

# HAMEVASER

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## Counterpoint 5736 Reports— Australian Jewry Examined

by Rabbi Yosef Blau

Since I share the pride of the religious community in America in reference to the large growth of our Jewish Day School movement, I was stunned to discover that in Australia there is a much higher percentage of children attending all day Jewish schools through high

send their children to day schools strongly suggests a vibrancy in Jewish life that proper rabbinic and educational leadership can build upon.

One gets the feeling that in Australia the Jewish community has the opportunity to avoid the



Counterpoint Team in Action.

school. In Melbourne, a community of 35,000 Jews, close to 3,000 boys and girls attend day schools from nursery through twelfth grade. While the other good-sized Jewish communities in Australia, Sydney and Perth are as strong, percentages correspond favorably to American Jewish communities of equal size.

Statistics in this case, as in many others tell only a part of the story. The level of Jewish education in these schools is often lower than and involves far fewer hours per day than any day school in America. Nevertheless, the very fact that the majority of Jews in Melbourne possess sufficient commitment to their Jewish identity to

mistakes of the United States. The large majority of Jews are either immigrants or children of immigrants and they can still be reached, but this reaching out of Yiddishkeit must be before they forget their roots, an opportunity that was missed in the 1920's and 1930's. This past summer I had the thrill of being part of the Counterpoint team, a group of fourteen dedicated young men and women, all of whom are either active in Jewish education or Yeshiva seminars, who spent six of their eight weeks in Australia running seminars and *shabbatonim* for high school and university students and lecturing to the general community.

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## Jewish Education Job Market: Promising Career Opportunities

By Joe T. Oratz

Despite opinions to the contrary, medicine and law are not the only fields for Y.U. graduates. After a lengthy fact-finding mission, HAMEVASER has found a field that is just as intellectually stimulating and professionally gratifying as the former two. This field of the future seems to be Jewish Education.

A few years ago the Stone-Sapirstein Center for Jewish Education was established to improve the quality and effectiveness of Torah Education. Now it has come into its own, providing potential educators with a structured program aimed at helping them make a rational decision regarding Jewish Education as a career. Toward this goal, Rabbi Robert Hirt, the director of the Stone-Sapirstein Center, and Mr. Stuart Zweiter, the assistant director, attempt to identify the students who might be interested in Jewish Education, to acquaint these students with the options open to them and to engage them in programmatic activities in order to give them experience for the future. Jewish Education is the only major at Y.U. with an administrator available at all times for consultation.

Interaction

The center can locate the potential students in a number of ways. All those who have applied to Yeshiva and Torah Leadership Seminars will be contacted. The Jewish Education Societies of both Y.U. and S.C.W. sponsored by the Stone-Sapirstein Center, will have periodical meetings and student-run programs. One such program took place on Wed. Nov. 3, at

S.C.W. The purpose of that program was to help the students learn about the opportunities available to them, and the significance of student contribution to the Jewish community. There were presentations by Rabbi Saul Berman, Coordinator of Jewish Studies at S.C.W., and by Rabbi Hirt and Stuart Zweiter. Similar programs are scheduled to take place at Y.U.

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## Summer Kollel Thrives

by Philip Kaplan

Would you believe that every summer for the past 11 years, a large number of yeshiva University *talmidim* have devoted their vacation to hard and long days of *limud Torah*?

Would you believe that they do not receive any college credit for their effort?

Is it conceivable that the institution where these students learn

to become involved in a totally *lishma* (translation: creditless) Yeshiva University program. As Joel Passick, a sophomore J.S.S. student pointed out, it will be his "first chance to learn without the distractions of college... without learning for a test. We often ask in college, 'what does this Rashi say?' Sometimes one gets an answer like, 'Oh, don't worry about it, it won't be on the test.'" Joel explained



Summer Kollel 1976.

## The Jewish Funeral Racket: More Cases of Exploitation

by Ronald Mitnick

Unbelievable as it sounds, there is such a thing as a Jewish funeral racket and it is a prosperous one at that. One would never imagine that the simple, solemn ceremony that is the essence of a religious funeral would turn into a gold-mine for the funeral director. All that is required by Jewish law is a modest pine box, and a plain grave. So how can undertakers manage to turn a Jewish funeral into a racket?

One can fathom how the non-Jewish funeral establishment, with its emphasis on the viewing of the deceased, has become quite a money-making enterprise. Undertakers, playing on the emotional weakness of a bereaved family, sell extravagant coffins and vaults to make the viewing and burial of the dead as "honorable" as possible. The fact that it has become "too expensive to die" has sparked an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission; in fact, some states have opened public funeral parlors in order to make available to the average citizen a less expensive alternative to the high-priced private establishments.

Naturally, this problem should

not exist in Jewish funeral homes, since dignity and simplicity, rather than expense, are the important factors of a Jewish burial. Furthermore, the principle of "returning the body to the dust from which it was formed" should eliminate the use of expensive vaults whose specific purpose is to preserve the remains of the deceased.

Yet, to a frighteningly large extent Jewish funeral homes have adopted the same practices as the non-Jewish establishment. Consequently, a Jewish funeral has become rather expensive. Some of the tactics used by funeral directors to "make a buck" are absolutely against *halakha*; much more is in violation of the spirit of the law, if not the law itself. And sadly, the low level of religious education among the general Jewish community has made many people easy prey for the Jewish funeral racket.

A major area of profit for any funeral parlor is the sale of coffins. According to *halakha*, the casket must be made of simple wood. However, contrary to the dignified spirit that the *chakhamim* instilled in the Jewish treatment of the dead,

many Jewish funeral homes emphasize the purchase of expensive, elaborate wooden caskets.

Comfortable

Of course, these establishments may offer all types of wooden coffins in order to accommodate the tastes of all prospective clientele. Certainly if a family was to choose an expensive casket without coercion, there would be no *halakhic* problem, since the price of a casket is a personal matter. However, there are many occasions when a simple casket is chosen first, but the funeral director attempts to persuade the buyer to purchase a more expensive model. This is understandable — it must be remembered that, like all other businessmen, funeral directors must try to make a living. However, the method of persuasion usually employed is based upon a principle contrary to the spirit of Jewish law! The buyer is led to believe that a more expensive casket is a greater expression of respect for the dead. Tragically, the average American Jew, ignorant of Jewish law and influenced by the society in which he lives, usually

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is located in the Poconos?

Perhaps the latter question could be answered 'yes', but the remaining queries seem bizarre amidst the competitive, grade-oriented atmosphere of Y.U. That is, unless one happened into the area of Honesdale, Pennsylvania and the facilities of Yeshiva University's Camp Morasha. It is on Camp Morasha's grounds that a J.S.S. Kollel was initiated 11 years ago and is still thriving today. The program was conceived by Rabbi Rabinowitz and Rabbi Lamm to aid J.S.S. students in their Jewish development and learning skills in a relaxed *frum* environment. Every summer since 1965, the Kollel has attracted as many as 25-30 students

that an approach to learning as the one above is not due to a dislike of *limud*, rather the overall pressure of college.

The stalwart *rebbe* and leader of the Kollel is J.S.S.'s Rabbi Siff. Under Rabbi Siff's aegis, the Kollel has developed into a well structured *shiur* and *chazara* agenda that entails 36 hours of learning a week. The morning and evening *shiurim* given by Rabbi Siff are both preceded by *chazara* and preparation by the students. Perhaps those hours of individual work by the *talmidim* are the essence of Kollel, as Rabbi Siff has said in expressing his goal for the *talmidim*, "to make them self-

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# HAMEVASER

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## Greeting The University Leader

The investiture of Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm as our university's third president leaves the Yeshiva community honored and proud. These feelings derive from our firm belief that Rabbi Lamm's outstanding achievements in the realms of Torah and secular scholarship, and his exemplary accomplishments as a leader in the Orthodox community, render him a worthy successor to the men who served so eminently as Yeshiva's first two presidents. It is with respect and with high hopes for the future that we welcome Rabbi Lamm not only to the presidency of the university, but also to the leadership of the Yeshiva.

We are pleased that Rabbi Lamm demonstrated in his investiture address his dedication to the principles we consider fundamental to the continued growth of Yeshiva University. Indeed, the concerns which he delineated should be seen as particularly vital to the well-being of the Yeshiva core of our institution.

We hope that his deep personal commitment to "synthesis" will shape not only school curricula but also the manner in which educational programs are administered. The most complete fulfillment of synthesis is to be found in a Yeshiva University that reflects Torah ideals in the way it relates to administrators, teachers, and students.

Another important point we note is Rabbi Lamm's renewed call for the study of Torah for its own sake. With this end in mind, HAMEVASER urges our new Yeshiva leader to examine and respond to the need for a *meshgiach* position that has been vacant since the death of Rav Lesin z"l. An individual devoting his full time to the spiritual welfare of YU's *talmidim* would be a significant step toward achieving an invigorating sense of Torah *Lishmah* in the student body.

The third major theme in Rabbi Lamm's address was his pledge to pursue excellence. In this respect as well, the centrality of the Yeshiva in the university's structure bears mention. One of the president's major challenges should be to upgrade the quality of all the religious divisions. In particular, the *Semicha* Program, as presently structured, is laden with problems and is in dire need of revitalization.

The challenges facing our new leader are certainly formidable ones. However, we are confident that President Lamm's dynamic leadership will guide our Yeshiva to new plateaus of Torah excellence and scholarly achievement.

## Shaky Bridges

One of the more promising ideas implemented by past SOY administrations was the publication of GESHER. This magazine furnished YU students with the opportunity to research a wide spectrum of religious topics and to channel their studies into stimulating essays. A striking feature of GESHER was that it frequently included articles bearing on the relationship of Torah and science, and consequently helped transform the lofty ideal of synthesis into a more tangible concept.

Last year's SOY attempted to revitalize GESHER, but the value of their endeavor is questionable at best. Assuming no further delays, this publication, a project of the 1975-76 SOY, will not appear before early 1977. There is, however, a more fundamental shortcoming that merits consideration. Few of the contributors to this edition of GESHER are YU students. Rather, the majority of papers were submitted by faculty members and leading Torah scholars in the American Jewish community. Because of SOY's generous allocations

## Associate Editor The Good Feeling Abe Rosenberg

Not long ago my friend Joe (not his real name) applied for admission to a prestigious business school. To get in he needed the usual letters of recommendation, including the all-important letter from his employer who would discuss the applicant's business capabilities. At the time, Joe was working for an important figure in a major brokerage firm. This man was tremendously impressed with the job Joe was doing for him, and Joe felt sure of receiving a glowing recommendation. It didn't turn out that way. The employer told the school that, in his opinion Joe didn't possess the proper "appearance" necessary for success in the business world. At first Joe didn't understand what this meant, after all he had always come to work well groomed and immaculately dressed. What then, could this terrible "appearance" be? It finally dawned on poor Joe. He had always gone to work wearing his kippah....

It's the old story. No matter how hard we Jews try to succeed in any profession, no matter how strongly we yearn for people to judge us by our individual performances, we always fail. Let's face it. We are seen as Jews, first and foremost — all other aspects of our lives are secondary, in the eyes of others. Even those who try to win acceptance by forsaking their Jewishness also fail — they, too, are seen as Jews. A person can change his name, his clothing, his neighborhood, his speech pattern... even his nose. None of it helps. No Jew can ever fool himself into thinking his non-Jewish peers no longer view him as a Jew. You can Americanize yourself to the hilt, but the Jew inside remains, obscured, perhaps, to your eyes, but, in reality, totally visible.

This crucial fact of life is thought to be a liability by both observant and non-observant Jews. These people could not be more wrong. Our inescapable heritage is not a fault but an asset — the greatest asset any people on the face of the earth has ever had — and no Jew should ever be ashamed of it. No Jew should ever feel he must turn off his Jewish side in the presence of a goy.

Yet, in spite of this, too many Jews continue trying. They try to be like their non-Jewish friends instead of their Jewish forefathers, because, deep down they are ashamed of what they are. It is a tragedy, because when Jews are ashamed of being Jewish, the very foundation of Judaism shakes and threatens to crumble. When Jewish parents lose their Jewish pride we find ourselves surrounded by thousands upon thousands of young Jewish children growing up without a Jewish education. We find Jewish college students who could care less about even a skeletal Jewish Studies program in their schools. We find a major medical school, largely populated by Jews, where, during the High Holiday Season only one student shows up for a voluntary *dinim* class.

These bad signs — and there are many more — must serve as a warning to all Jews who have a good feeling about being Jewish. Do not keep that good feeling to yourselves! Each one of us must reach out beyond our own little worlds and bring the pride and beauty of Yiddishkeit back to those who have lost it. We can do it by tutoring the non-religious ten year old, by bringing the non-frum adult back to *shul*, by explaining *t'fillin* and *tzitzit* to those who have not used them since Bar Mitzvah. By doing all of this we not only open the eyes of our fellow Jews, but we make our own observance more complete as well. As long as we remember that one can never really run away from Judaism, we can then keep running towards it — taking a few people with us along the way.

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to the GESHER project (over 30% of SOY's budget), the council's other projects, including HAMEVASER, suffered serious financial cutbacks.

One cannot help but question whether much of SOY's limited resources should be directed to GESHER under future administrations. Should student activity fees be used to sponsor papers by YU faculty members, while students are employed merely in the technical aspects of publication? Are there not a sufficient number of suitable media for leaders in Jewish scholarship to contribute to religious knowledge, without YU students bearing the financial burden?

These are questions that must be considered by future SOY councils. In view of the ever-decreasing SOY budget, a reevaluation of the GESHER project is a timely concern.

## Proposed Solutions to Funeral Racket

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succumbs to this emotional pressure and purchases a more expensive, yet *halakhically* less preferable, coffin. Occasionally, wooden caskets are sold with lined, padded interiors either for the "comfort" of the deceased or for viewing. The idea that padding makes the corpse more comfortable must be dismissed as absurd. But to the many who are not knowledgeable in religious practice, this is a fitting final gesture.

The viewing of the deceased, which is a growing practice at American funerals of all faiths, is considered as a pagan adulation of the lifeless human form, and absolutely against *halakha*. Yet, despite this fact, some Jewish funeral homes supply this service. And why not! The comfortable coffin, along with various other preparations necessary for the viewing of the dead can cost thousands of dollars.

### Vaults

Another big money-making item

for the Jewish funeral establishment is the concrete vault, which is placed into the ground to enclose the casket. The use of vaults is not totally against *halakha*; there are *heterim* for their use, in those areas of the country which, because of the shifting of the earth, require vaults by law. Still preferable to the vault, and achieving the same result, is the concrete grave liner, which comes in sections and partially exposes the coffin to the ground itself.

Clearly, if the use of the concrete vault was limited to those instances where it was required by law, there would be little problem as far as *halakha* is concerned. However, there are many instances when a vault is employed despite the fact that it is not required by law. Instead, the funeral director, in the name of "respect" for the deceased, convinces the next of kin to purchase a vault to protect the body of the deceased from the "cold" earth. Of course, since the whole purpose of the vault in these

cases is to separate the coffin from the earth, only a handful of dirt is placed inside the vault before it is sealed. This attitude is completely opposite that of Jewish funeral tradition, which states that the body should follow the natural cycle of decay in its return to the dust. It is sad that money so strikingly perverts our traditions.

These are but a few of the items which contribute to the high cost of Jewish funerals. However, it must be realized that the fault does not lie totally with funeral directors. The fact that these men are lax with such an important responsibility is sad, but it must be remembered that they, like all other businessmen, act according to the profit motive. After all, "kosher" services are offered in all Jewish funeral homes for those who request them. Only those who lack the knowledge to insist on a *halakhically* proper funeral are likely to be fooled. Of course, the average American Jew cannot be blamed for yielding to the emotional pressure applied by funeral directors; his ignorance prevents him from knowing or doing otherwise. A great deal of the fault lies with the rabbis who are afraid to stand up for *halakha* principles and to stop this exploitation. These rabbis, not wanting to alienate some of their congregants, refuse to tell them that what they may have requested for a funeral cannot be provided because it is contrary *halakha*. Indeed, the fact that funeral homes offer these goods and services is based upon the axiom that silence means consent, and many rabbis are deafeningly silent!

### Solutions

What can be done? Education of American Jewry is part of the answer, but the time required to accomplish this difficult task makes us seek other solutions. One radical solution has been pursued by some communities in central New Jersey: the elimination of the Jewish funeral home from these communities. The *taharah* (final ritual cleansing) and clothing of the body in funeral shrouds are performed in a non-Jewish funeral parlor, all non-Jewish articles having been removed from the premises. All goods and services related to the funeral and burial are supplied by the local Jewish communities. Since there are no businessmen who must make a living from these funerals, the cost is kept quite low.

A more pragmatic solution would require local rabbis to make it clear to funeral directors that those services which are not within Jewish law and tradition may not be supplied. A violation of this directive would result in a public boycott of the establishment in question. Whether many of today's rabbis would be willing to do this is debatable — a sad commentary on the present state of the American Jewish community. It is clear that to stop the use of these *halakhically* contrary goods and services, they must be eliminated. Otherwise, the American Jewish community will have to resort to more radical measures, or suffer along with the Jewish funeral racket.

## SOY President SOY Who?

Neil Maron

Being the S.O.Y. President, I have been approached by many students of the Yeshiva with certain complaints and questions. Most students want to know what S.O.Y. is all about. Is it only a handful of people deciding whether or not girls attend the *Purim chagiga*, or is it a strong viable organization run by earnest hard working individuals?

Firstly, I would like to point out that the S.O.Y. council is responsible in representing better than one half of the Yeshiva's Religious Department. Oddly enough, out of the well over five hundred and fifty students in the Yeshiva Program, less than half are officially registered in the University. Is it possible that both *Batei Midrashim*, which incidentally are packed every evening, have no Y.P. students in them? The fact is that the Y.P. student, regardless of his strenuous double program, has out done himself in this important *mitzva* of learning at night. So why then are a mere one hundred and seventy students officially registered?

The fault lies in the student himself. The average Y.P. student is oblivious to such minor details as registration. But "student apathy" doesn't stop there. This year S.O.Y. has already offered three different *Halakha Shiurim*, and the attendance could have been counted on one's fingers. The "*Sefarim*" sale has come and gone and several people have already received their *Sefarim*, yet far too many students, even though there was ample time and notice, did not bother to place an order. *Gesher*, a publication which has taken much time and effort to print, will hopefully be coming out in the near future. Plans for a new *Kashrut* Guide, as well as a special *Bein Adam L'Chavero* publication are already underway. The very prominent S.O.Y. *Pesach Haggadah* will also be reprinted with several additions and illustrations. (Incidentally, all these publications are given to Y.P. students gratis). The once defunct S.O.Y. radio *shiur* will once again begin broadcasting over W.Y.U.R.

All of these projects are open to all students. This year S.O.Y. can be one of the best the Yeshiva has had. The opportunities are available but it takes your help to make them worthwhile.

## JSS President State of Stagnation Harry Wruble

The beginning of a school year should always be filled with new ideas, projects and programs that will make the year an enjoyable and productive one. Unfortunately, YU remains the same year after year. We see the same walls with the same posters, offering the same things. With the advent of our new president, I hope that YU will take a younger, more active role in trying to better life here.

We need new ideas! YU is in a state of stagnation in student activism! Every student should participate in extracurricular activities that will help him feel that he is helping others or working for a cause.

With this in mind, JSSC has organized a volunteer program with a neighborhood geriatric center. This will enable YU students to give of themselves, to people who need our vitality and life. Fortunately, a group of very dedicated YU students have signed up for this program and I hope it will be a great success.

Another new activity brewing which I wish to commend is the idea of bringing in *Rebbeim* to be guest speakers here on *Shabbat*. I think it is very sad, especially for JSS students, that the *Shabbat* atmosphere here at YU is lacking. *Shabbat* seems to be just a day with no school. This year, the Dorm Committee is working very hard to bring in *Rebbeim*, to arrange for a particular *shiur* to stay for the weekend and make for the yeshiva a more pleasant *Shabbat* atmosphere.

This is a step in the right direction. I can only hope that the other inactive organizations of YU start moving and get together to make the YU community aware of activities that are open to them. This can only better the current apathetic attitude in YU.

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform your readers that the "Dirshu" — College Outreach Program has been revitalized this year. The "Dirshu" program consists of *shabbatonim*, informal classes, and *kumtizes* (get-togethers) on college campuses in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Long Island. A new Jewish Life

Cycle series dealing with basic Jewish concepts will be published soon.

Dirshu will soon launch a recruiting drive on the Y.U. campus. It is my hope that the entire Y.U. community will support this crucial venture.

Yours truly,  
Gary Estersohn  
Executive Director

## EMC President Flip-Turn Benjy Goldstein

Just as the miracle worker pulls his caravan into town each year his tried and true cure-all, so does the traditional EMC president "shlep" his council before the student body each September. He usually offers a one or two step plan of rejuvenation for the Erna Michael College Student Council which is smooth to swallow and will solve the problems of the past. But, lo and behold, the president's wonder program, intended to build an active Council in a multitude of ways, is just about as effective as Dr. Smith's active fixer. The story ends as the president and the good doctor take the same fast train out of town. The townspeople remain poorer but wiser. Next year, fewer will fall for the same trick.

Well, I just came into town, and I do not claim that the rejuvenation of the EMC student body will be a simple task. But it is possible; if I felt it wasn't, I would not have run for president. This task is far too great for your fifteen council members to accomplish alone. It requires the active support and participation of a broader band of the EMC student body.

This, then, is the key to my administration: involvement by the entire Michael College student body. I refuse to delegate arduous tasks to the members of Council if there is to be no student support behind them. Even if programs could be implemented by this group alone, I would consider it an empty triumph indeed. Council members are representatives and not paid employees. Council should serve as a catalyst to help initiate and guide programs; it is not fair to expect it to implement these programs without student support.

As a case in point, let us consider the rebirth of *HAMASHKIF*, the official Hebrew newspaper of the EMC student body. A week after assuming office last May, I began to speak to a few students concerning the possibility of revitalizing *HAMASHKIF*. I was not sure that this endeavor would succeed. But almost immediately, I was overwhelmed by EMC students filled with curiosity, and a desire to make this project work well. Three weeks later, the first issue of *HAMASHKIF* since 1971 appeared. The role that Council played in creating this fine piece of journalism was negligible. It was a student endeavor aided by a competent EMC faculty member, Dr. Yitzchak Sabban.

Today, *HAMASHKIF* stands on a sound foundation, and is able to boast an excellent staff and a dynamic governing board. It is independent of EMCSC in every way except financially. *HAMASHKIF* is now looking into ways of achieving financial autonomy.

*HAMASHKIF* is only one example of the type of successes the Erna Michael College student body is capable of achieving. Our potential is great and our resources boundless. The groundwork for other projects has been laid. A Constitutional Committee composed of EMC students has just begun to amend the EMCSC constitution. Our used clothing drive is about to shift into gear. Students are needed to help design a special EMC spread in *MASMID*. A series of luncheon lectures has already been inaugurated with great success. And as our most ambitious project to date, the EMC student body will endeavor to compile a directory of Jewish Service organizations in the Metropolitan area. I predict that this directory, when distributed to Jewish college and high school students, will provide a vital service to the New York Jewish community, channeling the talent and enthusiasm of our youth to those organizations which can best benefit from it.

I am looking forward to hearing other ideas from students on how to help serve the Jewish community and at the same time reach unprecedented heights of student involvement in EMC student government. We can do it. But I need your help. Do you feel like we do? I want you to show me the way!

# Man's Control of His Life: A Jewish View

*Editor's note: The following essay is taken from a letter written to a former student engaged in the study of psychology. It is not an exhaustive treatment of the subject.*

Dear M.K.,

Glad to hear from you and all that stuff — I really mean it though. It's good to hear that you've been broadening the old horizons by studying psychology, and I was especially interested in your remarks on behaviorism, which, you say, makes man the product of his environment, and its opponent, Existentialism, which you define as your professor's belief that she is in control of her own life. Your own mind on the subject appears to be reasonably open, though I have too much regard for your intelligence to believe that it is really the case. I suspect you have had enough experience with my limited intelligence to anticipate that, far from giving you a clear-cut opinion, I will begin by failing to understand your basic terms.

Behaviorism may mean one of several different things in the context of your letter.

## Philosophical

1. Someone may say that there is no such thing as mind or mental event. "The brain secretes ideas as the liver secretes bile," as some nineteenth-century materialist once quipped (the guy's name escapes me); mental events are really physical events taking place in our nervous system. One alters emotional patterns in people as one modifies anything else in the world — by acting upon certain areas of space directly (e.g. shocking portions of the brain) or indirectly (Pavlov's dogs etc.). Such a view is totally incompatible with Torah or with any form of classical Western religion (including even those forms of Christianity that do not maintain freedom of the will) inasmuch as it denies both freedom of the will and human dignity. I also cannot conceive of such a position receiving scientific verification. Why? Because empirical science can only experiment with physical entities, such as nerve cells. To state that these nerve cells are identical with thoughts, volitions etc. is to make a statement that cannot be empirically confirmed. That thoughts are physical events is precisely what the behaviorist must establish.

Science may progress to the point where a one-to-one correspondence can be demonstrated between mental and physical events (e.g. touching brain cells to evoke memories, induce thoughts etc.) but this only shows that such correspondence exists. We still would not know them to be identical: the chemical reactions following a mosquito bite are closely associated with the itch, but one would not say that the chemical reaction was identical with the itch, or that the itch was identical with it. We would not even know

**"...that human beings have the power of developing their choices to the point where they attain control over their actions. We are not born with absolute free will, but we have the ability to enlarge the scope of our freedom."**

whether the neural event caused the mental event or vice versa, since there would be no reason to deny the "mind" some causal efficacy: the structural changes in an asthmatic's bronchi, the saltiness of his urine, are the same whether the attack is attributed to mold spores or emotional upset.

## Pragmatic

2. One may subscribe to behaviorism on a less philosophical, more pragmatic, level. One may hold that human nature is neither inexorably fixed nor, for certain practical purposes, spontaneously self-chosen, but malleable through alteration of physical behavioral factors. A thumbsucker may be broken of the habit by painting the thumb with some bitter concoction; the sexual offender may be cured by showing him relevant pictures accompanied with electric shocks until he has learned to associate his

former pleasure with the anticipation of pain.

This approach, at a certain level, may have a strong attraction for Jews who are normally repelled by philosophical behaviorism. Torah, after all, stresses the effect of behavior: one *mitzvah* leads to another, one sin leads to another. What we do, eat, act, constitutes what we are. From this point of view, a therapy model that revolves about doing something will make better sense than a psychology based upon talk, self-concepts etc. The results of behavioral therapy (particularly in its extreme forms of drug-therapy and electric shock) are clear-cut and scientific-looking. For Orthodox Jews it is also important that behaviorism as therapy can be easily separated from any theoretical framework and viewed as nothing but a technique to attain behavior modification. The more theoretical psychotherapies (all brands of Freudianism, for example) seem impracticable without an assimilation or con-

anything? Aren't there limitations, both physical and psychological (I can't fly; I can't do things that are radically out of character)? When does a person acquire free will — at birth; at age thirteen?

2) That human beings have the power of developing their choices to the point where they attain control over their actions. We are not born with absolute free will, but we have the ability to enlarge the scope of our freedom. This view, as well, must confront the fact that we are limited radically by factors beyond our control, and that to say that we do control all our actions is generally utter nonsense. For most of us, the process of redirecting our actions will never end: we will never attain absolute freedom of the will, or even redirect the will absolutely towards what we believe to be good.

3) Each individual may be radically limited but still have an area of freedom, which may be expanded through moral training, e.g. I train myself not to be dependent on certain material possessions, on the

pressed in purely physiological terms (see Freud: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. R. Wollheim, among other works).

## Free Will

Again let me remind you that Existentialism

**"Yet we must also remember how often a man's very insistence on his freedom and his dignity echo like a cruel joke to those who see clearly the psychological pressures that force him to his pose."**

tialism, despite its seeming superiority over B. from a religious point of view, does not guarantee the Jewish belief in free will and responsibility. One may take man's consciousness of freedom very seriously as a factor in human psychology without necessarily believing that this freedom is genuinely independent of man's biologically determined state: Nietzsche, for example, who influenced profoundly what is called Existentialism, and who exalted the free individual above all, did not accept freedom of the will.

The real contribution of Existential psychoanalysis over the simple belief in free will, which is required if Torah is to be meaningful, lies in the focussing on freedom and consciousness as basic factors in the human personality, insofar as the analysis of the so-called Existentialists provides a better understanding of the nature of freedom and the ramifications of consciousness than rival theories, especially those which are, like behaviorism, founded on the denial of their importance. As a consequence of this analysis, these factors can be given the centrality they deserve. The areas of human activity which interest the religious individual are precisely those which present man with the imperatives of responsibility: like the Existentialist, he sees psychology as essentially an account of what man does with his freedom.

Therefore, while we should not ignore the power of external causes to influence human behavior, we should as religious individuals subscribe to that understanding which emphasizes human freedom as the most important psychological datum.

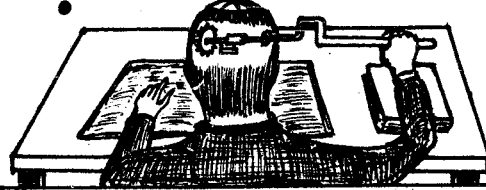
## IV

I realize that I've complicated things pretty well by now, and am placing a good deal of weight on your intelligence. I'd like to conclude this section of the letter by indicating something about the psychological attitudes that lead people to become B's or E's (until now, of course, I've tried to give the reasons on both sides).

People may become behaviorists out of a general materialistic outlook (esp. in 1st formulation) plus a desire to be rid of the burdensome demands inherent to the idea of personal responsibility. Behaviorism looks very "scientific," and is "realistically" concerned with actual behavior rather than inward experience. I mentioned before that this may attract the type of Orthodox individual who is impressed with the "behavior-oriented" stress inherent in *halakhah* (as opposed to those religious frameworks in which vague feelings often substitute for practical commitments); especially since one can pretend to evade problems of ideology, viewing therapy as a purely "scientific" activity, like fixing an engine. There is also a genuine egalitarian thrust to B.; and a sweet optimism: if behavior can be easily modified, people are not stuck with their old unsocial habits etc. Remember how Stalin forced his biologists to rewrite science in order to accommodate an environmentalist bias implying the reorganization of socialist society can overcome the defects of human nature. Note also the major behaviorist, B.F. Skinner, who wrote the utopian novel *Walden II*. But if people have too much free choice in the areas that matter and you can't readily "educate" them, there is not much point in working out a utopian society.

(Continued on Page 7)

## בחירה חפשית ?



frontation with some ideology opposed to Torah. A consistent behaviorist, of course, by leaving out free choice, negates Torah quite obviously. But the therapist may maintain his allegiance to the doctrine of free will in the abstract, while simply ignoring it within the four walls of his own practice, and thus evade the conflict. The question for a religious student of psychology is whether freedom is merely a necessary component of Torah psychology, or whether it is also the central feature of any psychological theory claiming to do justice to Judaism. If the former, then it is possible that, from a theological viewpoint, we may stop with a makeshift, unphilosophical behaviorism. If the latter, we are obligated to seek a psychology in which the fact of human free will is the central datum.

## Morality

3. Lastly, there is the related question of the morality of behavioristic therapy. One may hold B#1 or #2 to be correct, the common case being that one accepts B#2, yet raise doubts as to the desirability of behaviorism as a therapy. Human nature is indeed malleable, in this view, and behaviorism supplies techniques more formidable than other therapies; yet it may be undesirable to use them, because they violate human dignity, and overpower the free will which from a moral-religious perspective, ought to be made central to human action. "Behaviourism works," wrote W.H. Auden, and added: "So does torture."

## II

To clarify what is meant by "Existentialism" is even more difficult. Let's forget the question about the definition of Existentialism as a general philosophical doctrine and try to locate the meaning of the term as it might be used by someone in a psychology class.

You define Existentialism as your professor's belief that she controls her own actions. What does this mean?

1) If she means that everyone controls their own actions, this is not different from the traditional thesis of free will: is it? And does she really maintain that every single human being has the power to choose

approval of others, on a rigid schedule etc. as means to my existential project. The area of freedom may also be diminished through moral training — I may train myself to reject certain hitherto open possibilities, so that the choice of wrong actions or attitudes becomes more difficult for me than before; I renounce the freedom to be arrogant or exploitative in my personal relations. Some such picture would seem to be that of classical Existentialist thinkers, and coheres well with a Torah outlook (see for example, Rav Dessler's *Mikhtav meEliyahu*).

4) In the moral evaluation of freedom there is, however, a radical gap between a certain view of Existentialism, one unfortunately prevalent in the street nowadays, and Torah. The control over one's actions of which your professor spoke, may be understood as a subjectification of ethical laws: i.e. nothing makes an act moral but my own free decision — the world does not contain meanings that are not made by man. We, of course, believe that acts are right and wrong because they conform to the will of G-d; and one may, on secular or religious premises, maintain the validity of certain objective norms (reason, altruism, justice, etc.) regardless of their conformity to free human will. The fourth position, which is championed by Sartre, does not necessarily follow from the previous definitions.

## III

Now I'd like to make it clear to you that Behaviorism and Existentialism do not necessarily exhaust the possible positions open to the student of psychology. One may reject behaviorism in the sense that one does attribute importance to mental processes in experience and choice, but deny that these processes are chosen freely — the mental processes themselves may be caused by other factors outside the control of the individual. Such a position is prevalent among psychoanalysts (including existential psychoanalysts, because one may reduce the consciousness of freedom and its consequences to external causes while at the same time recognizing the value of this consciousness), though Freud himself who took a thoroughly materialistic position, believed that his insights could ultimately be ex-

# The Galician Master

by Rabbi Solomon Weinberger

Nineteenth century Galicia, the part of Poland included in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, produced many outstanding Jewish religious leaders. Religious teachings dominated both the thinking and the practical way of life of the vast majority of the Jewish people, and at the center of religious life, stood the religious leader. There were two distinct types of leaders: the traditional Talmudic scholar and *halakhhic* authority who served as communal Rabbi; and, the more recent phenomenon, the *Chasidic* master, known as *Rebbe*, who developed large followings in the towns and villages. Cities like Brody and Lemberg claimed the distinction of a succession of distinguished Rabbis Ephraim Zalman Margolis, Solomon Kluger, Jacob Orenstein, Joseph Saul Nathenson, Isaac Aaron Ettlinger, and Isaac Semelkes, all renowned for their scholarly work and rabbinic activity. While a host of small towns and villages - Zlotchov, Litzhnsk, Hegmenov, Roptchitz, Belz, Zans, etc. - owed their place on the Jewish map to the *Chasidic* Rabbis who transformed these tiny villages into centers of spiritual life.

## Talmud

The Rabbis and the *Rebbes* functioned in different spheres but both exerted wide influence in the Jewish world, far beyond their immediate communities. The Rabbis taught and preached strict adherence to Talmudic law and adjudicated civil and religious controversies within their communities. Their great erudition, however, was put to the service of colleagues throughout the land, and in distant countries. From all over, correspondents turned to the Galician Rabbis with complicated questions of Jewish law.

As the geographic diffusion of the problems addressed to them widened, the leading Rabbis emerged with international reputations as Talmudic authorities.

## Mysticism

The fame and influence of the *Chasidic* *Rebbes* did not derive from Talmudic knowledge, but from their expertise in another branch of Jewish knowledge — the knowledge of how G-d works in the life of man and of the mysterious bond between G-d and his world. With this expertise they appealed directly to the masses, and were able to create a new sense of brotherhood among the people. Tens of thousands of *Chasidim* (followers of the *Rebbe*) flocked to the various *Chasidic* masters, attracted by the saint's supernatural powers and miraculous activities. But primarily they came for the experience of joyous spiritual fellowship. An increasing number of adherents was won for *Chasidism*, as the enthusiastic *Chasidim* spread the renown of their *Rebbes*.

## Peace

The bitter struggles between *Chasidim* and their opponents (*Mitnagdim*) had ended in Galicia with the close of the eighteenth century. The *Rebbes* by then

recognized that *Chasidism*, despite its innovations, did not represent a deviation from Orthodoxy, and that it fully subscribed to rabbinic law. The *Rebbes* esteemed the Rabbis as learned authorities, whose Talmudic studies helped resolve the *halakhhic* problems of the new period in Jewish life. Some tension and mutual suspicion persisted however. The lack of sufficient emphasis on Torah study by *Chasidim*, are often by the *Rebbes* themselves, and the introduction of changes in the prayer service, were a constant source of irritation and concern to the Rabbis. The *Chasidic* leaders, insisted on separating their followers from the communal synagogues led by the traditional Rabbis, with the implication that the true elements of service to G-d are to be found only in *Chasidic* oriented worship.

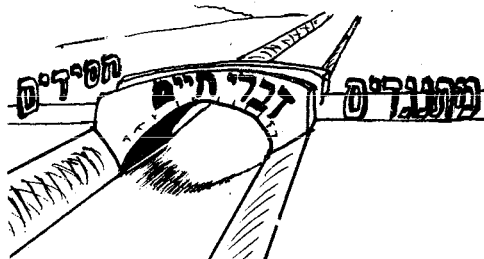
## Haskalah

These lingering differences did not disturb the larger unity needed to safeguard the (traditional) faith from external threats. Rabbis joined hands with *Rebbes* to fight the rising waves of the *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment), which had originated in the Mendelssohnian circle in Berlin and Koensberg, and had brought forth some outstanding leaders in Galicia. *Chasidism* was the major object of the *Maskilim's* scorn, but all religious groups were attacked by these new writers and reformers, and they were seen as the enemies of religious Jewry. The religious leaders knew that only with a

Talmudic law. Yet each *Tzaddik*, once he was established as a leader of *Chasidim* functioned primarily, if not exclusively as a fountain of the new mystical knowledge. Though he may have continued to be known as *Rav* (Rabbi), he became essentially a *Rebbe*. It is only in the fifth generation of *Chasidism*, that the climate became ripe for a leadership that not only united the two trends within itself, but functioned simultaneously in both the rabbinic and *Chasidic* spheres.

## Bridge

The outstanding example of the two sided master arose in Galicia. *Rav Hayyim Halberstam* of Zans was among the first to combine the career of a Rabbi-*Rebbe*. Throughout his life he was active as an international *halakhhic* authority while ranking among the foremost *Tzaddikim* of his generation. To Zans streamed both Jews who recognized *Rav Hayyim* as the living representative of the traditional rabbinic heritage, the great teacher of the "revealed" Torah; and Jews who longed for the "secret" lore, for the *Tzaddik* adept in the divine mysteries, the disciple of the disciples of the Besht. The great among the contemporary *mitnagdim* sat side by side with enthusiastic *Chasidim*, and drank with thirst the works of the living G-d as expounded by the *Zanser Rav-Rebbe*. In Zans, both schools of thought understood that far from being conflicting or even separate ways of serving G-d, the two ways were necessary com-



plementary elements by which man achieved his essence. *Rav Hayyim Halberstam's* figure looms large in religious Jewry's long struggle to achieve inner unity. With him and in him, the separate religious groupings achieved lasting reconciliation; the divisive threats hovering over the Jewish faith (and aggravated since the rise of *Chasidism*) were permanently removed. The lines of demarcation between exclusive scholarship and exclusive saintliness fell rapidly throughout Galicia, northern Poland, Hungary and Russia. The dominant image of a religious leader was of a talmudic scholar and rabbinic authority who was also the inspired saint from whom one could seek guidance for the everyday problems of life and help in the hour of need and distress. Today, a century since *Rav Hayyim's* passing, Orthodox Judaism rests firmly on the harmonious fusion of the rabbinic *Chasidic* trends, which the *Zanser Rav-Rebbe* exemplified.

## Authority

*Rav Hayyim* exercised as much authority in the area of public life

# Education Programs Available to Students

(Continued from Page 1)

At the Society meetings, students will be able to meet with educators who are doing exciting things in the Jewish community. There will be visits to schools, media centers and educational conferences. One major goal of this interaction with the educators is to help members of the Jewish Education Society realize their responsibility to the Jewish community.

## Jobs

In terms of job opportunities there are two major areas. The first is, of course, teaching, and the other is administrative positions. Most institutions today are looking to Y.U. for their teachers. Even those schools with ideologies different than those at Y.U. would rather see Y.U. products in their schools. Institutions are looking for people committed to Torah values, knowledgeable of their subject matter, capable of transmitting that material, and aware of the needs of their students. These jobs are available not only in small towns but also in major cities in both the U.S. and Canada. The administrator of today, besides being a teacher is also a curriculum designer and teacher-trainer, capable of creating a Torah atmosphere.

The *aliyah* minded students working with the center, will also be equipped for their future. Obviously such a student would be required to have a good command of the language, which is usually acquired by spending a year or two in an Israeli yeshiva or other institution. The assistant director of the Torah Dept. of the Jewish Agency is a Y.U. graduate. Those interested in *aliyah* would be referred to him for information. The newly opened Gruss Center will, it is hoped, be just as wide in scope as the main center is here. The Jewish educator needs knowledge, methodology, and experience which should also be available in Israel.

## Experience

The two major programs connected with the Stone-Sapirstein Center are the College Internship Program and the Graduate Residency Program. The Intern

Program will provide practical field work and continuous contact with Jewish educators and professionals. Each intern will engage in supervised and individualized work such as tutoring elementary and secondary school students, organizing and leading extracurricular study groups, acting as teacher's aides, preparing educational materials and participating in media projects. *Semicha* and graduate students in Jewish Education at Ferkauf Graduate School will be able to participate in the residency program. Residents may undertake any of the projects or programs open to the interns and, in addition, will help in supervising. Those residents who are already teaching will be eligible for observation and consultation with the staff of the Stone-Sapirstein Center and with members of the Educators Council of America.

The major problem that will hamper the students in their programs is the lack of time. The directors recognize the need for a student to be a student first. Yet, they feel that it is still possible to be exposed to all the areas of education. At the very least, being exposed gives the student a chance to say no. One cannot reject something he knows nothing about.

## Commitment

More important than all the programs and new courses instituted by the center, is the total commitment the directors have to the students. The center has in the past arranged for schools to call the prospective teacher and not the other way around. There is no need for one to grovel for a position. Even after residents are set in jobs, Y.U. remains the place for them to refer to when in need of advice. Because of this commitment, Y.U. is fast becoming the focal point of all aspects of Jewish Education in the country. Any Jewish Education organization is inevitably plugged into Y.U.

Above all, in a visit to the fourth floor offices of Rabbi Hirt and Stue Zweiter, one is immediately impressed by their enthusiasm and willingness to help. Plug yourself in you might be swept into the current.

as he did in the world of the spirit. The personal, familial problems of individuals, as well as the spiritual and economic problems of the Galician communities, passed his scrutiny. Important decisions were seldom made without prior approval from the *Zanser Rav* and he was a vigorous and courageous leader. He fought against exploitation of the poor and all forms of injustice in communal life. He fought against what he regarded foreign and pernicious changes and innovations in Jewish observance. And he led the battle against colleagues who he felt were unwittingly threatening the traditional structure of religious life. For more than four decades in the mid 19th century, he was a major force in the life of Galician Jewry.

*Rav Hayyim's* image, one of an "ethical-saintly" personality, emerged from his everyday way of life. In his ecstatic devotion and

clinging to G-d, in his humility and compassion for the suffering of his people, in his identification with the poor and unfortunate, and in his boundless generosity, he created for his community a living example of what man can make of his personality and at the same time, gave validity to the truth of his teachings. Like all *Tzaddikim*, he was constantly striving to improve and perfect himself, and in the process, improved and perfected his people.

The last years of his life were marked by a stormy drama. His sharp and vehement criticism of the ways of the *Rebbes* of the Sadagora dynasty quickly ended religious Jewry in a bitter struggle. But even in midst of the battle, which did not subside until after his death, it was clear from the way they rallied to his defense, that for both *Rebbes* and Rabbis, *Rav Hayyim* was the Master and the bridge between the camps.

# Australian Jewish Community

(Continued from Page 1)

Our programs had enormous impact, and hopefully some of the readers of this article will be inspired to devote a few years rather than a few months to provide continuity and follow-up throughout the year. The approach we used was essentially that of The Torah Leadership Seminars organized by YU's Community Service Division, an approach that has proven itself adaptable to Jewish teenagers throughout the world. Rather than focus on what we accomplished let me describe what we saw.

## Melbourne

The strange center of Australian Jewish life is in Melbourne where 35,000 of two and a half million people are Jewish, and half these Jews live in the Jewish ghetto, Caulfield. Every neighborhood in Melbourne is a separate city with its own local government, has a large Orthodox synagogue with a balcony, many empty seats, nominal members, and a Rabbi who delivers sermons but rarely reaches out to his congregants. There is a somewhat smaller liberal movement, equivalent to Reform for those who find attending an orthodox *Shul* twice a year to be too much. *Shabbat* observance is restricted to a few hundred families and full observance of *kashrut* is also limited. *Kashrut* is in a shambles with a *Beit Din* whose meat is not eaten by many observant Jews. A kosher list exists that is updated every six months and is considered reliable. Even though there are some *mikvaot*, the concept of family purity is rarely mentioned and most of the Jewish women born in Australia have never heard of a *mikva*.

Within the Orthodox community there are three significant religious groupings of the community. A small separatist but deeply committed group of Hungarian Jews arrived in Melbourne and Sydney during the 1940's and organized the *Adas*. Except for their *hashgacha* on meat and restaurants which all

accept, they have little relationship with anyone else and they run schools for their children only. I must confess that during my stay I had virtually no contact with *Adas* people. Their children receive a minimal secular education, and are sent to America or Israel before graduating high school to study Torah for a few years and then enter the business world. Groups of similar background and approach exist in many other countries, including the United States.

*Lubavitch* in Australia, which originated with only a handful of people, now dominates the religious life there. They have created almost ex-nihilo a network of schools servicing seven hundred children. Their student body is largely from non-observant homes. *Lubavitch* has a strong outreach program, and a vital university campus program. The dedication and commitment shown by their teachers and workers is exemplary. A problem has been created by *Lubavitch's* accomplishments. The young often lack any other model of religious life and if they cannot identify with Chabad, they find it hard to relate to Judaism, which for many of them is synonymous with *Lubavitch*.

*Mizrachi*, which is a *shul* as well as the religious Zionist organization, sponsors *Bnei Akiva*, the only religious youth movement in Australia. The Yavneh school, which is both academically superior, and modern Orthodox, stops after sixth grade. Unfortunately, at that point ninety-five percent of the students, including many from observant homes continue at Mt. Scopus (described below), and not at *Lubavitch*.

The Board of Jewish Deputies sponsors Mt. Scopus, a school of twenty-two hundred students (almost all Jewish), a community

school including grades kindergarten through twelve. Though the school's board of governors is predominantly orthodox, Mt. Scopus, caters to the broader community by providing a watered down program of Judaic studies.

Strikingly, it was with the students of the tenth and eleventh grades of Mt. Scopus that our eight day seminars were held. Requiring students to attend a seminar which takes place during the school year indicates an awareness of a need to reach the Jewish spark in the students and at least expose them to a *Shabbat* and to living a full Jewish life.

## Rabbi

Since Australia has a relatively small Jewish community, with less than 100,000 Jews, its rabbis and teachers have to be imported. Many of the Yeshiva teachers are Israelis and only a few adjust successfully. The vibrancy of the institutions, and the exposure of most of the young to some type of extensive Jewish education, mark Australia as a place where a small number of dedicated young *Rebbeim* and *Mechanchim* can transform the whole fabric of Jewish life. Today a student who takes a year off after high school to learn in a foreign yeshiva or seminary (e.g. Israel Yeshiva or JSS/Stern) has reached the highest level, even though the study of Torah will stop after this one year. The enthusiasm, broadness, and drive which are American characteristics contrast with the reserve and stolidness of the Australian rabbinat. Considering the difficulties in getting positions in the Orthodox rabbinat and in Jewish education in America, one should see the opportunity to obtain such positions in Australia as an exciting possibility.

# Summer Kollel Thrives

(Continued from Page 1)

sufficient in *limud Torah*. To put each one on the road to being a *talmid chacham*. In the *beit midrash*, which is consistently filled by the J.S.S. Kollel and their high school counterpart (a Kollel led by MTA's Rabbi Cohen), Rabbi Siff is readily available to solve problems in learning. Additional teaching assistants are also at hand. This year, two former J.S.S. Kollel members, Phil Solomon and Jay Goldberg, provided aid in the *beit Midrash*.

In addition to the intensive *talmudic* studies, several *Chumash* and *Musar shiurim* are held. Rabbi Siff teaches *Tanya* Thursday nights, while Phil and Jay share the responsibilities of the *Chumash shiurim*. Phil also teaches *torat h'bayit* (*Chafetz Chaim*).

Beyond the *limudim*, there is another crucial factor of Kollel that Phil has profoundly outlined as, "learning and living Torah. Living in a totally religious atmosphere, where Judaism is not just Talmud 101 or Bible 103. You cannot get Torah like this in Y.U." Phil's statement of "living Torah" in Kollel is clearly evidenced by the devout *iflillah* there. It often takes as much as an hour and an half to complete *shacharit* alone.

The learning does not end at the set times, as many of the students find time on their off-hours to review, to learn ahead, or to have *chavrutot* to learn some different material on their own.

The graduates of Kollel enter, upon their fall return to Y.U., "Junior Y" — a J.S.S. preparatory program spearheaded by Rabbi Siff for those who wish to enter Y.P. The success of the Kollel in producing qualified Yeshiva *bochrim* can best be judged by the ability of the former J.S.S. students to adapt to the R.I.E.T.S. program. When Rabbi Parnes was a first year R.I.E.T.S. *rebbe*, he asked Rabbi Siff where his boys from J.S.S. had been. Rabbi Siff explained that by the time they came back from the Kollel, he couldn't recognize them, and as far as he was concerned they were regular Yeshiva *talmidim*. Rabbi Siff summarized his approach that has allowed for such *hatzlacha* by saying that the important thing is "...not so much the quantity that you learn but the quality and the method."

The typical *Kollelnick's* schedule is well diversified with recreational activities. An unwary observer might be startled by the Yeshiva *bochrim* darting back and forth on the tennis courts with their *tzitzits*

## Special K

## Ethical Orthodoxy

George Karasick

There is a story told by Tolstoy of the nobleman who had a very faithful servant whose name was Ivan. He decided that he wanted to repay Ivan for his loyalty and offered him all the land that Ivan could cover on foot from sunrise to sunset. Early the next morning Ivan awoke and set off on his walk. After a short while he met his son who cried out, "Help me, father, I'm hungry." But Ivan answered, "Land, land, I must have land." A while later, he met a friend and even though a similar cry came out Ivan continued on. Towards evening, he heard the church bells and said, "I must have land, I'll stop later." As night fell, Ivan died from exhaustion. His friend passed by and saw him lying dead and said, "You wanted land so much, you couldn't stop for anything; now all you have is the six feet of your grave."

Extreme as this story may seem, and as obvious as its point may be, many people tend to forget its importance. A man has responsibilities and should not shirk them, especially his responsibility to his fellow man and to G-d. As for amassing wealth, there is nothing wrong with a man who wishes financial security, so long as he does it in an honest fashion, without letting his money overshadow his communal responsibility.

We live in times when scandals surround the Orthodox Jewish community. The apparent lack of honesty that pervades business dealings is astounding. These scandals vary widely and hit major facets of our community. The religious Jew has a responsibility to set an example of moral behavior both for his fellow Jews and for the rest of the world. Instead, we have acted in a disgraceful manner.

Aside from the obvious *Chillul Hashem* that has been created by these people there is a void in the moral relationship between one man and another. In this election year we hear a great deal about morality; morality, that is, in political dealings. We Jews had better concern ourselves with reestablishing morality in business dealings. To place blame on one man or even on a handful of people is foolish, but rather, this problem can be said to be like a contagious disease that has spread throughout a great part of our community.

There is a great emphasis in Judaism on the relationship between a man and his neighbor, *bein adam l'chavero*. Commentaries on the opening verse of *Mishpatim* point out that the Torah placed these laws close to the laws of the altar to show that we Jews are different from the rest of the world. In considering laws pertaining to man, the outside world is completely secular, without religious base. In Judaism, the laws concerning man were given from G-d. The same way that we serve G-d in the temple by offering sacrifices, so too by observing these seemingly secular laws we are serving G-d every day of our lives. For some reason, many people seem to believe that the key to Judaism lies in the laws that pertain to man and G-d, but disregard the laws that pertain to man and his fellow man. But it is obvious both logically and from a commentary on the word "*chamas*" in *Noah*, that all the *mitzvos* in the Torah hinge on each other and therefore, one cannot separate laws between man and G-d from the laws that are between man and man.

There is a great deal of talk about how our generation is more religious than the past few generations. This may be true but it seems that we have sacrificed the laws that pertain to man in order to observe the laws that pertain to G-d. People involved in all areas of business and politics try to shield their actions behind their mask of righteousness, and Jews are no exception. Among many Jewish leaders and businessmen there are flagrant cases of hypocrisy. We must return to our observance of all the laws, even the ones that pertain to our fellow man. Our past president, Dr. Belkin *z"l* stated that such transgressions deny the very existence of G-d. So, if one violates these laws, he is not only rebelling against his fellow man but also against G-d.

Referring to the story by Tolstoy, the key words are loyalty and responsibility. These people have shed themselves of their responsibility to the community. They have tarnished our name in the outside world and have set bad examples for our younger generation. They have, by their actions, cast off their loyalty to men and to G-d.

The point is that we the younger generation, have a larger burden. We must guard ourselves from this moral decay, and strive to show, not only to the outside world, but the rest of the Jewish community (i.e. Reform and Conservative movements) that we religious Jews are indeed honest. We must prove that the setback is only a temporary one.

We should like to think that Orthodoxy will be the basis of Judaism in the future. If we are to set any sort of lasting foundation we must refurbish our tarnished image and return to our moral ways. We must try to fulfill all the laws that G-d has set forth in the Torah, both the laws that apply to G-d and the laws that apply to our fellow man. Only by doing this will we have a chance to remove this stain from our reputation.

On a personal note, I would like to wish a *mazel tov* to a fellow Board member, Marty Thaler, on his recent engagement to Marcia Rothstein. Marty, I wish you and Marcia many years of happiness.

flying in the air or going up for a basket with *kipot* miraculously attached to their heads with bobby pins borrowed from their mothers.

The rustic setting provides a different atmosphere from that of Washington Heights. Rabbi Siff called it "a *Gan Eden* in this world. It is like a little part of *Eretz Yisrael* planted here in the middle of nowhere." Phil added, "our physical facilities are nothing more than a *beit midrash*. We have

a lot less here than in the city, but it is all a person needs to be happy. Things are not bad here. I'm just saying that country living is not city living. But no one complains and that shows that Kollel works."

"You have a dedicated group of boys in a magnificent environment with no other responsibilities and cares than learning Torah," Rabbi Siff commented, "Could you think of anything better?"

## The SOY Tapes

Most of us have, at least on one occasion, desired to attend one of the various special *shiurim* offered in the Yeshiva, but unfortunately were unable to be present. The task of locating a tape and waiting on line before getting it often discourages one from ever listening to the *shiur*.

Responding to this situation, the past president of SOY, Phil Kazlow, initiated the SOY Tape Library with the aim of recording the special *shiurim* and lectures of Jewish interest that are given in the Yeshiva community. The library presently holds no fewer than fifty presentations, in the varied areas of *halakha* and *hashkafa*, as delivered by Rabbis Bleich, Parnes, Riskin, Tendler, and others. Tapes date back as far as 1972.

The Tape Library is under the direction of Jordan Yasgur (Morg. 805), and tapes can be obtained directly from him. An official location and regular hours will be designated in the near future.

The Tape Library is expected to at least double its volume under the present SOY administration.



# Thievery in a Yarmulka - The Questions

(Continued from Page 8)

I, for example, were to take meat from the butcher, and not pay for it immediately." (*Yoma 86a*). What is so heinous in this deed as to constitute *chilul Hashem*? For this, we find an explanation in the words of *Rashi*: *Rav's* thinking was that other people, seeing his action, and not realizing that he intended to come back later to pay (those were the days before credit was commonplace), would think that *Rav* is a thief, "and would learn from him to take stealing lightly." In *Rashi's* view, then, an act is a *chilul Hashem* if it would tend to influence others to sin or to disregard a Biblical dictum.

A similar conclusion is reached elsewhere in the Gemara (*Chagiga 16a*). There it is written, that if someone feels himself overcome by temptation to sin, and is not able to control his *yetzzer hara* (evil inclination), let him at least go far away, "lest people (who know him in his own town) see him sinning and learn from his behavior." *Rashi* again explains, that by leaving his own locale, "even if he sins, no one will pay attention since he is not an important person in their eyes."

Thus we clearly see that a *chilul Hashem* takes place only when a person of prominence, generally respected, acts wrongly or acts in a manner which is subject to misinterpretation, and from this act other people may be influenced to sin or to neglect the *mitzvot*.

In our context, I think it is highly debatable whether anyone is going to be influenced to cheat the government or to neglect the elderly by the example of those currently under investigation. Corruption is so rife, dishonesty so commonplace in our society, that I find it difficult to accept the thesis that innocents will be corrupted by the spectacle of Rabbis and religious Jews suspected of cheating. They may be embarrassed, but hardly corrupted.

## T'fillin

The opinions in the Gemara and in *Rashi* which we have cited ought not to be dismissed as merely theoretical "obiter dicta"; they were actually adopted and incorporated into the lifestyle of the Jew, as can be seen by referring to later halakhic literature.

In the *Sefer HaChinuch*, *mitzva* 451, a classic work of *halakha*, we find a very similar question tackled: At one time, Jews wore their *t'fillin* not only for prayer, but throughout the day and even to work. It was commonly recognized garb of the Jew, visible to all. Inevitably, it sometimes happened that a Jew thus attired would be caught lying or cheating or stealing. Consequently, some Rabbis wished to restrict the public wearing of *t'fillin* to the home or synagogue or such private domain.

(Before I proceed, let me hasten to add that I appreciate the distinction between the donning of *t'fillin*, a direct law in the Torah, and the wearing of a yarmulka, a much later Rabbinic stricture. Nevertheless, it is the implication which is pertinent. In ancient times, the *t'fillin* publicly worn signified the observant Jew. In our times, it is the yarmulka which proclaims to the onlooker that this is an Orthodox Jew.)

The *Sefer HaChinuch* dissented

strongly with any move to limit the public wearing of *t'fillin*. "We must understand that it was the opinion of our Rabbis that each person should hold on to the *mitzva* and be accustomed to performing it... Yet there are persons who want to be very strict concerning the sanctity of this *mitzva*... but they misunderstand the passage in the Jerusalem Talmud (upon which they base their argument), where it tells of a person who once left a goblet with a Jew for safekeeping. After a while, he returned to the Jew and asked for the goblet in return, but the Jew denied ever having received it. Then the claimant retorted: 'It was not you that I trusted, but that tree (*t'fillin*) which you wear on your head.' " The inference of the remark clearly is that the outward manifestation of devotion to G-d, as evidenced by the *t'fillin*, leads the observer to expect exceptional honesty from the traditional Jew and thus to be more shocked when this trust is proven false. Therefore, certain Rabbis felt they ought to curtail the public wearing of *t'fillin*, for it would be a desecration for a Jew to perform *mitzvot* publicly while at the same time publicly transgressing other commandments. Better, said they, for the thief not to wear *t'fillin* and not to desecrate the community.

But the *Sefer HaChinuch* bluntly disagrees. "This is not my thinking, for the Lord knows, and I know, that there is no perfect person in this world who always acts righteously and never sins. Nevertheless, let us not prevent Jews from engaging in *mitzvot* when they are moved to do so."

Perhaps we in America in 1976 have a similar situation. If we follow the reasoning that no one who is likely to disparage Judaism by his deeds or words should appear in public in traditional Jewish dress, we are really saying that no Jew, no matter how Orthodox or observant, should wear his yarmulka in public, for "there is no *tzaddik* on earth" who will never sin. And if religious Jews do at times commit acts which are wrong and sinful, should we therefore tell them to transgress further, and remove their yarmulkas?

In the same vein, the *Bet Yosef* (*Orach Chaim* 38) also rejects the opinion that only the learned should wear the *t'fillin* publicly all day. "On the contrary, we learn that if a minor understands how to care for the *t'fillin*, his father ought to get *t'fillin* for him."

## Perfection

What is it, in light of these clear halakhic dicta to the contrary, that so many persons today nevertheless feel that an errant Jew should not openly display his Orthodox affiliation? I am afraid we have been led astray by a common fallacy of our society's thinking. Unfortunately, we seem to expect perfection from those in positions of leadership or influence. If parents, or Rabbis, or educators do not always embody all the virtues which they preach, if they lack somewhat in their perfection, they are attacked as "hypocrites." But that is wrong, for it is not hypocrisy to fall prey to human frailty. There is no one who is perfect, there is no one who does not make mistakes, and if we demand perfection, we

are going to end up disqualifying virtually everyone from representing Judaism. We will have no growth and no leadership, for each person will fear that he is not good enough to speak out.

This should not in any way be taken as a justification for those people who may have acted despicably, who are criminal in their deed. I do not seek to excuse the inexcusable. But I would urge that rather than removing one's yarmulka in public, each Jew should increase his awareness of the responsibilities and the high standards which the yarmulka calls for. The yarmulka should serve as a constant reminder of the Torah and the duties we are obligated to fulfill. Even if we remove the yarmulka, we cannot remove our obligations.

## Our Greatest Loss

What is most distressing to me, in retrospect, is the realization of what we have lost. Previously, even in the not too distant past, the Orthodox Jew possessed a marvelous gem, the priceless treasure of respect and trust from his fellow man and from the Gentile. Whatever else might be said, Rabbis and scholars and even *yeshiva bachurim* were respected as people of integrity, whose ethics and morals were above those of ordinary folk. To some extent, they exemplified the Gemara (*Yoma 86a*). "What is a *kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of the Holy Name)?... Let him read and learn (the Torah) and serve the wise men, and his dealings be gentle with people, and what do people say? Blessed is his father who taught.

# Israel on the Ropes

(Continued from Page 8)

more with the State of Israel than these spokesmen do. There are many who believe that Israel is the *Ichilat D'geulah*. There are others, and not only the idealists, who see in Israel the best if not only place for a fulfilling Jewish life.

And these spokesmen tell us not to believe and not to be idealistic and not to have faith in the impossible dream. With cold rational logic they dry up the well-springs of idealism. Without realizing the effects of their heartless pronouncements they are destroying the foundations of the optimistic and idealistic spirit of the upcoming Orthodox generation. If we would approach the contemporary problems of Judaism and Israel with their realistic and practical approach, we would dismally fail, for the future of Judaism rests with the optimists who dare to reach higher and higher religious summits, and not with those who despair from the exertion.

Intellectual thought has its place, but not at the expense of the destruction of the spirit. And such talk has this effect. Far from introducing intellectual ferment into the community, they have struck fear and discord in Jewish hearts. They have not encouraged people to yearn for the final *geulah* but they have brought a feeling of gloom and depression into the hearts of believing Jews. "Did you yearn for the Redemption?" we will be asked. And we will answer that our leaders were so busy convincing us otherwise that we

him Torah, blessed is his teacher who taught him Torah, but woe to him who has not learned Torah. Look at this one who has learned Torah, how pleasant are his ways." How terribly sad that religious Jews have forfeited that sterling reputation, have sold their good name for a few pieces of gold.

## Honesty

*Midrash Tanchuma* relates a beautiful tale of a ship full of voyagers, all Gentiles save for one Jew. When they reached a port, one of the Gentiles turned to the Jew and said, "Mr. Blank (they didn't even know his name), take my money with you to the town and buy our provisions for us." The Jew countered in amazement. "You don't know me, you don't know where I may go with your money!" "It makes no difference," the Gentile responded, "wherever you will go your G-d will go with you." Thus the Gentiles signified their total trust in his honesty, knowing that since he was a G-d-fearing person, they could rely on him in all financial matters.

What a beautiful tribute that story is for the Jew! What a magnificent *kiddush Hashem* such a Jew was. And how dreadful, how shameful, that we have by our own misdeeds, our own avarice, lost the right to hold our heads high. Now everyone knows, to our sorrow, that Rabbis and scholars are not necessarily better, that they often have as few scruples as anyone else. After all, business is business.

Our opportunity for *kiddush Hashem*, at least in this respect, has been shattered. And to me, that is the ultimate tragedy.

## Religious State

And what of our religious brethren in Israel? How are they to react when they read such dismaying articles? Who are we to deny them the desperate support they deserve and need? How can we allow our support to wane as they strive to build a true Torah state? As long as there is a remote possibility that the State may be the beginning of the redemption—something to which most writers admit—how can these writers forgive themselves for introducing doubts of this redemption into Jewish minds?

It is essential to question the source of ones beliefs. That a Jew must strive to understand his faith is essential. But this is a personal experience, an individual cathartic struggle. Nowhere does it say that we must broadcast our shortcomings, and certainly not the wrongdoings of others. But such is being done by our Orthodox spokesmen. The shortcomings of the State and of our Zionist thoughts are being shouted in public and at the public. And collectively it is having a demoralizing effect.

Our religious leaders should have many more important matters to occupy themselves with, than to discuss Israeli messianic speculations. Why must they destroy and not build? Their efforts are desperately needed to write articles instilling love for Eretz Yisrael, if they fail to feel for Medinat Yisrael.

# Self-Control

(Continued from Page 4)

Existentialism, on the other hand, is anathema to the Reds (though there are Marxist "*Epikorsim*" who have attempted a "synthesis"), not without justification. E., at least on a superficial level, tends to become self-preoccupied, even misleading. While it is important to realize that, as individuals, we always have the potential for freedom, and thus for some form of heroism, it is wrong to encourage the heroic pose by downplaying the prosaic determinative factors in human existence. We have learned from the Existentialists how even the most unfree limit-situations contain the scope for freedom: even the concentration camp, where man is totally dehumanized, still offers the stark choice of one's attitude towards one's dehumanization—one may regard one's suffering as the occasion for repentance, defiance, *yissurin shel avavah*, despair, suicide. Yet we must also remember how often a man's very insistence on his freedom and his dignity echo like a cruel joke to those who see clearly the psychological pressures that force him to his pose, like the hypnotic subject who insists his actions are his own while the bystanders, who know of his post-hypnotic suggestions, split their sides laughing.

And so the Marxists claim that Existential analysis is no more than a sign of bourgeois weakness, a distraction from the real problems of economics, exploitation etc. But the Marxist-environmentalist behavior arguments may be valid, though some social engineering may be in order, and some of the Existentialist stress on inwardness may be escapism. We know that any solution for man's social and psychological crisis that does not go to the root of the problem—man's freedom and what he does with it—is bound to be phoney.

Again: it was good to hear from you; and I hope we'll be able to talk over some of this when you're in NYC some time,

Your friend,  
Shalom

And such is the state of our Orthodox community vis-a-vis the State of Israel. To ask for a moratorium on such anti-Israel literature would be to rob too many religious spokesmen of rousing public lectures. I do hope that Jews do taste the diet of negation they are being fed. We must counter this disease which is creeping into our consciousnesses.

But most importantly we must continue to yearn for the immediate redemption of our people. We must pray that we have been privileged to witness the birth pangs of the true redemption. Let us hope that it will be our prayers which will be answered and not the prophecies of others. Let us not doubt the resurgence of the Jewish spirit which we see in our days and which will continue forever.

It has not been my object to offend any individual. My only purpose has been to confront the positions of this issue but not to fault the personalities involved. Kol Yisrael Chaverim.

Contributing Editor

# ISRAEL ON THE ROPES

Joseph Epstein

*Dedicated to my Rebbe who strives in Jerusalem to bring the love of Torah and Israel to all Jews.*

Presently, the American Jewish Community is debating a crucial question relating to the singular phenomenon and continued existence of the State of Israel. The issue is how to define the position of the State of Israel vis-a-vis the Diaspora. Should Israel be the leader in world Jewish affairs, and how crucial is Israel to the Diaspora experience?

That this issue should confront the general Jewish community is not surprising. To the secular Jew, the State of Israel was never defined in religious or spiritual terms. As a fallible political entity, the State of Israel never acquired the unique religious significance which would have deflected much of this criticism. What is surprising is the lateness of this debate. Years ago, the American Jewish establishment should have demanded an equal, if not greater, voice in world Jewish affairs.

A logical outgrowth of this increasing awareness was the establishment of an organization such as *Breira*. Their stated "longterm goal is the revitalization of American Jewish institutions and culture." However, since there

is an "interdependence of Israel and the Jewish communities around the world", there must be "free and open debates" between Israel and these Jewish communities. This debate must recognize "the moral and intellectual integrity of both partners," so that neither side should "dictate its views or attitudes to the other nor mutely accept each other's actions." And as the first step in this new relationship, *Breira* believes that "the Arabs are within their rights when they claim equal recognition" (to their national aspirations), and, that "there can be no peace without a just solution to the Palestinian problem." Such are the conclusions of those who evaluate Israel in secular and political terms and do not believe in its extra religious and spiritual significance. (Above quotes are from the *Breira* information pamphlet).

As members of the generally supportive Orthodox community, we would contend that such opinions are foreign to our religious view of Israel. We believe that our world view is influenced by deep religious yearnings and not secular political considerations.

Yet this is not necessarily the correct reality. A new trend can be observed in the Orthodox Jewish community. This reorientation has

fragile implications and ominous repercussions. Many of Orthodox's most influential spokesmen have reexamined their views towards the importance and position of Israel. And many have opted for the easier position of minimizing this "Israel connection." So outspoken have our spokesmen become in decrying some aspect of the Israeli State, that even the secularists have been outmaneuvered. So desperate have these crowd pleasers become that even the most sacred ideal does not escape the criticism of these detractors of Torah Zionism.

That *Neturei Karta-Satmar* are violently opposed to the State is clear. That *Agudah* is cautious and at times non-supportive to the State is well known. No songs of praise were ever expected to be heard from these groups in support of the State.

## Modern Orthodoxy

But no one ever expected modern Orthodoxy to vitiate in their support of the State. Today, many of our Orthodox spokesmen have found new courage and support from both the right and the left to question the foundations of Religious Zionism. Indeed no "rock" is left unturned in their efforts to minimize the religious significance of the State of Israel. At a time when there is a desperate need for a resurgence of support for Israel, their voices of defeatism and scholastic self righteousness, set a mood of sadness and despair.

Since the establishment of the Israeli State, modern Orthodoxy's view has been influenced by the Mizrahi semi-mystical model of the State as the *Itchalta D'geulah*, the beginning of the redemption. The State was seen as the first step in the realization of the Messianic age. Israel was charged with a Divine mission and the people of Israel are the messengers of G-d in establishing His kingdom on earth. Basing itself on Torah sources and upon the Messianic visions of religious thinkers, this concept believes that only in Israel can the Jew find true and complete religious fulfillment.

Significantly this new attack on Israel is a religious one. By de-emphasizing its religious uniqueness and minimizing its spiritual significance, these spokesmen can more easily debate the importance of Israel. Once the traditional aura of religious specialness is dissipated, these speakers can relegate the State of Israel to a less important role in the destiny of the Jewish people.

## Orthodox Spokesmen

I should like to examine the writings of two of these Orthodox spokesmen whose recent articles on this subject elicited much comment. Their opinions are representative of a larger group of American Orthodox spokesmen. I choose these two articles because they epitomize, in a most clear way, this new trend in the Orthodox community.

Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, president of the Rabbinical Council of America and editor of *TRADITION* magazine, wrote in the Tishrei 5736 edition of *Jewish Life* an article titled "The Role of

the Jewish State in the Ultimate Triumph of the Jewish People." Rabbi Wurzburger states that "the traumatic shock of the Yom Kippur War drove home to us not merely the vulnerability of the State of Israel but the precariousness of Jewish existence everywhere." However, no matter how precarious this existence may seem, our belief in *Netzach Yisrael*—the indestructibility of the Jewish people - "is an article of Faith." Yet this belief is not an "absolute guarantee for the survival of the State" because "from the perspective of Jewish faith, one cannot provide absolute guarantees for the future." "Nowhere does it say that we must broadcast our shortcomings, and certainly not the wrongdoings of others. But such is being done by our orthodox spokesmen."

existence of the State of Israel unless one is willing to commit oneself to the proposition that the establishment of the State marks the actual beginning of the Messianic Era." Rabbi Wurzburger cannot commit himself to this possibility for there is not even a consensus "with respect to the theological meaning of the State." Nevertheless the State does have a significant role, albeit a less crucial one. The State was "an enormous success in the deepening of the mystery of Jewish existence." It makes more plausible our Messianic expectations. However, no matter how significant the event, "we cannot derive any guarantees for the continued survival of the State of Israel. After all, the spiritual significance of the event does not completely depend on its durability." It is Rabbi Wurzburger's belief that the most plausible way to understand the State is one which "is stripped of all Messianic pretensions."

One year later, *TRADITION* magazine published an article by Dr. Gary Epstein titled "Could Judaism Survive Israel?" (*Tradition* 16:1, Summer 1976). Prefacing his article, with a bleak evaluation of the current political situation, as Rabbi Wurzburger did, Dr. Epstein theorizes that it is a conceivable (though "heretofore") eventuality that "the State of Israel could be destroyed and its people massacred." Therefore it is imperative that "every contingency be examined" and that "a realistic evaluation be undertaken" in order "to objectify the importance of Israel in our minds." This evaluation is necessary because

"our psychological dependence on Israel is shortsighted." His goal is to encourage specialists in these fields (of religion, community, politics, psychology) to consider what was formerly unthinkable." It is essential to begin to plan for the eventuality of the destruction of the State. In his article he speculates about the changes which would occur in the America Jewish community. If the State would be destroyed, the "community center . . . would probably gain new support and direction. The Jewish day school movement would grow." With the removal of the financial yoke of supporting the weak Israeli economy, a "mind boggling" amount of money would be freed to build a viable and internally expanded American Jewish community.

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the specific arguments advanced by such spokesmen. The effects and the conclusions of these positions are of greater importance. I refer not only to the above spokesmen, but also to several other writers and speakers who have advanced similar arguments.

The demoralizing and articulate words we read above are not the sentiments of Arab propagandists. The terrifying conjectures regarding the destruction of Israel are not the arguments of extreme alarmists but the well thought positions of Orthodox intellectuals. So effective has been the disheartening talk of our spokesmen that only the idealistic fringe elements still speak of Israel in positive religious terms. To all these discouraging speakers we owe the withdrawing of intellectual and religious support - and ultimately perhaps financial support - of the State.

## Holocaust Plans

I do not know where it is stated that we must plan for our own doom. The Jews of pre-WWII did not make plans for the post Holocaust society. The Jews who lived before the *Churban Habayit* did not consult the experts about how to operate in a society without the Holy Temple. Yet we are asked to consider the impossible and plan for a second Holocaust. How morbid can we get? How insensitive to the morale of our people can we be?

A generation of young committed Jews is growing up, who are untainted by such demoralizing beliefs. This younger generation sympathizes and identifies much (Continued on Page 7)

## The Yarmulka Problem And Business Ethics

by Rabbi Alfred Cohen

Recent political disclosures have caused considerable chagrin in Jewish, and particularly Orthodox Jewish, circles, as we have seen our co-religionists paraded before investigative panels, television lights, and news reporters. Unfortunately, the publicity has not been for the purpose of exhibiting them as praiseworthy leaders of society, but rather to air all manner of despicable and demeaning charges against them. Despite the fact that some of these people hold positions of eminence and leadership in the Jewish world, they stand accused of the lowest calumny, of fraud against the government and against the individuals they ought to have served, and of neglect or even cruelty to others. What has particularly discomfited many persons in Jewish circles is seeing Orthodox Jews, pinioned in the spotlight of public and media interest, appearing at these accusatory sessions wearing a yarmulka on their heads. It is these onlookers' feeling that by thus publicly declaring their status as Orthodox Jews, and indeed appearing to many as ultraorthodox Jews, the accused discredit and dishonor Judaism, due to the crimes of which they are charged.

Outraged cries of "What a disgrace!", "What a *Chilul Hashem*!", "Why doesn't the thief take off his yarmulka?" are heard. We feel angered and betrayed, all the more so since these are visibly Orthodox Jews who are charged with cheating the government.

This raises a somewhat sticky

question, one which we now propose to discuss: Who is right? Is it the Jew who wears his yarmulka at all times, even in the prisoner's dock or on the witness stand, or those individuals who feel that, despite the pures of motives, one should not display the yarmulka in such circumstances, as it will tend to lower the respect for Judaism?

## Chilul Hashem

*Chilul Hashem*, desecration of the name of G-d, is indeed a most serious charge to level against an individual. Throughout the centuries, it was always regarded as virtually the worst sin that a person could ever commit. The *Talmud Bavli*, in *Yoma 86a*, lists the various types of sins and their respective penances or "punishments." . . . If he transgressed and committed those which require death (by Divine intervention) or death by order of a Court and if he repented, then his penance, and *Yom Kippur*, and his punishment can cleanse him. But for that person who has in his hands a *chilul Hashem*, desecration of the name of G-d, there is no power in repentance, nor in *Yom Kippur*, nor in any punishment to suspend his guilt."

Before we proceed, it is essential that we define the concept of *chilul Hashem* in *halakha*, normative Jewish law. The classic source in the *Gemara* are the words of Rav, an outstanding disciple of R. Judah the Prince, and one of the greatest *Amoraim*: "What is a *chilul Hashem*? . . . Rav said, 'If

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