel, no additional knowledge of Torah can be gained, except through the actual involvement in Torah study. A Jerusalemit studying Torat Eretz Yisrael, however, can experience a *brakhah*, an increase in his Torah, even when he's not directly involved in Torah. The holiness of all aspects of life in Eretz Yisrael makes possible the continuous process of *timud* Torah.

There are aspects of the concept of Torat Eretz Yisrael, which we haven't even touched upon. How, for example, does Torat Eretz Yisrael affect the social aspect of *limud* Torah? i.e. how is it conducive for a superior *chavrutah* relationship, as described by the Talmud in Sanhedrin (24a)? How might Torat Eretz Yisrael add to *Kedushat Am Yisrael* and *Kedushat Eretz Yisrael* more than Torat Chutz La'Aretz? More research on this subject is needed to explore these and other aspects of this issue. We have confined our attention to the narrow area of the intellectual activity involved in the study of Torah. Even here we have by no means exhausted the subject.

In Conclusion

Although we have considered, for the most part, the theoretical level, for those of us who have had the good fortune to study Torah in Eretz Yisrael, the theories described above, are very real. Studying Torah in Eretz Yisrael is a unique and rejuvenating experience. Learning, in particular, and religious experience in general, become less of a confused struggle and more of a simple and clear experience, infused with *Kedushah* and *Simchah*. Somehow, *Yahadut* was happy and natural, and in no way pallid or forced. We can only pray that with God's help, we will be worthy of the *Shleimut* of Eretz Yisrael, together with all of Klal Yisrael.

JSS Student Recalls Jewish Life In Egypt

(Continued from Page 1)

Ventura, was expelled after he refused to sign statements denouncing Zionism. At the same time, mobs killed 500 Jews and bombed a synagogue in Cario. Albert explain. By the end of 1948, 40-50,000 Jews had left Egypt, mainly going to Israel. The situation worsened in 1954, after Nasser came to power. In that year, 100 Jews were imprisoned after an Israeli spy-ring was uncovered. As the situation deteriorated, more Jews left. "In 1954, Jews could take with them all but very large sums of money. By 1956, all they could take was what

they were wearing," said Albert in describing the gradual deterioration of the situation of the Jews in Egypt.

"In 1956, Nasser started 'Arabization of the economy and government,' and Jews were pushed out of many jobs and positions. When war broke out that year, Nasser expelled most Jews with foreign passports." The period of 1956-67 saw the Jews living in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty. As Albert Babbaï described it, "We never knew what new decrees might be enacted. When we went to the synagogue people stood outside and threw stones. There were also tightening restrictions on Jewish

education. By 1967, only one primary school remained. In June, 1967, the six-day war began, and with it a considerably larger reign of terror for the 2,500 Jews left in Egypt. All Jews with foreign passports were immediately expelled most Jewish males over 18 who were Egyptian citizens about 350 in all, were thrown into prison, incounging Albert Babbaï. Even the Chief Rabbi of Alexandria, Jaques Nefussi, was not spared. Chief Rabbi Douek was placed under house arrest and forced to sign statements condemning his fellow Jews in prison. The treatment the Jews received at the hands of their

Egyptian captors can well be imagined. "The first six months were the worst. It was just like the reports of Egyptian treatment of Israeli P.O.W.s." Albert went on. "It was more than just beatings. At least the pain from the beatings gradually wore off. But the worse thing was the constant humiliation and degradation to which we were

subjected." International pressure was gradually brought to bear on Egypt, and in 1969 all Jews without Egyptian citizenship were released. This left 80 Jews still in prison. The Spanish ambassador and the French government especially Alain Paher, President of the French Senate, intervened in behalf of the

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The Other Time Problem

By Menachem Schrader

I would like to call the attention of the Y.U. community to the existence of an insoluble conflict of time. This is not the renowned conflict between **Torah** and **Madah**, or even the alleged impossibility of getting both good grades and a good education. It is the conflict between **Talmud Torah** on one hand, and N.C.S.Y., Dirshu, Tchiyah, Seminar, and many such organizations on the other. The concept is a difficult one to grasp, since almost everyone agrees there is no essential contradiction. Whether one is in a **Beit Midrash** or an office, the importance of the other's accomplishments is well recognized. Yet herein lies our problem. Where should the energies of a Y.U. bachur be directed?

At first glance, the whole problem turns on a very clear halakch mentioned by the **Rambam** in **Hilkhot Talmud Torah 3:4**. "If one has before him the possibility of doing a **mitzvah** or learning **Torah**, if the **mitzvah** may be done by someone else, do not stop learning, but if it will not be done by someone else, do it yourself, and go back to learning." It can be safely assumed that if Y.U. students don't man the posts in various organizations rekindling the fire of **Yiddishkeit** throughout the country, no one else will. Other university students generally aren't qualified, and other Yeshiva students simply won't. So our answer is seemingly straightforward. We must temporarily close our **Gemaro** whenever called up for duty. Whether at Hofstra, Anchorage, Denver, or even **Be'er Sheva**, the man from Yeshiva is responsible to be on the spot when needed.

But when one pauses for a moment of additional thought, the conflict comes bouncing back. The students of Yeshiva are the future **G'dolei Torah**, **Rashei Yeshivah**, **Rabbanim**, and lay leaders of the Jewish community the world over, and the extent to which they will succeed is largely commensurate on the amount of **Torah** they will have learned. How much are we hurting

the next generation by putting too much of our energy into the present one?

There are limits to either extreme, of course. It may be argued that one **Shabbat** in four weeks spent in such activity does not disrupt anyone's learning. And how many of us learn on **Shabbat** anyway? Nevertheless, those of us who are involved in various organizations tend to take any amount of time out of learning if pressed.

Actually, one doesn't have to go outside Yeshiva in order to find worthwhile causes that have lessened the **hatmadah** at Yeshiva in the first place. How much time do the Senate and various student councils take out of learning (not to mention the newspapers)? Yet I am certain everyone is happy that someone is trying to keep cafeteria prices low, and that someone is putting out halakch bulletins. And despite the animosity towards the student newspapers, I don't believe anyone would want to see them both close.

And yet, **Torah mah tehal alehah!**

The dilemma is without solution. If we drop everything and learn, we can wave goodbye to the Jewish college students of Nassau County, and to the teenagers of the American Jewish hinterland. We can wave goodbye to the College and rabbinical alumni who see in the college newspapers their only remaining linkage to Yeshiva, and who read the columns and editorials as the expressed opinions of Orthodox Jewish youth. But if we instead drop our **Gemarah**, we can wave goodbye to the future.

Yes, the dilemmas without real solution. But whatever compromise or extreme each of us decides upon, let us realize the essential and potential good that we are not accomplishing. And to whatever extent our communal responsibility takes time out of learning, let us remember the terse but exacting language of the **Rambam** in explaining this halakchah. "**Ya'aseh hamitzvah, veyachzor leta'mudo.**"

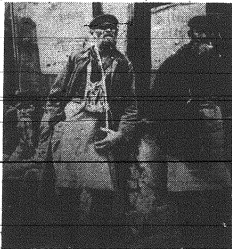
The Chosen People: An Irrevocable Title

by Jay Orlinsky

Many ages have long passed since the observance of the Jewish nation from Egypt. During that span of time the Jews have wandered from country to country, continent to continent, and from unity to dispersion. But even after centuries of persecution, the Jewish nation has become synonymous with the title "The Chosen People."

Am Ha-Nivchar, a name of royalty and permanence or a tag for the downtrodden that is transient? Was **B'nei Yisrael** chosen for eternity or is this choice transferable? Is everybody in the Jewish nation part of this selection or does this **bechirah** refer to a select few? Jewish scholars have dealt with these questions and have supplied various answers.

The title of "The Chosen People," although widely used, has been



Am hanivchar

disregarded by the Christian world and classed a misnomer. Christianity has pronounced the Jews sinners, who thereby forfeit their claim to be called the Chosen People. On the other hand, the Gentiles, having accepted their Saviour, reclaimed this so-called "forfeited title" and proclaimed themselves the true Chosen People. The **Gemarah** in **Kiddushin** refutes this claim, (1) and says that under no circumstances can this privilege, bestowed on the Jewish people by God, be lost by the act of sinning. (2) The Talmud cites proofs from the **Torah**, the very basis of the Gentile canon, thereby refuting intrinsically

the claims of the Christians. (3) The illustrious Maharal of Prague explains that God's selection of **B'nei Yisrael** does not hinge upon their actions and is not transferable even if **B'nei Yisrael**'s righteousness, as **Avraham Avinu**'s righteousness, says the Maharal, was mentioned before God's choice of **Avraham** as the forefather of the Jewish nation, reflecting the fact that **B'nei Yisrael**'s selection is in no way dependent upon their actions. (4)

The "**Or Ha-Chayim**" continues on the same line of thought and even adds an example of the attachment of **B'nei Yisrael** to **Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu**. He compares it to the affinity a king has for a precious jewel. Though the jewel may have no use, its preciousness creates an inseparable bond. (5) **Rav Meir Chaim Luzzatto** disagrees with the Maharal, and says, rather, it was because of **Avraham**'s righteousness that he was chosen by God. Although in disagreement on this point, he joins other Jewish scholars in saying that after **Avraham**'s selection there are no conditions attached to **B'nei Yisrael**'s choice as the Chosen People. (6) The **Ramban** reiterates this by stating that God's choice was made out of love, which, having no underlying reason, remains as such for eternity. (7)

Rav Kook zt"l writes that the concept of "**Am Ha-nivchar**" is superseded by the ideal of "**Am Segulah**". The attachment of **B'nei Yisrael** to God, he adds, is like that of the bond between father and son. Just as a son can weaken or strengthen his relationship with his father by bad or good deeds so is the case with **B'nei Yisrael** and **HaKadosh Barukh Hu**, "**Bechirah**" is the measurement of the strength of the bond between the Jewish nation and God, being governed by good and bad deeds, while "**Segulah**" is the attachment itself, a bond that shall always exist. (8)

Being "**Am Ha-nivchar**" carries with it responsibility as well as privilege. The 613 commandments prescribed by the **Torah** are the

duties of **B'nei Yisrael** to God. In addition, we are told that **B'nei Yisrael** are to be a nation of priests onto God; a shining light for the rest of the nations of the world. (9)

During recent years the Jewish nation has experienced a division amid its ranks caused by the various religious and secular groups. This rift has provoked harsh words and alienation on all sides. What all sides fail to realize is that all Jews alike, whether religious, irreligious, or even anti-religious, are all an integral part of **K'lal Yisrael**, "**Am Ha-Nivchar**". When assembled together they all form one unit of righteousness. (10)

B'nei Yisrael is symbolized by the "**Arba Mnim**" used on Succot. These include the "**Aravot**", the symbol of the **Reshaim**. What better proof can be brought to show that



Am Sigulah

"**Am Ha-nivchar**" encompasses all of its constituents? (11)

From all these sources one may safely conclude that **B'nei Yisrael** is a nation chosen by **HaKadosh Barukh Hu** for no apparent reason and with no stipulations for keeping its title of "**Am Ha-Nivchar**". It is a nation whose members are, each and every one of them, an integral part of a congregation of priests. In short, **B'nei Yisrael** have a covenant with the **Ribbono Shel Olam** that is forever binding and non-transferable.

Footnotes on page 7

Miracles of Miracles

by B. YASGUR

The spitting of the Red Sea, the desert wandering, Israel, life. Is there a unifying factor between the aforementioned?

The Jewish people has for centuries claimed that G-d performs miracles for His nation. Indeed all aspects of life for all are G-d granted miracles. Yet, how common we must be to believe that life goes on with an underlying basis of miracles. How dare we claim that we are recipients of miracles? Does not science tell us that in the summer months the Nile River usually turns a dull red, due to the presence of vegetable matter? Does not science tell us that the slime of the river breeds a vast number of frogs accompanied by swarms of tormenting insects in the sky? Does not science, indeed, offer natural explanations for all the plagues save the last? Events from **Masaad Har Sinal** to the existence of the State of Israel, as well as all life functions, find natural explanations in scientific theory. Can Judaism, which boasts progressive knowledge deny scientific facts? Does the **Torah** which commands man to conquer Earth and vanquish knowledge (**Gen. 1:28**), do so only to disprove itself?

The **Rambam** offers us the needed insight to the understanding

of miracles. Miracles are performed within the realm of nature, by the Master of nature. Each miracle is a **Nisayon**, a test. If we recognize an occurrence as a miracle we thereby affirm our belief in G-d. If we are nonbelievers the option is ours to naturally explain a phenomenon. A miracle then is an event, which may be thought to be a phenomenon of nature but is in actuality a Divine decree.

As a nation the Jewish people have experienced two types of miracles. The first type encompasses the events, which are readily recognized as unusual occurrences, such as the spitting of the Red Sea. These obviously strange happenings were unique to our nation until our entry to the Promised Land. With our entry to Canaan miracles of this type ceased to occur. They now assumed the format of the second type miracle concealed within the realm of nature.

The **Torah** introduces us to this concept of miracles. Let us examine the following verses: "**Vayelach Hashem Baam et hanechshim haasrafinim, vayeleschu et haam vayanot ani rav meYisrael** (Numbers 21:6)" and "**Hamolichacha bamidbar hagadol v'hanorah nachash saraf v'tzemaon,**" (Continued on Page 7)

Rationalism, Mysticism and Heteronomy

by Shaya Wexler

Any Jew who takes his Judaism seriously has found the need to anchor his faith in firm philosophical foundations. The purpose of this article is to examine the various philosophical approaches which have served as the basis of Judaism. This article will first examine each doctrine separately, and then explore the possibilities of synthesizing the different approaches into one.

The three philosophical approaches used by Jews to justify their belief are rationalism, mysticism and heteronomy. (1) Rationalism emphasizes the use of reason in understanding Judaism and insists that knowledge of G-d is of prime necessity. A rationalist asserts that logical and even a priori proofs can be presented as a justification of the Jewish ideology. Mysticism takes an entirely different approach. A mystic sees religion as a subjective - as opposed to objective - experience. He eschews rational philosophical systems in favor of a personally developed relationship with G-d based on the emotional affinity between G-d and man. Heteronomy, for the Jew, is the belief that all Jews are subject to the laws of the **Torah** because of a specific commitment on the part of the Jewish nation - this com-

mitment being the covenant accepted by the Jews at Revelation. The laws of the **Torah** are arbitrary and do not need to be comprehensible to human reason. Religion, then, is mainly a historical experience. (2)

The problem in accepting any one of these approaches is the inherent difficulties in each method. The rationalistic approach is flawed because reason can be used to lead to many different and equally valid conclusions. This weakness is countered by the rationalist with an absolute in the form of a deity which gives his particular system its legitimacy and *Raison d'etre*. (3) It is for this reason that rationalist philosophers first set out to prove the existence of G-d and then demonstrated the rationale of Jewish Law. However conclusive and logically binding proof that G-d exists is lacking. Modern philosophy considers axiomatic the dictum of Immanuel Kant that the existence of G-d is an antimony meaning that for every proof of G-d offered, there can be an equally logical proof offered negating the existence of such a being. (4) Kant's widely accepted assertion pulls the plug out of any religious philosophical system. Mysticism presents us with a

problem of a different nature. Mysticism stresses the personal subjective relationship between G-d and man. However, by making religion subjective, objective "codes of law" lose their importance, as individuals would rather rely on mystical experiences to define the scope of their religious commitment. This attitude, of necessity, denigrates legal codes and fosters religious anarchy and antinomianism. (5) This is the trap that **Shabrai Zevi** and his followers were ensnared in when they preached the doctrine of "redemption through sin" and encouraged the breaking of **Halakchah**. (6)

The difficulty with heteronomy is a psychological one. Many people are not willing to accept the idea that reason plays no role in religion. Also, the traditions of Revelation and the **M'sorah** are not historically verifiable, and this lack of proof sows the seeds of doubt in the minds of many.

Clearly, no single approach is sufficient, and it is necessary to construct for the modern Jew a philosophical system combining the various features of the different approaches that have been discussed. I would label such a construction as the eclectic approach. (Continued on Page 7)

"Gather the nation... at your gates so that they will hear and learn"

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when the Old City was in the hands of the Arabs hakhel services - the

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of HAMEVASER wish a hearty mazel tov to Jeff Feinstein former Editor-in-Chief of HAMEVASER, and his wife on the birth of their son, Yaacov Mordacai, Hay'rushalmi.

Chief Rabbinate was careful to call them zecher P'hakhel - were held on Mount Zion. The zecher L'hakhel was held on the second day of Chol Hamoed, not the first, so that visitors fromchutz la'aretz could participate without the complications of yom tov sheini.

One other interesting innovation was announced in 1953 by the Chief Rabbinate in order to satisfy a

requirement of hakhel mentioned by the rishonim. Basing themselves on Baba Batra 14b they say that parshat hakher was read from the sefer azarah, the sefer torah written by Moshe. (Later, when sefer Moshe was nigzar, hakhel was read from the sefer that Ezra wrote.) Since we have no sefer azarah today, from which sefer ought we to read? In response to this problem, the Chief Rabbinate announced the writing of a sefer Torah for all of K'tlal Yisrael. Jews from 'all over the world were encouraged to buy "shares" in this sefer by paying the sefer to write a letter for the - Sefer Vayavileh was reserved for children since it is traditionally the part of the Torah taught to youngsters beginning yeshiva. It was felt that such a sefer would be the symbolic, if not the halakhic equivalent of sefer Azarah.

One final problem with regard to present-day observance of hakhel is that of tumah. The Rambam (Hilchot Chagiga 3:2) states that a

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tameh is exempt from hakhel. This would seem to exclude us from hakhel since everyone today is considered tameh - P'not. The Minhag Chinukh Mitzva 612 explains, however, that the Rambam does not mean that a tameh is intrinsically exempt from hakhel. Rather, a tameh is excluded because hakhel took place in the Temple which he could not enter. If hakhal takes place outside the Temple mount, therefore, a tameh may and must participate.

Regardless of the possibility of fulfilling hakhel today, poskim speak only of instituting a zecher

L'hakhel. This is not hard to understand. Even if we can fulfill Mitzvat Hakhel to some extent, no hakhel we can arrange can compare with the spectacle of multitudes of Jews gathering in the Bet Hamikdash to hear the Torah reading by their appointed King. Any commemoration of hakhel we perform must be coupled with prayer that mashiach will soon come and hakhel will be celebrated in all its spiritual beauty and meaning.

hakhel took place on the Temple mount (See Tosephta Sota 7:8 and Baveli Sota 40b.)
6. However, see Hakhele Rabai 12:4. "Why was Solomon called Kibolei? This is because his words were said in a gathering (hahel). This is based on the passage (Melachim 1:11) "Then Solomon gathered etc."
7. Minhag Chinukh Mitzvah 612. Abavaon on Dvairim. The Hilchot Yisrael in Sotah says that there is a mitzvah drabanan for the king to read. From the Chinukh (Mitzvah 612) it would seem that only the

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of HAMEVASER sadly note the loss of Mrs. Pauline Sachs, a long time secretary in Yeshiva. We express our sincerest condolences to her sisters, Mrs. Nadler of CTI and Mrs. Greenberg of the Registrar's office.

Footnotes

1. R' Meir. Onkelos translates this as b'zman, "in the time". However the Baveli (Sota 41a) understands it to mean "during the holiday" i.e. Sukkot. See also Rav Yechiel Charlap's article dealing with hakhel in Or Hamizrahch Tiferet (Kislev 5722).
2. Literally, "in their ears" (v'ozanhem). See Rav Baruch Sheffer's Burei Onkelos ad loc.
3. 2:13-14. Paralleled in Dinei Hanyaman III 33:2, 4:8-18.
5. However, R' Eliezer ben Yochanan quotes both the passages in Nechemiah to support his contention that

- king may read parshat hakhel.
8. Antiquae 4:8.
9. See Rav Charlap's article for a discussion of whether hakhel can be, and whether in fact it was performed at night.
10. See Rav Leibes' article in Or Hamizrahch Tarnuzel 5725 in which he attempts to substantiate the original text of the Yerushalmi. There may be some historical basis for the Yerushalmi as we have it in Nechemiah 8:16. Also see the Baveli Sotah 41a.
11. From Yerushalmi Sotah 17:8 it seems that the banah was in the Men's Court. The Rambam (Hilchot Chagiga 3:4) accepts the Baveli's opinion. See above note 3.
12. See the discussion of sefer azarah below.
13. Tosephta Sota 7:8. See above note 6.
14. See Rashi on the Mishnah, Rambam Hilchot Chagiga 3:3 and Kesef Mishneh ad loc.
15. See Lacham Mishneh on Rambam Hilchot Chagiga 3:4.
16. Rambam Hilchot Chagiga 3:4.
17. Rishonim and Acharonim disagree as to whether only children who are old enough to be educated or all children must be brought for hakhel. See Rambam in Vayelech, Minhag Chinukh Mitzvah 612.
18. There is support for this psak in Rashi, who apparently says (on Sota 40b v'v' me'emeitan) that theoretically hakhel should take place on the first day of Sukkot but is postponed till the second day, to avoid desecrating the yom tov.
19. Rashi Baba Batra 14b v'v. Rabad quoted in Shita Mekubetzet ad loc.
20. See Zecher L'Avotai Hakhel pp. 17-23 for a description of his practice and other factoids by the Chief Rabbinate.

The Chosen People: Footnotes

1. Tractate Kiddushin 36a
2. Ibid. Rebbe Meir and Rebbe Yehuda argue as to whether or not Enei Yisrael are still called "Banim" (sons) when they transgress the commandments of God. Rebbe Meir teaches us that in all cases Enei Yisrael is called "Banim." The Rabbi in his response section 194 and section 242, states that although normally the halacha is like Rebbe Yehuda when he argues with Rebbe Meir in this particular case the halacha follows Rebbe Meir.
3. The Pesukim (verses) used in Kiddushin 36a are to be found in Deuteronomy 12, Jeremiah 4, Isaiah 1 and Hosea 2.
4. Maharal of Prague: Netzach Yisrael - Chapter II.
5. Rav Moshe N. Eter. "Or Ha-Chayim" Exodus 19:5.
6. Rabbi Meir Chaim Inzago: "Da'at I Yevah"
7. Rambam: Deuteronomy 7:10.
8. Rav Kook z"l: Introduction to "Shabbat H'aleitz"

9. Exodus 19:6
10. Rav Ze'evok He Cohen. P'ri Tzadik on Leviticus; Essay on "Amalot Torah". II. "Et Tamei on the Torah: Essays on Succot". The author thanks Rav Yitzchak Steiner of Jerusalem in helping him with the finding of sources.

The Editor-in-Chief and Governing Board of HAMEVASER wish a hearty mazel tov to Jeff Granofofsky, former Copy Editor, and his wife Barbara, on their recent marriage.



Major Trends In Jewish Philosophy

(Continued from Page 6)
proach, an approach that seeks to synthesize the ideas of rationalism, mysticism and heteronomy using each a method for the different stages of an individual's relationship with G-d.

The first stage in this relationship, of course, is the acceptance of G-d for which the individual employs certain elements of mysticism. This is done by the individual seeking out G-d. The goal of this quest is to discover G-d by experiencing G-d, and only if the individual senses and experiences G-d by himself will he be able to attain a lasting and meaningful relationship. But not only must the individual sense G-d for the relationship to succeed, but he must also feel the overpowering desire and need for a special, uniquely personal relationship with G-d.

The second stage is the solidification of this relationship, and here heteronomy comes into play. To solidify his relations with G-d, man must commit himself to G-d, much like a love between man and woman, to be solidified, must be committed to the bonds of marriage. The commitment involved here is the unconditional acceptance of the Torah and the laws inscribed therein. Heteronomy is then the cement that binds the connection between G-d and man.

The third stage is where man seeks to develop the relationship between G-d and himself to the fullest extent. This is accomplished through the vehicle of reason. Man uses reason to discern the "way of G-d" which is the ultimate in perfection. Once man understands the "way of G-d," he can emulate this way in his everyday life. In this

manner, the individual fulfills the verse "That thou wouldest walk in His ways" which is the source of the all important precept of "imitatio Dei." (7)

The above eclectic approach is only an outline of a much deeper method of attaining a relationship with G-d. Such a system makes religion a subjective experience, but does not eschew either rationalism or heteronomy. Indeed, all three methods are necessary in the creation and development of a lasting bond between G-d and man.

FOOTNOTES

1. I have borrowed the term of heteronomy from the article by Rabbi Alexander Carlebach, "Autonomy, Heteronomy and Theonomy," TRADITION, Fall, 1963.
2. The best example of heteronomy is a SIFRA (Leviticus 20:22) quoted by Rashi and others. The Sifra goes as follows: "How do we know that we should not say 'I have no desire to eat swine's flesh...' but on the contrary that we should say 'I have a desire for these forbidden things, but what can I do when my Father in heaven decreed that they are forbidden to man'..." Preface to Spinoza's Critique of Religion" THE JEWISH EXPRESSION (New York: Bantam, 1970) pp. 353-354.
4. Etienne Gilson and Thomas M. J. van Driel. M.O.D.E.R.N. PHILOSOPHY: DESCARTES TO KANT (New York: Rishonim Press, 1973) pp. 432-433.
5. Gershom Scholem, MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM (New York: Schocken, 1940), p. 9.
6. For a better understanding of the

Sabbatian heresy see, Gershom Scholem, "Redemption Through Sin", THE MESSIANIC IDEA IN JUDAISM (New York: Schocken, 1971), pp. 78-141.

7. Deuteronomy 26:17. See Maimonides, SEFER HA' MITZVOS, positive precept number 8.

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Arab vs. Jew

(Continued from Page 5)

remaining prisoners and on June 13, 1970, the remaining prisoners, including Albert, were secretly released, and left the country at once. Within a few months, Albert was joined by his family and most of the remaining Egyptian Jews.

Today no more than 400 Jews are left in Egypt, either old people or professionals - They and their families are still forbidden to leave. There is no real persecution, since the Jewish community is practically extinct. A synagogue still functions in Cairo, and the ancient Elyahu Hanavi Synagogue in Alexandria has been declared a national monument. When asked what American Jews could do for these Jews still in Arab lands, Albert replied, "The most effective method is quiet diplomatic pressure. Western governments must apply pressure. Only that and G-d's help can get them out."

'Recognizing A Miracle Is An Affirmation Of God'

(Continued from Page 6)
asher ein mayir. Hamotzi lecha mayim metzur hachalaminah" (Deut. 8:15).

The first verse seems to imply that G-d sent biting snakes into the desert to attack a sinful nation. The second verse tells us that the desert was always inhabited by biting snakes. Are these verses contradictory? The understanding of the verses, the incident mentioned, and everyday life, lies in the meaning of Vayeshalach, which is in the Piel form. This meaning is clarified by the following verses: Vayeshalach et hayonah meito (Gen. 8:7), Vayeshalach et hayonah meito (Gen. 8:9), Vayesh P'shalach paroh et haam (Exodus 13:17).

The Cantorial Training Institute invites the entire student body to the presentation of the film, "The Traditional Chronology of the Hebrew Scripture," Wednesday, December 5, 8:45 P.M. in RIETS Hall rm. 470.

We see in the above verses that the word Vayeshalach (in Piel) connotes the letting loose of something up to now restrained. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch accurately translates the verse in question (Num. 21:6) as "Then G-d let the poisonous serpents loose against the people, and they bit the people and many people of Israel died."

denancies which up to this time had been restrained by G-d. The deadly obstacles in life had always been checked by G-d. In the case of the snakes, G-d withdraws His restraining power, His careful protecting power, and the nation is afflicted. With the nation's repentance G-d once again harnesses the serpents' natural tendency and continues His unbroken protection in other areas.

Creation was only the first step in G-d's ever continuing hasgacha. G-d keeps constant watch over the entire world and a special protection to Shomrei Mitzvat, observers of G-d's commandments.

The order of this universe, the rains in the proper season, the grass in the field for the cattle, the continued existence of a small nation, are not unguided occurrences. The miracle of miracles is that G-d functions through nature's channels. G-d's miracles are not supernatural. They are events which testify to G-d's supremacy. His control of nature, it is this control, just as the control over the biting snakes, which successfully guides and protects this universe and its inhabitants.

The channels of Divine protection and guidance of this scientifically explained world are endless. The Jew lives his life paying tribute and recognition to G-d and His ways, by living a Torah life.

1. The key to understanding these verses was rendered to this author by Prof. Nechama Liebowitz.

Contributing Editor

America's Homo Judaicus: An Endangered Species

Ephraim Buchwald

There was a time when the Jewish people, not only preached, but practiced selflessness. The generosity of Jews, even in the most difficult circumstances, was legendary. Children were nurtured on tales of impoverished Jewish families who extended aid to those less fortunate than themselves. Young listeners were fascinated by stories about poor tailors who brought guests home with them for Shabbat to share with them their Shabbat "feasts" of black bread and herring.

The Yom Kippur, was put the Jewish charity instincts to the test once again. The great outpouring of money by Jews to save the beleaguered State of Israel from destruction was unprecedented. More than a few people gave their life's savings to the UJA. Far from abandoning the traditional Jewish ideal of selflessness, it would appear, that American Jews added an illustrious chapter to the history of Jewish idealism.

The average informed American Jew will find nothing earth-shattering in the contents of the above paragraphs. That the American Jewish community responded very well to Israeli appeals for help, should shock no one. But let us not delude ourselves. The truth of the matter is that the contributions solicited by UJA and State of Israel Bonds represent only about half the Jewish population in America. The incredible fact is that while three million Jews faced the possibility of total annihilation, nearly half the Jewish families in the United States failed to respond. This, surely, is not the generation of selflessness and selflessness may be more appropriate.

At the risk of stretching the point a bit, it would not be incorrect to say that many of the crises of American Jewish life today, can be attributed, at least partially, to the naked selfishness of American Jews. An obvious example of the survival of the fittest is the numerical survival of

the Jews in America. With great fanfare, the United States Bureau of Statistics reported earlier this year that the United States had finally attained Zero Population Growth (ZPG). If all goes well, and Americans continue to bear an average of 2.1 children per family, then seventy years from now the total population of the U.S. will level off and remain stable.



However, American statistics are rather bland when compared to American-Jewish statistics. Actually, the selfless American-Jewish humanitarians achieved ZPG in Jewish community long ago. In fact, for years now, American Jews have been maintaining Negative Population Growth. The consequences of NPG for the American Jewish community are obvious. Even if all assimilation and intermarriage were to suddenly stop and if every single Jew, born a Jew, would live as a Jew, the Jewish population of the United States would nevertheless progressively diminish.

If this is so, why don't American Jews have more children? Doesn't the American Jewish community realize the inherent danger of self-extinction in NPG?

There are many reasons for the diminished Jewish birth rate in America. Concern for world over-population has always been popular among Jews, and has mitigated against large families. Many Jews

have limited their own natural families and have instead chosen to adopt children. In certain Jewish circles it has become almost fashionable for parents to adopt children of Vietnamese, Biafran or Korean origin. In light of the critical realities of American Judaism at a time when Judaism is starving for children, this noble and selfless act of adoption in the name of

Universalism and Humanity, can only be regarded as an act of selfishness. It is not easy to condemn those who adopt non-Jewish children in the name of over-population. After all, over-population is a legitimate concern of the Jew. No such difficulty, however, arises in condemning other practices now common on the Jewish scene. Recent reports record a rise in the number of supersuperstitious couples who consciously do not want children. As expected, a large number of these people are Jewish. They make no effort to hide their purely self-centered motives for this practice. They openly admit that children get in the way; children detract from the father-mother love relationship; they make living the "godlife" inaccessible to those of middle income. In short, they say, we prefer one life to live and we prefer Acapulco to washing diapers!

Adding to the complexities of the overall problem is the growing number of Jewish homosexuals and Lesbians. The New York Times now carries an ad for religious services at the Gay Synagogue. Statistically speaking, the effect of the various childless groups on the total Jewish population is devastating. It is enough to cancel out any gain that may accrue from observant families with 10-12 children.

An additional factor to consider is the rate of employment of Jewish women today. Among all white groups of similar economic circumstances, Jewish women have the highest rate of employment. The success of the Jewish career woman has sharply diminished the Jewish population, since career women are not likely to have more than 1-2 children. Here again, personal ambitions of the American Jewish community results, not only in a quantitative but in a qualitative diminution of the Jewish population as well.

Other elements contributing to this dismal picture show no signs of abating. Inter-marriage is reported at 48 per cent and children of these marriages are not raised as Jews. Divorce among Jews in this country has risen in the past five years to a staggering 30-35 per cent resulting, in many instances, in irreparable damage to the members of these families. Furthermore, throughout the country young Jews represented in the counter-culture, are significantly out of proportion to their numbers. Many of the best Jewish youth are being lost to the drug culture, the family unit is being destroyed, and the Jewish community structure is crumbling.

The conclusion is inescapable: selfishness and hedonism now rule supreme. For more and more Jews the question of survival of the Jewish people means nothing. What counts is their ability to gratify personal needs and so-called "ideals," whether it be luxury, pleasure, self-fulfillment, status or sex. The days of the black bread and herring are no more. Selflessness has become a

fantasy.

One final example. When it was finally acknowledged that the Jewish movement had attracted many Jewish youth various groups were organized to deal with the threat. Jewish establishment organizations vented particular venom at the Key 73 campaign and even charged them with trying to steal Jews from Judaism. At the very moment that Rabbis and leaders of major Jewish organizations were condemning the Christian leadership for trying to steal our children, our own Jewish organizations (particularly, the Jewish Child Care Association) continued (and continue) to allow Jewish children to be adopted by non-Jews. Jewish leaders, you accuse Christians of taking our children!

CORRECTION
HAMEVASER incorrectly reported on the name of the YU Kollle complex being established in Israel. The center will be called the Gruss Center of Yeshiva University. Mr. Joseph Gruss, a member of YU's Board of Trustees is the main contributor to the project. We regret the error.

You yourselves, are guilty of allowing our children to be given away!

The tragedy does not end here! The Jewish Child Care Association is not totally to blame. While they cannot be excused for their actions, the desperate truth is that there are no Jewish foster homes ready to accept these children. Even an Orthodox institution in Boro Park cannot find enough homes for their clients. If these children are taken in by non-Jews, we have only ourselves to blame. It is selfishness, once again, rearing its ugly head.

If we are survive as a community of Jews in America, then it will be necessary to relearn the art of being a Jew. The wealth, glamor and distractions of this country cannot be allowed to deaden our sensitivities as Jews. If we are to live, we must do away with selfishness, or selfishness will do away with us.

Contributing Editor

The Significance Of Hakhel

Eleizer Diamond

With the founding of the State of Israel, many areas of halakha which had long lain dormant have become the subject of theoretical and practical debate. Shmittah, terumat maaserot, kidushat harabavot these are just some of the areas with which halakha authorities have had to deal. The year 5734 brings with it a mitzvah that has yet to be fully clarified, that of hakhel.

The mitzvah is described briefly in Vayelekh. The Torah states as follows: "And Moses commanded them (the priests and the elders) saying, at the end of seven years in the time of the shmittah year during Sukkot. When all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your G-d in the place He shall choose, you shall read this Torah before all Israel so that they shall hear. Gather the nation, the men, women, and children and the stranger at your gates so that they will hear and learn, and they will fear the Lord your G-d and they shall be careful to follow all the commands of this Torah." There are references to public reading of the Torah in Milukham II and Nechemiah, though it is far from clear that these were intended to be a fulfillment of mitzvah hakhel. We

find the term hakhel in reference to King Solomon as well, but no mention is made of a public Torah reading in this instance. The last mishnah in the eighth chapter of Sotah describes the procedural requirements of hakhel. It therefore serves as an excellent framework for examining hakhel and its application to our own times.

The Mishnah refers to the hakhel Torah portion as parashat hamelekh and says that the king reads the hakhel portion. While the poskim understand from this that the king ought to read hakhel, most of them also agree that a high official other than the king may read in the king's place. It is interesting to note that Josephus reports that parashat hakhel was read by the Kohen Gadol. However this may be explained by the fact that during the Hasmonean dynasty the king usually held the position of Kohen Gadol as well.

The proper time for mitzvah hakhel is, according to the Mishnah in the Bavli, the first day of Chol Hamoad Sukkot (the wording of the Mishnah is: miztaei yom tov harishon shel chag). The Mishnah in the Yerushalmi reads miztaei yom tov shel chag, but most acharonim amend the Yerushalmi's

text on the basis of the Bavli. Both the Bavli and the Yerushalmi agree that if the appointed day falls on Shabbat then hakhel is delayed until the following day.

The Torah was read from a wooden platform which was placed in the Woman's Court of the Temple. The Torah was passed among a number of high officials until it reached the King. The King then read the prescribed portions of the Torah aloud, adding his own commentary as he went along. The identity of the readings and their order, incidentally, is a matter of controversy among rishonim. The Torah reading was preceded by birkat hatorah and followed by the final birkat hatorah as well as seven other brakhot. Special prayers accompanied the Torah reading as well.

In preparation for hakhel the Kahanaim blew chatzotzot in all of Jerusalem. All of the men, women and children then gathered in the Woman's Court to hear the King read the Torah. Even the greatest chachamim had to come and listen to the Torah being read.

The ceremony we have just described was only practiced at the time of the Temple. Even after

churban habayit however, some remembrance of hakhel remained in the form of minhagin. The Abaranel traces the institution of Simchat Torah and particularly of the custom of Chatan Torah and Chatan Bireshit back to hakhel. In place of the king reading parashat hamelekh, the great men of the community read the final and initial portions of the Torah. The custom of calling all of the young children to the Torah seems reminiscent of the Torah's command to bring even the children to hear parashat hakhel. Rav Avraham Hayarchi in his Sefer HaManhig (Hilkhot HeChag 57) suggests that we read Kohlet during Sukkot because according to the Midrash it was originally recited by King Solomon during hakhel.

One can ask, however, why a more direct remembrance of hakhel was not instituted during the Amoraic period when many Jews still lived in Israel and had free access to Jerusalem. Rav Herzog, in a pamphlet dealing with hakhel issued in 1946, suggested that Jews feared that hakhel would be interpreted by the non-Jewish authorities as a prelude to revolution. The Jews were therefore forced to abandon hakhel entirely.

Such reasoning does not apply today, however, and the question becomes to what extent can we and ought we perpetuate hakhel.

The Chinnuh speaks of hakhel as being a mitzvah as long as Jews live in their land. "Thus the basic imperative of hakhel is applicable today. We then must grapple with various technical problems. There is no Jewish King today; even assuming that a king is not germane to the ceremony who in fact should read the Torah? Rav Herzog suggests that there should be no formal reading, thereby avoiding the issue entirely. On the other hand, Dr. S. Z. Chahana (in Zecher L'Mitzvat Hakhel Jerusalem 5713) contends that the president of the State of Israel ought to read the Torah publicly since he is the head of the Jewish State.

The problem of location must also be dealt with. Since we no longer have a Temple we cannot read hakhel in the Woman's Court. The Mishnah Ostank's (Mitzvah 612) doubts, however, that hakhel must take place in the Temple. If necessary Hakhel may be performed anywhere in Jerusalem. In 1953,

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