

# HAMEVASER

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## Yeshiva Vows Never to Forget

### Yom Hashoa Memorial Service

Yom Hashoa is a day that was proclaimed by the Knesset and communities around the world as a day of remembrance of the six million who perished in the Holocaust during World War II. Every year, for the past eleven years, JSSSC has held a program reminding students and the community at large that we must remember an event in history that only happened at the most two or three generations ago. An event that many say could happen again soon.

Normally, a program of this nature consists of a speaker, a film and a candle lighting ceremony of "KEL MALE RACHAMIM." Yet this program was different in that it was a symposium of children of the Holocaust. Students whose parents survived the Holocaust, related their stories to total

### Bigotry Exhibit in Furst Hall

by MORDECHAI TWERSKY

For the second consecutive year, a most frightening and thought-provoking exhibit of leaflets and assorted hate-group paraphernalia from across the nation is on display in Furst Hall.

The large, three board exhibit, "American 'Diaspora,'" is filled with pamphlets and publications carrying such titles as: "Bolshevism from Moses to Lenin," "Auschwitz: Truth or Lie," and "Menachem Begin's Blood-Soaked Past." Many of these materials are distributed by such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, American Nazi Party, and Christian Defense League.

According to Larry Domnitch, who, along with fellow student David Bildner, collected the material for the exhibit by writing

## Major MYP Changes

By Seth Landa

Strengthening of the Yeshiva Program seder and the possibility of instituting shiur for credit were two of the major points touched upon in the most recent meeting of RIETS and MYP rabbeim. In addition, Rabbi Charlop addressed each shiur individually, emphasizing the need to maintain the level of learning in YP at its optimum.

Rabbi Charlop, who has been forced to cut down on the number of personal shiur visits due to the burden of his position, nevertheless made a point of talking to all RIETS and MYP shiurim shortly after Pesach. Although the content of his talks to the shiurim varied, the message was consistent; there is a great need for improvement in the Yeshiva Program, improvements which would put the level of learning at Yeshiva on par with that of the best yeshivot anywhere. Rabbi Charlop stressed the uniqueness of learning

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## YU Loses Rabbi Besdin: Director of JSS

Rabbi Morris J. Besdin, director of the James Striar School of General Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University for 25 years and pioneer in the educational direction of the Baal Teshuvah movement, passed away on April 10 at the age of 69.

Prior to his Yeshiva University directorship, Rabbi Besdin served for 22 years as a pulpit rabbi, as spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikai Hadas in Scranton, Pa., of Beth Hamidrash Hagodol in Washington Heights, New York, NY, and of K'hal Adas Yeshurun in Kew Gardens, Queens, NY, where the funeral services were held, as well as for three years as a U.S. Army chaplain.

A master teacher and renowned educator, Rabbi Besdin's rare combination of warm personal involvement and high academic standards shaped the development of the James Striar School of General Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University, making it a prototype

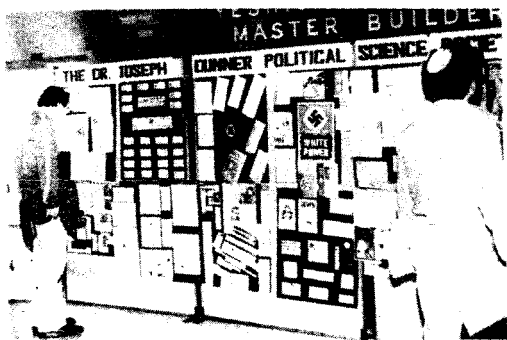


Rabbi Morris Besdin, Z"l

for others in this country and in Israel. Soft spoken in manner, his popularity was unparalleled among students, alumni, and colleagues throughout the University.

Born in Poland in 1913, Rabbi Besdin came to this country in 1921. He was an alumnus of Yeshiva College, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1936, and of Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, where he received Semikah in 1936. Rabbi Besdin joined Yeshiva University as a lecturer in Talmud in 1946 and later also was an instructor in Bible. He was named director of the School of General Jewish Studies in 1958, a school founded in 1956 and renamed in 1966 in memory of industrialist James Striar of Bangor, Me.

Rabbi Besdin revitalized the school, which is now celebrating the 25th anniversary of its founding and, at the same time, pioneered in the educational direction of the Baal Teshuvah movement. In the Sixties and Seventies, this movement generated a widespread revival of interest among Jewish youth in the sources, traditions, and practices of Judaism, and sought to counteract the ongoing process of assimilation threatening the survival of Judaism. The common denominator among Baal Teshuvah youth is a strong desire to deepen the roots of their Jewish identity. The James Striar School of General Jewish Studies provided these students some of whom, though born Jewish, came to Jewish studies as to a new and unfamiliar faith, and some of whom were graduates of Yeshiva day schools but had not learned the fundamentals of Talmudic study — an opportunity to learn



Students viewing the exhibition

strangers about their experiences of being raised by concentration camp survivors.

The Chairman of the Holocaust committee this year was Harry Shualy. Harry was influenced by Helen Epstein's book *Children of the Holocaust* and decided that the time had come for YU to hold such a symposium. The objective of the program was to familiarize students with the problems faced by the children of Holocaust survivors let alone their parents.

Harry, himself, a "child of the Holocaust," had his own problems to deal with while organizing this event. Firstly, publicizing this program in the school newspaper THE COMMENTATOR, and the OBSERVER presented difficulties

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to and visiting the headquarters of some of the groups in Washington and Virginia, the exhibit serves to depict "the elements of exile," and also, "to remind Jews that this nation, as most others, is not immune to but often susceptible to the forces of anti-Semitism.

Mr. Domnitch points out that although the materials are published by many hate-group organizations, and that they may be found in all parts of the country, much of the material may be obtained right here in parts of Long Island and New York City. "These groups are serious," maintains Domnitch. "They are taking an active role in politics and are taking stands on various social, political and economic issues, such

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## Lectures At Yeshiva

### Memorial Lectures

On Monday April 26, Yeshiva University held two memorial services for two of its esteemed scholars. First, there was a memorial for Dr. Hyman B. Grinstein, who died on March 10. Dr. Grinstein who began his affiliation with Yeshiva in 1917, served as Professor of American Jewish History in the Bernard Revel Graduate School, and as director of the Teacher's Institute for Men. The speakers at the memorial service all brought out a similar theme, that Dr. Grinstein's personal strength and quiet leadership dominated Yeshiva while he was here. Dr. Leo Landman, Dean of BRGS, noted that Dr. Grinstein always brought people back to the fold. He worked well with people and never antagonized them. He also had a great love for the Jewish People which manifested itself in everything he did. Dean Jacob Rabinowitz of EMC noted other characteristics of Dr. Grinstein. When Dean Rabinowitz succeeded Dr. Grinstein as director of TI Dr. Grinstein was always very supportive and was never critical. The students of TI were like

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### BRGS Series

The last installment of this year's BRGS lecture series was held on April 26, in conjunction with the Michael Bernstein Memorial Lecture. Professor Moshe H. Goshen Gottstein delivered the lecture entitled "New Dimensions of Targumic Exegesis." Dr. Goshen Gottstein is Professor of Semitic Linguistics and Biblical Philology at the Hebrew University and is Professor of Bible and Hebrew Philology at Bar Ilan University.

Dr. Goshen Gottstein, who also taught at BRGS in the 1960's, analyzed various passages from our Targum, and compared them to manuscripts of targum that have been found. He stated that our version of the Targum is faithful to its original printing of 1517, which is not necessarily the most accurate version. Dr. Goshen Gottstein showed passages from our Targum which are difficult to understand, and parallel passages from manuscripts which are different and are easier to understand. The results of this research will soon be published by Bar Ilan University.

Two previous lectures in the spring series were delivered in

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## Leave It There

If one were to take a leisurely stroll through Rubin Hall he would more likely than not trip over a huge pile of discarded cafeteria utensils. It seems that each floor has its own utensil depository near the elevator. That the students discard the utensils is understandable; they have no further use for them. The habit of removing utensils from the cafeteria is spreading, and it is a serious problem.

Once a utensil leaves the cafeteria, many things could happen to it that would make it unsuitable for further use. Due to this fear of finding non-kosher utensils to the cafeteria, the cafeteria has a policy that any utensil, tray or plate that leaves the cafeteria may not be returned to use. For those who wish to take their food out of the cafeteria, the cafeteria provides take-out trays at an additional cost.

Since it is not any easier to use the regular utensils we must assume that the reason that students do not use the take-out utensils is that they are deterred by the added cost. The disregard of cafeteria rules and continued theft of cafeteria utensils is inexcusable. Every time a utensil is removed it must be replaced and we all pay for the replacement.

We suggest that the cafeteria stop charging extra for the take-out trays. The loss in revenue should be more than made up by the huge volume of utensils that won't have to be replaced. In the meantime, those students in Rubin Hall should immediately cease their selfish habit.

We wish to correct a misconception that was printed in the last issue of *Hamevaser*. The Bible and Hebrew courses taken by all MYP students are under the jurisdiction of the Dean of Undergraduate Jewish Studies and not the MYP office.

# HAMEVASER

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## Please Don't Go

This week Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel was sent to Israel on a recruitment trip at the Israeli Yeshivot. These trips are effective because the students appreciate the personal attention and concern of the YU admissions staff. Unfortunately for Rabbi Kanarfogel's students, he will be unable to teach his courses from Israel. To be sure, he left his students with reading lists, and his EMC course will be covered by another teacher, but this is not enough. His three Stern College courses will not be covered and they will be unable to cover all the materials on the reading lists in the remaining weeks of the semester.

Presumably the reason we go to college rather than only read on our own is that the faculty available to us in college are the best resources for learning. Rabbi Kanarfogel is certainly no exception; he is an excellent teacher who is popular with his students. That is why it is so silly to take him out of the classroom. Certainly, Rabbi Kanarfogel is not at fault here; he would be foolish not to jump at the opportunity to make his first trip to Eretz Yisrael. The Admissions Office is not at fault; indeed, they are to be commended for their wise choice of faculty to send to Israel, and they have every right to try to send as many as they can afford. However, the dean, or deans which allowed their professor to leave their classes should be chastized for not forbidding the trip.

The academic integrity of a course must come into question if the professor misses 2 or 3 weeks of a 16-week semester. If there are reasons why this trip could not take place over intercession, or Pesach, or some other vacation period then someone other than a teaching faculty member should be sent. To pull a teacher out of the classroom with three weeks remaining in the semester is ridiculous. The Deans involved owe an apology to the students who will not be learning the entire course for which they registered.

Limited number of plots available in the YU alumni section Eretz Hachaim Cemetery in Israel available.

Those interested please contact  
Rabbi Avrech, Rabbinic Alumni Office  
960-5289.

## Letter to the Editor

### To the Editor:

The article on the calendar, "Making Rain From a Molehill" was most interesting. I must, however, disagree with an attitude that threads through the entire article, and I believe, leads to the wrong conclusion. Contrary to the writer's assumptions, I believe that Shmuel, and then Hillel, knew full well that 365 1/4 was an inaccurate estimate and that they were fully aware of the more accurate basis of the 19 year cycle. The question then remains: "Why did Shmuel settle for an approximation?" I believe that the answer lies in Shmuel's confidence in future generations to make adjustments as needed. It would take approximately 130 years for an error of one full day to manifest

itself. In the meantime, the simplicity of following a six hour remainder made the use of the approximation reasonable. It probably never occurred to Shmuel that later rigidity would prevent the necessary changes.

This past winter's drought in Israel, as well as recent world wide aberrations - floods as well as droughts - which caused so much suffering, should perhaps motivate us to finally correct the error in our calendar. Let us, at least, do what we can in the area of prayer to bring about an abundance of rain.

Sincerely,  
Zvi Elizur YC '88

**Mother's Day Sale at  
MORG MART**  
Discounts on selected gift items.

## Neshira, Yerida, Abortion and ZPG

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deciding to arrive on that Shabbat morning two months ago — is repeating the process. My G-d! Ribbono Shel Olam! Are these what society is subjecting to the suction of a vacuum machine!

What a selfish sham is that liberationist credo: "Out bodies, our selves." (In the current issue of "Lilith" magazine — how the name reflects the ideology! — the cover article by Blu Greenberg is depicted graphically by a cover photograph of a frum woman, replete with tichel, wearing a button proclaiming: "Keep your laws off my body.) Torah law seems to disagree. We are not at liberty to rule "our bodies our selves." We may not make tatoos, destroy the corners of the beard, make cuts in the flesh, ingest certain foods, or do many other things with the bodies G-d created as receptacles for our souls.

"Kol D'mei Akhikha Tzoakim Min Ha-Adama!" The bloods of tens of thousands of murdered Jewish babies — and of their generations who will never be — are screaming to us from the earth. We must begin to speak out forcefully — rather than to quietly leave this "dirty work" to the Protestant fundamentalists. For the children. And for our people.

(Because I knew others would be writing on the passing of Rav Besdin, I did not want to write a redundant column. He was a Torah giant who will not be replaced, only imitated. Long before he built JSS into one of Yeshiva's greatest crowns of glory, he was making a life-lasting impact on Jewish boys fighting overseas for America during World War II. In JSS, he molded an idea into an institution which has had an impact of incalculable dimensions on Jewish life in America and in Israel.



# A History of Torah Judaism

By JOSEPH C. KLAUSNER

A review of:

Rakeffet-Rothkoff, Aaron: *The Silver Era* (Rabbi Eliezer Silver and his generation) — Yeshiva University Press, Feldheim Publishers, Jerusalem, 1981. (and a companion volume reissued.)

Rakeffet Rothkoff, Aaron: *Bernard Revel — Builder of American Orthodoxy* — First Edition: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972; revised: Feldheim, Jerusalem 1981.

In the study of Judaica, the history of American Jewry has already taken a prominent place in the last few years and decades. Yet, traditional Jewry has not received its fair share of description, documentation and study, notwithstanding its important contribution.

One person who has sought to tell the story of Torah-true Judaism in America is Rabbi Dr. Aaron Rakeffet (ne Rothkoff). A graduate of Yeshiva University and ordained at its yeshiva (R.I.E.T.S.) Rakeffet poses the issue of American Orthodoxy and begins to solve it.

He asks: why did Torah take a back seat in America for many years? Indeed, why was Orthodoxy neglected? And, specifically: who began to change the tide? and, who guided the new trend?

Determined to investigate the personality of he who stemmed the path away from Judaism and carried the battle for Torah, HaRav Rakeffet located Rabbi Dr. Bernard (Dov) Revel. Revel founded Yeshiva College and was the first president of Yeshiva University. He is to be considered — according to Rakeffet — as "the builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy."

Born in Lithuania in the 1880s, Revel became a *Talmid-Chacham* in his early years. Upon his arrival to the U.S. in 1906 he pursued a secular education and only six years later was considered a prominent scholar. When in 1915 he was offered the proposal to head the newly organized Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva, it was clear that if anyone could build a major yeshiva in the New World, it was only Revel. He possessed many skills, foremost

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Applications for the 1982-83 Governing Board of

HAMEVASER are being reviewed now.

They should be brought to M328, or call 927-1562.

# What Has Become of Shevet Shimon?

By SHALOM STONE

"... So said the Lord, the God of Israel: I shall tear the kingdom out of Shlomo's hands and I shall give you (Yeravam) the Ten Tribes." (King I 11:31) "... and I will give it to you, the Ten Tribes." (Kings I 11:35) In these two psukim we find the only mention of "the ten Tribes" in Tanach. The legends that place these lost-souls in Africa, North America, the Far East or the Russian Mountains are well-known and certainly fascinating. Yet a far more basic question remains: Who are these ten tribes?

At first glance, most people, and indeed most commentaries simply subtract Yehuda and Binyamin from the "twelve tribes" and get ten. The Midrash Rabba (B'reishit 73:6) also parallels "Yehudah and Binyamin" to the "ten tribes." Even Josephus contrasts them several times. This widespread assumption, however, has one problem: it would seem from two places in Joshua that Shimon was "part of" Yehudah, and could not, therefore, be part of the kingdom of Yeravam, King of Israel.

Joshua 19:1 says of Shimon: "And their inheritance was in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Yehuda ..." while (19:9) repeats: "Out of the inheritance of Yehuda came the inheritance of the children of Shimon ..." More explicitly, of the 37 cities given to Yehudah (Joshua 15:26-32,42), 8 are later named as Shimon's (19:1-9); a sort of joint ownership. In any case, can the words "the ten tribes" include Shimon? It seems not.

It must be noted, first of all, that the number 10 is never associated with the Kingdom of Israel during or after the exile. "The ten Lost Tribes" may be a later term derived from the Kings I text — without being numerically accurate. Likewise, the number 10 in the Tanach itself may only be a rounding-off of 9. Examples of this phenomenon can be found by 40, (lashes) where 39 is rounded off to 40, and in the genealogies (B'reishit 11 and others) where many ages are conspicuously multiples of 10. However, this is not likely in the case of such a small number — 9 — as the need to round off does not arise.

A case can be made for Levi as the tenth tribe. Although not counted on most occasions, and of course did not receive a territory of its own, Levi was given individual cities in each tribe's territory (Joshua 21 and "arei miklat"). Hashem was not awarding Yeravam territory; he was giving him jurisdiction over ten tribes. Levi, as a resident within them, might be counted as a tribe within his jurisdiction. From a practical point of view, however, it is unlikely that Levi would be seen that way; they were far too scattered. Rashi states explicitly: "Levi is not included in the count of the tribes, for they are divided." (Breishit 49:7) The Metzudat David refers to Levi: "Do they not live among all the tribes of Israel, and are not counted at all." — And this is said on our original verse. Obviously, he does not include Levi as one of the ten.

Another possibility, put forward by the historian Graetz (History of the Jews, Vol. I, p. 183) is that the two halves of Menashe are counted twice. Unfortunately, he gives no source or proof for this theory while there is a wealth of material opposed to it. Nowhere else in Tanach are the two halves — i.e. Ben Yair and Ben Machir — counted as two tribes. They are always referred to as halves. In addition, by the allotments for Mashiach, Menashe is counted only once; all 12 are given equal shares, with only Levi's portion more

complicated than the others (Yechezkel 47:13). It seems, then, that the only solution that remains is to say that Shimon was counted in the 10 in spite of the Joshua passages. In order to see how this is possible we must examine the territory and movements of Shimon.

In addition to the basic listing of Shimon's cities within Yehudah, there are other references to their joint nature. When Yehudah moved to capture its territory, they offered Shimon a reciprocal deal to drive out the Canaanites (Shoftim 1:3-17). Moreover, during the fighting only Yehuda is mentioned — as if, in comparison, Shimon is inconsequential. The Ramban refers to Shimon thus (B'reishit 49:5): "and their cities were separated one from the other throughout the tribe of Yehuda." Ibn Ezra echoes this and adds, "thus they (Shimon) are in another's possession."

This basic idea is summed up by the historians with such ideas as: "Shimon was absorbed by Yehuda" (Encyclopedia Judaica 15:1384); Shimon settled in the Negev, was semi-nomadic, and part of their territory was absorbed into Yehudah (ibid 8:579); Shimon fused with Yehudah at an early date (Jewish Encyclopedia XI:345-6); Shimon became "subordinated ... vassals", a "dependency" and "subsidiary" of Yehudah (Graetz I-38, 77, 182). In addition to this evidence, the representation of Shimon in various historical maps is varied, yet maintains a secondary role for Shimon.

There is slight disagreement as to how Shimon came to be in Yehudah's territory. The Raibag (Joshua 15:8) objects to Rashi's explanation that Shimon simply moved in when it was apparent that Yehudah had extra space. Raibag specifies that Hashem intended those cities to be Shimon's all along; the only reason they were listed first as Yehuda's is that "they (Shimon's cities) were all within their (Yehudah's) borders." This argument is academic since all of this only seems to prove the point that Shimon was attached to Yehudah and could not be one of ten tribes, as assumed by so many people.

There are other indications in Tanach pointing to Shimon's perplexing anonymity. In Moshe's blessings (D'varim 33:7), Shimon is not mentioned, and many commentaries see in Yehudah's blessing indications of Shimon's association with the descendants of Yehudah. Neither is Shimon mentioned in the Song of Devorah. No king or judge ever came from the tribe of Shimon. Nor is Shimon mentioned during the siege attack, capture, or Babylonian Exile of Yehudah (Kings II 25:21 ...).

There are a few isolated appearances of independence. Shimon gives some of its cities to the Levi'im in Joshua 21:4,9. Shimon managed to retain family ties and records at least as far as Chizkiyahu's reign (Divrei Hayamim I 4:24-42). Yoshiyahu destroyed the altars in Shimon's territory (lit. cities). But these incidents are not enough to assume Shimon's independence in the face of the overwhelming evidence opposing it.

Although it seems that only the Encyclopedia Britannica (XXV: 121, 1910 edit.) actually asks the question of which group Shimon belongs to (the 20 or the 10), there are several theoretical answers. Only one, however, seems to work out.

This theory (with thanks to Rav Parnes, shlit'a) assumes that when Hashem gave Yeravam the "ten tribes", he was referring to the tribes that he was *entitled* to. Inherent in the split kingdom was the separation of Yehudah-and-Yerushalayim (and therefore

Binyamin by way of Yerushalayim) from the "ten tribes". The fact that Shimon did not become part of the new kingdom was therefore **geographical**. By all rights, Yeravam was entitled to rule Shimon — the "Tenth Tribe".

We must now explain the lesser question of the ten *lost* tribes, since Shimon could obviously not have been lost with the others by theory alone. The Jewish Encyclopedia (ibid) quotes an apocryphal midrash (?) which brings both Yehudah and Shimon to Ethiopia, and then leaves Shimon behind. Although the story is impossible for several historical reasons, it is noteworthy in that it is a marked attempt to explain how Shimon could have been with Yehudah yet still get lost in the end.

A more plausible theory, although not without problems, is that there were two groups from Shimon—one group that was exiled with Yehudah, and one with Israel. This is not at all far-fetched, as there is mention (Divrei Hayamim I 4:38-43) of 500 Shimonites who went off to Har Se'ir to find more land after having been partially kicked out of Yehudah's territory. It would seem that these people settled there, separated from those Shimonites who remained in five cities in Yehudah (v. 32 there). The Radak there states clearly, "when the children of Yehudah chased them from their land, and they (Shimon) sought a new territory ... and these 5 cities and their areas remained for them (Shimon) and they were not chased from there."

It appears that those Shimonites who remained in the five cities did *not* leave in the exile of Israel, as is evident from Metzudat David (Divrei Hayamim II 34:6): "and even though the Ten Tribes were exiled, a few of them remained in their (tribe's) lands."

Since only five cities' worth of Shimonites remained in Yehudah, it is understandable that there is no subsequent mention of them in the Babylonian Exile. It is also understandable that they did not return to those five cities, so that the description of the later inhabitants of those cities as "children of Yehudah" (Nechemya 11:25-30) is not a problem.

But far more important than proving that some Shimonites remained with Yehudah is showing that those Shimonites who moved to Har Se'ir did indeed go into exile with the ten tribes, and now with Yehudah. The Radak (Divrei Hayamim I 4:41) says, "even in the days of Ezra, there were no settlers in these areas (Har Se'ir) even though the Shimonites were exiled from there." This logic implies that Shimon did not return from exile, for if they had returned the Radak would have written "There were no settlers there even though Shimon returned from exile." Of course there is only one way that Shimon could have been exiled and not returned — the exile of the Ten Tribes.

We have now found a complete answer: Shimon was originally prevented from joining the ten tribes by a geographical impediment. When some of them moved away, they became vulnerable to separation and, indeed, they were taken from their "new" home in Har Se'ir to a permanent exile.

Is this the right answer? There probably is no one correct solution. There is merely one possibility among many. If you have any thoughts on this article, or any other for that matter, please write to Hamevaser, c/o The Editor.

# Eulogy For Rabbi Morris Besdin

Dr. Norman Lamm

The death of Rabbi Moshe Besdin is an occasion of deep bereavement not only for his loving family, many friends, and former congregants, but especially for Yeshiva University — of which he was a proud and loyal son, and which he served with great distinction, love, and dedication. His funeral takes place almost six years to the day that the late Dr. Samuel Belkin, of blessed memory, passed away. And it is my sad duty to speak the eulogy over a distinguished member of Yeshiva's faculties for the third time in two months.

Rabbi Besdin, the greatest of all our educators, was in almost every way unique. He was a humble man who bore his humility naturally. His modesty was genuine, not in the least contrived. He possessed remarkable self-knowledge: he completely appreciated his own strengths, especially his superior pedagogic talents, without a trace of false humility and without a scintilla of superciliousness or arrogance. His intellectual integrity and love of truth were so powerful that he was able to view himself with astounding objectivity.

Thus, when Moshe Besdin referred to himself as a *melamed*, it was more than mere playfulness and was certainly not an affectation. It was, rather, an accurate professional description — and a self-identification that lent glory to the entire teaching profession and shed lustre on all who strive to be *marbivei Torah*. If even the term — "*melamed*" had a degree of opprobrium to it, Rabbi Besdin changed all that and made of it an honorific title.

He often spoke of having learned how to teach from his late father whom he revered deeply. But the ability to teach was for Moshe Besdin not an acquired gift, not even a vocation or profession or mission; teaching and teaching ability were part and parcel of his personality. He was a teacher when he taught, when he talked, when he joked, when he preached, when he learned.

He was, indeed, the *melamed par excellence*. In educational philosophy he was essentially a traditionalist. He was an educational conservative in the best sense of the word: he wanted to conserve the wisest elements of the past, the most functional and effective teachings of the traditional pedagogic methodology, without rejecting anything just because it was new. But at the same time he was deeply skeptical, with a sardonic sense of humor, of new educational policies or techniques whose only recommendation was that they were new and "modern." He often pointed to the intellectual wreckage that followed in the wake of some of these new techniques and the abandonment of tried and tested methods of the past.

Of the Biblical Moses the Sages said, *Mosheh safra rabba* — Moses was a great scribe. He labored over every letter, over every dot of the text of the Torah. Our Moshe too was deeply devoted to the text. He believed in strict adherence to the text, and passionately advocated teaching students the elementary techniques of how to master a text before proceeding to more abstract conceptualization. He coined a simple but meaningful dichotomy that has proven to be the guiding slogan of the James Striar School, an institution which is really the elongated shadow of Moshe Besdin. That is, that we must concentrate on "it" and not "about." The concern of teacher and student must be that text itself — Chumash or Rashi or Gemara or whatever — and not merely discussions about the text, whether of historical or biographical or literary nature. When one studies "it," one at least has grasped the essential teaching;

from there on, the student's mind is free to interpret it according to his talent and inclination. When one reduces the "it," and emphasizes the "about," he can often mistake the periphery for the core, and pontificate for authentic study.

And yet we err if we think that Moshe Besdin's greatness as an educator, as a *mehanekeh*, lay only in his emphasis on texts instead of history or discussion. There is something more basic, more elementary, more fundamental for which Moshe Besdin strived in his grand educational vision. The real "it" which was the focus of his concern was not the text of the Torah or the commentaries or the Talmud and its expositors, but the individual student's soul, his *neshamah*, his spiritual *gestalt*, his intellectual capacity. This was so because Rabbi Besdin was far more than an educational technician; he was a religious personality. He saw his function as not merely that of filling the head of the student, but reaching his soul as well. He tried to touch the mind of a student via his heart, and his heart via his mind.

In the *Haftorah* of the first day of Passover, which we read but two days ago, we learn of Joshua on the eve of the conquest of Jericho. In the quiet before the storm, there takes place a strange and mysterious interlude on the ancient plains of the Gugal. Joshua is accosted by a stranger and cannot make out if he is friend or foe. The stranger identifies himself as an angel of the Lord. When Joshua hears this, ויאמר לו, מה אדני מדבר אל עבדו. ויאמר שר צבא ה' אל יהושע ועל נלך מעל רגלך כי המקום אשר אהה עומר עליו קדוש הוא. ויעש יהושע כן. "and he said unto him: what does my lord say to his servant?" And then the angel of the Lord said to Joshua, "remove your shoes from your feet, because the ground on which you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so."

But the question which Joshua asked seems to remain unanswered, and we may well repeat it: What indeed does "my Lord speak to his servant?" What, after all, is the message? The angel has come to deliver? Surely, angels do not make appearances merely to entertain; they have some urgent divine message to deliver to the prophet or the judge. What, then, is that divine message for which the removal of Joshua's shoes is only the introduction or the prelude?

The answer is: no, for "remove your shoes" is the message. The angel is teaching Joshua that he is standing on hallowed ground. He is telling him: if you want to penetrate Jericho, which seems hermetically sealed, so impossible to breach —

ויריתו סוגרת ומטונרת מפני בני ישראל אין יוצא ואין בא.

then you must first *know* that you stand on holy land, that you and your men have the capacity to be *mekadesh*, to sanctify and transform an ordinary parcel of real estate into hallowed ground. Only when you and your troops have the self-awareness of your potential for sanctity will you develop the self-esteem and self-confidence that will allow you to conquer Jericho. You will breach and conquer the city not merely by a battering ram and not merely by a shofar — for these are only the instruments of war — but by the sacred dedication of your people.

When Moshe Besdin took over the James Striar School, he faced an overwhelming educational challenge in the Jewish training of young adults. Here he was accepting students seventeen and eighteen and nineteen years old, whose previous Jewish education was minuscule, who barely could read a passage of Hebrew and understand it, but in whom there stirred inchoate yearnings, an indefinable thirst, a vague but palpable hunger for something transcendent, something

exhausted, for the transcendent word of God. The problem was that, like Jericho, these minds were *sogeret u-mesugeret*, they were hemmed in by walls of ignorance, encrusted by social convention which idealizes mediocrity and looks askance at Jewish learning. How could he penetrate these walls? How would he pull down the Jericho walls that imprisoned these young spirits and minds? He did it by concentrating his magisterial forces on the primary "it" — the student himself; by inducing in the student an exciting and sacred self-awareness: wherever you are standing, that is *kodesh*, hallowed ground. You have the capacity to transform yourself and your environment from drab profaneness to exalting spirituality.

Thus did Rabbi Besdin come to fill an historic role in American Jewry by leading the James Striar School for well over a quarter of a century. He put the indelible stamp of his unique personality on this, the first "Baal Teshuvah Yeshiva," emphasizing real learning and religious fulfillment, all with a sense of moderation and adherence to the "Golden Mean" of the Jewish tradition. He knew every student without having to check his comprehensive files. He loved them — and they returned his love in full measure. They all but worshipped him.

Thus, Moshe Besdin was the teacher of all of us at Yeshiva. He was truly *Mosheh Rabbenu*, our teacher Moses, because he taught us how to teach others.

Moshe also had a special charm, a very distinctive *chen*, about him that won for him the affection of students and colleagues, young and old, congregants and co-professionals. It was more than the charm that comes merely from a handsome mien and a pleasant disposition, both of which he possessed in great abundance. His *chen* was an amazing combination of the ethical and the esthetic. There was a lilt and a touch of grace to his moral character.

Let me share with you an example that I learned of just as I was walking into the synagogue where he served as a Rabbi before he came to Yeshiva. The young doctor who was with him during his last lucid moments, before the medication which was administered to save his heart contributed to mental confusion, he asked that Dr. Lamm not be informed of his hospitalization until after the holiday was over, because he was away from home for Passover and needed his rest badly... What special divine grace, what incredible *chen*, he possessed to make him so thoughtful, so considerate, so sensitive even as he was suffering a fatal heart attack!

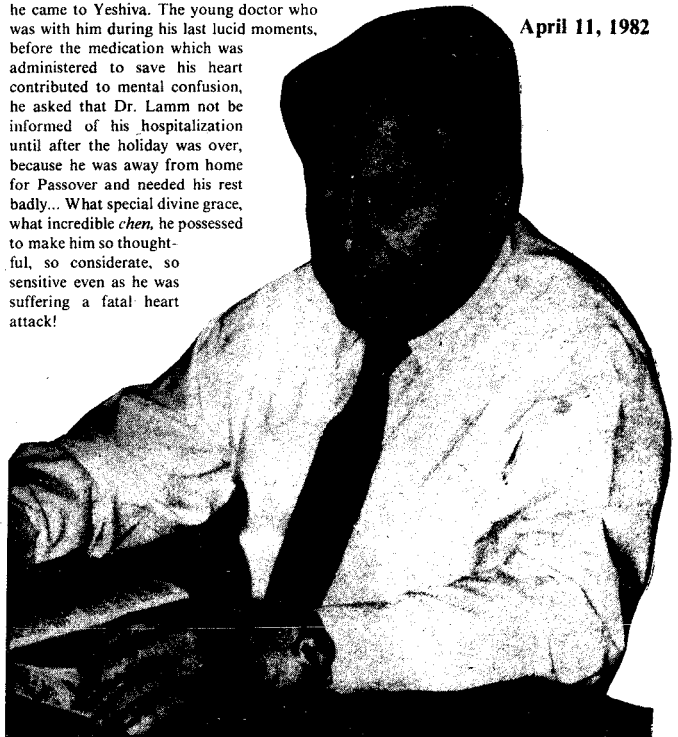
A special *chen* not only enhanced his interpersonal relationships, but it also constituted an esthetic dimension to his scholarship and his homiletics. Whether it was in his exegetical creativity or in his spinning out a "gut vort," there was something about what he said that was not just a rehash of the old and not the meretricious novelty of the new. It was an amalgam that was totally individual, completely his own. He was our Rabbi *Mosheh ha-darshan*...

From three or four years ago, when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 65, we decided that I would renew his tenure as Director of the James Striar School annually. I did so gladly. Just about a month or two ago, I invited him to my office and asked him to stay on indefinitely, as long as his health and will would hold out — and I added that I hoped that that would be the case of a hundred and twenty years. I didn't merely invite him; I actually begged him to stay on. I knew then and know now quite well that the combination of his experience and talents and personality and learning was such that we shall never have quite another Moshe Besdin again. But he begged off, and he said, "one more year and that's it." How sad that this should have taken place even before the year is over. How tragic that "that's it"...

There was a well-rounded, complete quality to his life as well as to his personality. The Seder of his life was whole. It began on the note of *Kadesh*, of dedication and sanctification, and continued throughout. As a teacher, he has the great gift of *Maggid*, of teaching and narrating. He gave to his family far more than the traditional Four Cups of wine, the symbols of his special joy and warmth and guidance and fun and love. His death leaves each of us with a double portion of *Marror*, of bitterness. But this is most important: that now that he has left us, all of us can loudly proclaim and proudly affirm, without a shadow of a doubt, that *Nirzah*, "accepted!" Moshe Besdin's life constituted an offering, pure and whole, which is acceptable and beautiful in the eyes of God and man, an offering of love and grace which blessed all those who were privileged to join the Seder of his life.

May his soul be bound up in the bond of immortal life.

April 11, 1982



## Gershom Scholem 1897-1982

By ELI LEDERHENDLER

(JSPS) Israel Bureau — The story is told that when Gershom Scholem came to lecture at the Jewish Theological Seminary, a well-known Talmud scholar introduced the visitor, the world's foremost authority on the Kabbala, with grudging admiration:

"Nonsense is nonsense, but the history of nonsense is scholarship."

The backhanded compliment was typical for a bearer of the rationalist 'litvak' tradition. But Gershom Scholem, who died this last February in Jerusalem at the age of 84, devoted all his adult life to demonstrating that the mystic lore of the Kabbala was anything but nonsense.

Scholem did not study Kabbalistic texts as a seeker of hidden mystical paths to G-d. Rather, he applied to the Kabbala modern tools of scholarship in a search for a different sort of hidden truth: what he referred to as the "enigma of Jewish history."

It was precisely the systematic and scientific study of the Jewish mystical tradition, he felt, that might shed some unexpected light on what had made Judaism survive and constantly renew itself over the course of millennia. Kabbala was "an address where the secret life of Judaism ... seemed once to have dwelt."

"I am not a Kabbalist," Scholem stated in a *Jerusalem Post* interview published in 1967 on occasion of his 70th birthday. "I am a student of Kabbala. But I take it seriously. I never thought the Kabbalists were either the fools, or the crooks and charlatans they used to be called."

What Scholem's modesty did not permit him to say is that in fact he disproved this view single-handedly.

Scholem taught Jewish mysticism at the Hebrew University and produced in the course of 60 years over 500 articles, studies and books. In the process, he became the architect of a completely new branch of modern scholarship: a feat of ground-breaking intellectual quest and daring equal to that of, say, Freud. Like the founder of modern psychology, Scholem has so profoundly altered our way of thinking that from now on scholars will find it impossible not to take him into account.

English readers are most likely to encounter Scholem through his *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, in which he traces the development of Kabbala as a hidden tradition within Judaism from the period of the Second Temple to the emergence of East European Hasidism in the 18th century.

Scholem argues that, far from being peripheral and hostile to the legalistic culture of rabbinic Judaism, as 19th century historians contended, the Kabbala was its necessary counterpart. It was the spiritual yeast that prevented Judaism from petrifying. It adapted and legitimized for Judaism elements of myth, of magic, of the irrational, subjective aspects of religious experience. It made available for Jews ways in which to express the deep yearnings for a G-d who seemed so distant and yet whose presence was so strongly felt by those possessing religious sensitivity.

It was primarily the spread of Kabbalist ideas all over the Jewish world in the 16th and early 17th centuries, according to Scholem, that paved the way for a positive response to the mid-17th century "messiah," Shabbetai Zevi. Scholem's monumental study of the Shabbatean movement, *Shabbetai Zevi, The Mystical Messiah*, revolutionized the traditional views of Shabbetai Zevi as a

cynical fraud — or at best a sincere but deluded madman — who had a tiny following among the poor and ignorant.

Scholem believes that while the Shabbatean episode was destructive, Shabbetai Zevi and his followers cannot simply be read out of Judaism or dismissed as so many fools. They represented an extreme development of traditional and legitimate messianic yearnings, supported by a mystic theology whose main elements had already gained very widespread acceptance in the Jewish world. Included among the movement's adherents were learned rabbis, worldly businessmen and prominent community leaders, and they constituted a significant minority of the Jewish people.

As such, they were part and parcel of the development of Judaism — in fact, Scholem sees the Shabbatean episode as central to Jewish History. It was the kind of upheaval, or as Scholem put it, "anarchic breeze," that moved Jewish History forward.

Scholem's ultimate point is that Judaism cannot be described in one-dimensional terms. Side by side with the rationalist culture of rabbinic Judaism, and in creative tension with it, there existed the Kabbala and radical Messianism. Judaism was more flexible and pluralistic than has been asserted by proponents of a theory of Judaism based only on one essential idea, whether that idea be ethical monotheism or Talmudic law.

Scholem's scholarship was conducted in conscious rejection of these strictly defined theories. It is no wonder that some called him a "religious anarchist" and a "nihilist." He rewrote the history of Judaism, making room for the alternative currents and potentially revolutionary impulses that arose to challenge the tradition from within.

A recent book about Scholem (*Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History*, by David Biale) suggests that he, by challenging the previous assumptions of modern scholars, has played in our day the same pushing and prodding role that the kabbalists played in an earlier age. Here lies the point of inner affinity between Scholem the scientific scholar and the mystics who were the subjects of his research.

Scholem never confined his perceptive criticisms to the academic realm. As a youth in pre-World War I Berlin, he rebelled against his assimilated parental home where Christmas was celebrated as a German national holiday. He sought out tutors in Hebrew and Talmud, and began to read voraciously about Judaism and Jewish History.

Scholem soon became alienated from German Jewish life, which he found stagnant and shallow. The anti-Semitism of German society — and the pretense of many German Jews that it did not exist — also disturbed him deeply.

Scholem was among the few German Jews who opposed the First World War, and was able for some time to avoid military service. When his Communist brother, Werner, was arrested for treason, his patriotic father threw Scholem out of the house, declaring that he'd had enough of both Communists and Zionists. (Scholem was eventually conscripted into the army, but the military authorities found his manner of performing his duties so intolerable that they quickly had him discharged as a "psychopod.")

In 1923 Scholem emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, where he continued his research to involve himself in controversies and polemics.

During the 20's and 30's, he was associated with Brit Shalom, a small group of Zionists who opposed the idea of seeking to create a Jewish majority in all of Palestine. Many of its members favored a bi-national Arab-Jewish society.

Scholem also spoke out on such controversial subjects as the Eichmann trial and on the attempts of the Israeli religious establishment to impose a narrow definition of "Who is a Jew?" for the purposes of the Law of Return. (Under the law, a Jew is entitled to automatic citizenship, without undergoing naturalization.)

In more recent years, Scholem returned to the theme of German-Jewish relations. He sharply criticized what he felt was the blindness of pre-war German Jewry in the face of the rise of Nazism. Jewish assimilationists in Germany, he charged, were guilty of a suicidal lack of self-respect.

At the same time, he spoke out against those who now, after the Holocaust, would like to see all Jewish-German relations served. Scholem believed that such a

relationship was possible — even necessary, given the history the two nations share — provided that the relationship could be built on "a new understanding ... distance, respect, openness ... and above all, goodwill."

When Gershom Scholem died, the news was carried on the front pages of the Israeli press. This kind of public recognition was remarkable for a man whose life was spent in such an esoteric endeavor. The attention had something to do with Scholem himself; with the special charisma he generated as the very opposite of the "ivory tower" sort of intellectual.

But the national veneration was also a reflection of the importance now generally accorded to Scholem's consuming passion, the Jewish mystical tradition. It is a measure of Scholem's success that what was regarded not so long ago as a murky realm of superstition, flight from reality and even demonic urgings is now so widely acknowledged as a major wellspring of the Jewish spirit and a fertile field for philosophical and historical research.

## A History of Torah Judaism

(Continued from Page 4)

among them: vision, and the academic tools to realize and implement.

A prolific writer, Rakeffet traces the origins of Yeshiva University. As a labor of love, Rakeffet shows how Revel succeeded to integrate *Torah U'Mada* and explains why, until today, Yeshiva University is unique among universities and singular in the Yeshiva world. For the principle of Revel's mission was that Judaism not only doesn't frown on general studies but crowns them in the service of Torah, Israel and humanity.

It can, however, be noted that while the author's admiration of Revel is vivid and vast, Rakeffet is a quality scholar. The footnotes and the appendices attest to enormous research and to the unique attempt at objectivity by means of source collaboration.

Rakeffet's second book leaves off where his first book ends. In *Bernard Revel* we see who set the tide in motion and whose vibration reverberated to lead American Orthodoxy to nurture, develop and enhance its type of positive contribution to Torah Judaism, "Modern Orthodoxy." In *The Silver Era* we learn that it was HaRav Eliezer Silver (1881-1968) who added a further dimension to American Orthodoxy.

Though a devotee of Yeshiva University and Religious-Zionism, primarily as a product of close learning and training under HaRav Soloveitchik, Rav Rakeffet is first and foremost an ardent supporter of all traditional modes of Torah study. Hence, Rav Rakeffet took upon himself to write the comprehensive biography of that Torah giant, Rav Silver, who introduced classical "lomdut" to the American scene and who reorganized European Torah learning in the U.S.A. after the Holocaust.

Through this volume the reader discovers that Rav Silver was a *posek* in addition to being a *lamdan* and becomes fascinated by Silver's ability to grasp the pulse of American life and grapple with the various issues facing American and World Jewry.

In this respect the flap-jacket is smart-looking and no less revealing: on a silver colored background it shows Rav Silver in U.S. military uniform, on his European trip, 1946, as head of "*Va'ad Hatzala*." Indeed, Rav Silver is seen throughout the books as one who knew how to utilize modern media to help fellow Jews. The biography, as such, is to a great extent the story of the primarily diplomat of American Orthodoxy in the interim years between the two world

wars and, especially, during the Holocaust and the early years of *M'dinat Israel*.

*The Silver Era*, similar to an epic tale, is an account of a period where only one like Silver could fashion a segment of American Jewry. He was, on the one hand, bold and brave. And, yet, kind and friendly. He knew how not to alienate when waging a battle. Similarly, he had the wholesomeness of how not to compromise integrity and credibility even at the expense of convincing and gaining consent.

That Silver had these attributes is a reflection to his 'rarity of spirit as to his genius of intellect. *The Silver Era* is testimony to the situation that his mission was crucial for the future of Torah Judaism in America. In this volume, Rakeffet shows how Rav Silver availed himself of his talents and guided and ministering to American Jews, succeeded in combining greatness in Torah and in charitable deeds, something which — according to Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik — he had in common with Rav Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk. (The epitaph inscribed on Rav Chaim's gravestone was: "*Rav Chesed, Master of Kindness.*")

Reading these two volumes, one learns considerably about American Orthodoxy. As Silver was involved in various matters — *Kashrut, Agudath-HaRabanim, Mechitza, Va'ad Ha'atzala*, — all these and other issues are treated. And through *Bernard Revel* one learns the story of Yeshiva University and "Modern Orthodoxy."

Interestingly enough, both Revel and Silver were men of ideals, believing in a world where Torah is above politics. Thus, while Revel identified with *Mizrachi*, he — like HaRav A.I. Kook — took an active interest in the formation of *Agudath-Israel*. Silver, on his part, became an *Agudist* as a *Talmid* of R. Chaim O. Grodzinski, yet maintained close relations with HaRav Kook and even with the *Mizrachi* leaders (Rabbi Maimon, Gold, etc.) and, not too infrequently, called for the unity of *Mizrachi* and *Aguda*.

Rav Rakeffet has done an excellent job in portraying a generation in addition to profiling a personality. Furthermore, he has begun the attempt to write the story of Torah Jewry's contribution to American Jewry.

This reviewer feels that two volumes ought to be introduced to the curricula of our Jewish schools in America. Thought should also be given for suitable translation into Hebrew.

Meanwhile, for every English reader — it is a must. I strongly recommend these two companion volumes!

## Memorial Services

(Continued from Page 1)

children to Dr. Grinstein and he cared for them more than anything else. Other speakers were Rabbi Israel Miller and Dr. Lindenbaum, a student of Dr. Grinstein who noted Dr. Grinstein's mildness and that he never raised his voice.

Another memorial ceremony on April 26 was for Rabbi Dr. Michael Bernstein on the occasion of his first yahrtzeit. The memorial lecture was held in conjunction with the BRGS lecture series. The memorial tribute was delivered by Dr. Haym Soloveitchik, the Golda Meir Professor of Jewish History at BRGS. Dr. Soloveitchik began by speaking of Dr. Bernstein's devotion to Torah, beginning as a Rosh Yeshiva at RIETS. He was a unique Rebbe who took a rare interest in Hebrew language and structure. Since there were no teachers in these areas Dr. Bernstein had to teach himself through his method of direct contact with the primary sources.

Dr. Bernstein made many innovations in the study of Hebrew and Aramaic texts but his work was published by others, since Dr. Bernstein was a perfectionist and was reluctant to publish. He was careful to avoid broad, sweeping generalizations, or to speak with overwhelming authority. Dr. Bernstein was bedridden his last fifteen years but he taught as vigorously as ever. Dr. Soloveitchik concluded by stating that the man, Dr. Bernstein, was larger than his parts, in a way that cannot be understood but was felt by all.

## Bigotry Exhibit in Furst Hall

(Continued from Page 1)

as: Federal income taxes, integration and immigration."

Of major concern, he says, is that the various hate-groups are sponsoring candidates representative of their parties' line to run for political office in such states as California, Georgia, Michigan, and North Carolina.

And the people are responding indeed.

In a recent election in Southern California, Tom Metzger, a KKK leader, received 34,000 votes and the victory in the Democratic Primary. The Anti-Defamation League has recently reported that the Liberty Lobby, a hate-group, has weekly distribution figures of its publication, "Spotlight,"

All our readers are invited to submit articles for publication. RIETS Alumni are especially encouraged to contribute their Torah thoughts and opinions:

(Continued from Page 1)

since the event was scheduled for two days after Pesach vacation. The second, more important problem was how to get people to talk about a topic most survivors would prefer not to discuss with strangers.

Fortunately, the organizers' apprehensions did not materialize. Over 150 people attended, but, more importantly, several students of YU approached Harry to volunteer. Esther Geffen and Yocheved Gruenberger volunteered from Stern and Mitchell Weitzman, Joseph Frish, Ray Glenn and Michael Grabow volunteered from YC. The moderator was Professor Erich Goldhagen, a Harvard professor who teaches a Holocaust course at YU.

The program itself was an informative one, with Professor Goldhagen exploring the influence of the Holocaust on the survivors' children. Ray Glenn said that the Holocaust had no effect on them, and that he didn't want it to affect his children. However, Mitch Weitzman vigorously contended that the Holocaust has indeed affected his life and that he was aware of it every day.

Yocheved Gruenberger responded to a question from the audience by stating that the Holocaust has made her realize the necessity of raising children in a religious Jewish atmosphere and for them to be involved in Jewish youth groups, as she was.

exceeding 300,000. "It is indeed a dangerous situation," says Domnitch. "Through the display of such materials," he adds, "students should become aware that the problem of anti-Semitism is an ever-growing one."

Although the exhibit deals with many different topics and themes, which are the targets of the groups, one of the most notable is the newest and ever-popular claim that the Holocaust was a Jewish "fraud and fabrication." Included with that claim are "eyewitness accounts" and various other newspaper articles attempting to explain what "really happened" during the "alleged Holocaust."

The exhibit was sponsored by the Joseph Dunner Political Science Society.

## Yom Hashoa Memorial

The evening concluded with Cantor Paul Glasser singing Kel Male Rachamim and a special service in memory of Rabbi Besdin, zt"l.

Most of the audience thought the program worthwhile, while there were those who really couldn't feel the same emotions as those students who recounted their feelings. Some said they thought a program of this kind should have been more emotional and involving. When asked about this feeling, Mr. Shualy replied that the symposium was meant to be one of information and awareness. "You can't please everyone," he said, "but the fact remains that even those people who weren't affected by the program will remember the Shoah in a more personal and meaningful way. If they do that, then perhaps an additional purpose was served by the program."

## Yeshiva Loses Rabbi Besdin

(Continued from Page 1)

Bible and Talmud texts and commentaries.

Rabbi Besdin, himself, taught all freshmen in the school, and maintained close relationships with them throughout their student years. He demanded excellence from the instructors and formidable discipline from students, who must make up more than a dozen years of Jewish education and practice in several college terms while they are also pursuing their liberal arts education at Yeshiva College. He believed it essential for all students to acquire as soon as possible the ability to study classical sources of Torah learning. The emphasis in all courses at the James Striar school of General Jewish Studies is on textual proficiency, on what Rabbi Besdin called learning "it, not about it."

Under Rabbi Besdin's direction, the school recently entered its Silver Jubilee year, with over 200 students studying Hebrew language and literature, Bible, prayer, Jewish law, Talmud, and other subjects, many adopting a new way of life as well as learning about Jewish traditions and teachings.

Rabbi Besdin was one of the founders and also served as chairman of the boards of education of Yeshiva Rabbi Moses Soloveitchik, New York, NY, and Yeshiva Dov Revel, Queens, NY. He wrote articles that were published in a wide range of scholarly journals and was a member of the Rabbinical Council of America.

Rabbi Besdin is survived by his wife Bertha and their four children. We share with them a great loss, both as individual mourners and as a society.

## Changes Planned for MYP

(Continued from Page 1)

at Yeshiva, and the tremendous potential the Yeshiva Program has.

Steps to facilitate the realization of that potential were discussed at the meeting of the Rabbeim. The meeting boasted almost perfect attendance, with a few Rabbeim missing due to pressing circumstances.

Rabbi Charlop opened the meeting with a statement regarding the strengthening of the seder - both bet medrash and shiur attendance. The Rabbeim, not just the administration, must pressure the conscience of the students.

In light of the close to one hundred personal conferences with talmidim lax in attendance since February alone, several suggestions were put forth to remedy the situation. Rabbeim must be at hakhanah in the mornings with each Rebbe keeping the roll-book for shiur and hakhanah attendance.

The mashgiach must take a more aggressive and stern roll. No boy should feel comfortable coming into the bet medrash late, or infrequently. In addition a suggestion was made to close all doors to the bet medrash after a certain time, except for one, so that late student could be easily scrutinized by mashgiach and Rabbeim. In order to prevent

"floaters" no one should be admitted into a shiur without a note from the office.

The strongest feelings presented were in regard to the institution of shiur for credit. One credit (minimum) of shiur would be mandatory with attendance counting as part of the grade. The rule regarding 18 (9 days) unexcused absences resulting in one credit of shiur would be strictly enforced. If a mandatory credit of shiur is agreed upon then an extra credit would still be added.

At the end of one month of the term anyone overly delinquent from shiurium must automatically take shiur for one credit or more, and must be reported to the office by the Rabbeim. Sunday attendance will also be enforced.

Other ideas included the regularization of registration with Mr. Friedenberg, the YU registrar. This would give a more uniform spread among shiurim, avoid over-crowding, and facilitate any necessary shiur changes.

One idea considered would put Kollel Fellows in charge of 20-30 students in the bet medrash and higher RIETS shiurim containing MYP students. They would also assist students returning from Israel in making their transition back to Yeshiva.

The Rabbeim agreed upon the above measures with particularly strong feelings regarding the need to institute shiur for credit.

## BRGS Lectures

(Continued from Page 1)

March, one by Professor Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture and Society at Columbia University, and the second by Professor Joseph Dan, Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Thought and Director of the Hebrew Institute at Hebrew University. Professor

Dan's subject was "Jewish Mysticism and Jewish Ethics, Thirteenth Century Gerona: A Case Study." Professor Yerushalmi, who also is Director for Israel and Jewish Studies at Columbia, discussed "Spinoza on the Survival of the Jews."

The lecture series is very important since it establishes BRGS as a major intellectual force in Jewish scholarship.

## Yom Ha'atzmaut at YU

On April 28, a beautiful spring afternoon, the students and faculty of YU gathered to celebrate the 34th anniversary of Israeli independence. One half hour of singing and dancing, led by the four piece orchestra, was followed by Rabbi Lamm's comments.

Rabbi Lamm noted the importance of the students' dedication to the state of Israel and recounted the efforts that he and his classmates made in 1948 to assist in the defenses of the new nation. "I am quite sure," said Dr. Lamm, "that you would do no less; probably more."

The EMC Student Council, which sponsored the event, then

presented Dean Rabinowitz with the JNF Golden Book Award. The dean's contribution to "the inculcation of 'ahavat tziyon' in his students was cited during the presentation. Dean Rabinowitz gave a short d'var Torah in the spirit of the day. In addition to receiving the commemorative certificate, Dean Rabinowitz's name will be entered into the Book of Zionist Leaders, joining such luminaries as Theodor Herzl, the book's first entry.

The singing of "Hatikvah," followed by a closing set of songs, concluded a most successful celebration.

# Neshira, Yerida, Abortions, and ZPG

## NESHIRA—

The process by which a Soviet Jew, upon emigration, chooses to live in America rather than in Israel. (See also: CAPITALISM; PROFIT MOTIVE; and MARXIST DOCTRINE — FAILURES OF)

## YERIDA—

The process by which an Israeli Jew chooses to live in American rather than in Israel. (See also: SOCIALIST ZIONISM — EDUCATIONAL THEORY OF; SECULAR ZIONISM — THEORY AND PRACTICE; Y'LIDEI TEHERAN; and TAXI MEDALLION QUARTERLY)

## AMERICAN ZIONIST—

A Jew living in America, not in Israel, who is livid and infuriated over the dual phenomena of Neshira and Yerida. (See also: UJA — TAX EXEMPTIONS; HAVA NAGILA; and YOM ATZMAUT — BIRTHDAY CAKE RECIPES FOR)

### By DOV FISCH

I sit at meetings, and I hear the Zionist wail over Neshira and Yerida. "It will kill Israel," they cry. "Israel cannot survive without an ongoing mass immigration. We must stop this attack on Israel's demographic future now!"

It is amazing. They who can afford to make Aliya and to bring their tens of thousands (and hundreds of thousands) of dollars with them — living out their lives in the contentment of Tevye's dream — sit in America, watching and Beta-maxing TV movies about Golda, infuriated that others aspire to emulate their example. What hypocrisy!

Let us be clear. Neshira and Yerida do pose terrible problems. Certainly, one need not subscribe to Leon Dulzin's ridiculous argument that Neshira gives the Soviets an excuse to refuse to issue future exit visas. A more compelling argument can be made antithetically: as Jews opt for America over Israel, the Soviets will encounter less pressure from their Arab clients to clamp down on Jewish emigration since the population transfer will no longer bestrengthening Israel. Regardless, it is nothing short of criminal to contemplate denying potential Noshrim documentary assistance in emigrating from the Soviet Union; they need the letters from Israel, and they must get them.

Rabbi Louis Bernstein, however, has repeatedly made a more significant point: Soviet Jews coming here are forcing Jewish communities to take millions of dollars raised for inflation-crippled Israel and to reallocate those funds for the material benefit of Noshrim. We cannot and must not subsidize Neshira at Israel's expense. Our Federations and UJA's should certainly give newly arriving immigrants from the Soviet Union used furniture, used clothing, and vocational-rehabilitation / job-location assistance. But the good stuff — the cash and the checks — must go straight to Israel, with the sole exception being to grant generous tuition scholarships to Soviet Jewish youths attending Yeshivot.

(Of course, Federations should stop wasting so many other millions on even more questionable antics and programs, such as the 92nd Street Y's course on how to evaluate horses.)

But the demographics of Neshira vis-a-vis Israel should be a non-issue. If Israel needs Boris Borisofsky, then Israel needs Dov Fisch and every other American Jew, better and worse, richer and poorer. It is the apex of hypocrisy to denounce the Soviet Jew, after 65 years of Communist indoctrination (during most of which time we did nothing or condemned those few who did try to free them, with G-d's help), for having no more Zionist idealism that does the typical American Zionist leader, who has been free to study Judaism and to make Aliyah since his birth.

Nor would Israeli society necessarily gain from a movement to compel Soviet emigres to live in the Holy Land. Many are deeply anti-religious and are, in fact, hostile to things Jewish. My city has one of the country's largest Soviet populations; in the course of

conducting sedarim for them in my shul, teaching their children in yeshiva, and countless other encounters as the staff rabbi of an organization dealing with hundreds of Soviet Jewish families, I have learned this first-hand. At this hectic juncture in history, when Israeli society is undergoing its first real spiritual revolution, taking inventory of the failure of a century of socialist Zionism and moving closer to the restoration of Judaism in Zionism, it is Divine providence which sees the best Soviet Jews choosing Israel — while the others stream to the Exile. These are the days when Ephraim Kishon, a life-long secularist, has written that he has come to realize that under the knitted skullcap abides Israel's last repository of decency and Zionist positivism. Nor are we unaware that Israeli leftists, bemoaning the failure of kibbutz Zionism, sneak envious glares at the graduates of Yeshivot B'nei Akiva. At such a time as this, we can observe Neshira and Yerida and whisper: "Gam Zu L'Tova."

Ah, but what shall become of demographic Israel, with Arabs inside the pre-1967 borders already challenging Jewish control of the Galilee and increasing everywhere else? And what shall be when Israel annexes — nay, reunifies! — Judea and Samaria, as it will (because it must...)? The answers are not more difficult to find today than they were in the 1800's, when Herzl advocated a Jewish state in all-Arab "Palestine" nor when Jabotinsky called for a Jewish state on both sides of the River Jordan at the turn of the century.

In a negative sense, the Arabs will have to go. And they will go. And it will be not the "extremists" but the moderates who will do the pushing. As they blackballed Jabotinsky's call for an independent Jewish state, preferring Weizmann's game of procrastination — and eventually declared the state anyway; as they screamed for havlaga, denouncing the Irgun call for hatkafa (even to the point of kidnapping Irgun and Lechi soldiers and handing them to the British) and eventually moved to declare pre-emptive war anyway; so they will one day take the lead in evicting Arabs from Judea and Samaria, in order to preserve the Jewish character of the State. They will because they will one day conclude that they must. And the strong hand of G-d will be there to give the Arab diehards a commanding push, even as happened in 1948 when native Arabs foolishly streamed out of western Palestine to make way for invading Arab armies, despite frantic Histadrut efforts to convince them to stay and build a dream state of Jewish and Arab workers marching on May Day, arm-in-arm.

Other Arabs will emigrate voluntarily, even sooner, the day Israel adopts a more sensible policy towards them. After Judea and Samaria are reunified into the State, all Arabs should be offered two benefits of Israeli citizenship: high income taxes, payable annually to the Zionist entity, and three years' physical national service. (They ought not serve militarily; there will undoubtedly be many worthy construction projects underway in burgeoning Jewish cities in the reunified territories, enough to keep every Arab youth busy for three years.) One truly sees such a

new policy leading to a dramatic war between Israelis and Arabs: over access to taxi medallions in New York City.

Nevertheless, a solution to Israel's demographic challenge must ultimately include a most obvious — and, happily, positive — priority. Put simply: we have got to start having lots and lots of Jewish babies. Five and six to a family. Screaming, crying, beautiful Jewish babies. It is absolute folly and national suicide for Jews in America or Israel to preach "ZPG" (Zero Population Growth) because of overpopulation in India! Let India ZPG India, and let the Arabs ZPG the Arabs. But, after one-third of our people were murdered by the Nazis, with the tacit — and sometimes active — collusion of the Western democracies in the 1940's, it is insanity for us to contemplate ZPG. We must have big families with lots of babies. And, especially in the Torah community, this must become a national enterprise in itself.

While Alex Schindler and the Reform movement swell the ranks of American Jewry by converting Elizabeth Taylor and all her husbands, we must quietly, persistently reproduce our numbers two and even three times per family. We have to turn our backs on the society around us, in which people marry for the wrong reasons — though, more and more seem to be divorcing for the right reasons. We must not wait till the late twenties or, worse, till the thirties to marry. And, finally, when we do marry, we must go "Lifnim M'shurat Ha-Din" and transcend the highly abused "heter" — invoked by so many who do not dare consult a qualified rav first — which presumes to sanction "calling it quits" after having one boy and one girl. If we can spend \$500 on tefillin, it is time that we conquered the challenge of a true "hidur mitzvah" — Pru U'rvu.

To this end, we will need to change community priorities and to plan for new needs. Community federations should assist families with six or more children. Yeshivot must dramatically scale down tuition charged families of three and more children. Cooperative food and furniture stores should be established by communal agencies for the exclusive use of large families. (Israel has already begun to adopt some such measures.)

We must focus on a new priority for the 1980's and beyond, in this context. It is imperative to expand and to dramatically upgrade day-care facilities, at reasonable rates, for working families who are otherwise not averse to bearing many children. Undoubtedly, a major factor inhibiting many educated Jewish women from having more offspring is a refusal to be "incarcerated" in the home. It is rather hopeless to try convincing aspiring career women, with graduate degrees, that their place is rightly in the home. Nor, as "modern Orthodox Jews," would many of us find such a position all that desirable. But, as a corollary, reasonably priced day-care, especially for infants under two years of age, is imperative, if we wish to alleviate a major obstacle hindering many from bearing more children.

And, of course, we must enhance and strengthen our efforts to Jewishly educate those children; otherwise, the whole effort to increase our numbers becomes an exercise in futility.

But, if all this is to be done, we must finally declare war on the great new threat of our Western society: abortion-on-demand. Abortion is the ultimate weapon in the Jewish national suicide. It goes against the essence of the Fackenheim imperative — that we must not offer Hitler a posthumous victory. It is our own home-made Holocaust.

The Torah position on abortion, for all its flexibility under certain extraordinary circumstances, is rather clear in its opposition. But, beyond the halakhic sphere, we must begin to appeal to the broader mass of secular Jewry on humanistic and moral grounds — ultimately, not hesitating to invoke the very real question of Jewish national survival. More than Yerida — in which we lose Israel's least idealistic; more than Neshira — in which we lost Russia's most materialistic and least Jewish; more than ZPG, it is abortion which is sending Jewish demographics analysts into a tizzy.

The numbers are staggering. It has been estimated, for example, that Israel's population could today be double its current number were it not for abortion. We are talking about a demographic loss in the millions — in less than half a century. Neshira and Yerida, by comparison, are a mere drop in the bucket.

Even more chilling is the thought of cool-headed, rational people assenting to the performance of abortions altogether. I was in the delivery room when Yael arrived last year. She was one ugly, little, screaming whelp, instantly converted from fetus to human. In these last fifteen months, she has become the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. Her voice, her smile, her sounds of delight have unlocked emotions in my soul that I never knew existed. Kineret Yardena — even though she almost ruined the annual Etz Chaim NCSY Shabbaton in Jersey City by

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