

# HAMEVASER

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DR. LAMM:

## Torah and Derekh Eretz: "Where Do We Go From Here?"

The following is a summary of a lecture given by YU President Dr. Norman Lamm at a conference entitled "The Impact of Samson Raphael Hirsch." The conference inaugurated the Samson Raphael Hirsch Professorship in Torah and Derekh Eretz which has been established by Jacques and Hanna Schwalb. The summary was prepared for publication by Larry Yudelson.

It's puzzling that Hirsch and his thought weren't accorded full study at Yeshiva until now, since YU is, in many ways, a fulfillment of Hirsch's vision. Hirsch was one of the true giants of Jewry. He tried to formulate a Jewish humanism, a "synthesis" under the slogan of "Torah im Derekh Eretz."

I have never been pleased by either formulation, "Torah im Derekh Eretz" or "Torah u Mada." "Torah im Derekh Eretz" seems to be too broad. The Talmud uses this phrase to refer to anything from business to manners to conjugal relations. It does not specifically describe the world of culture. "Mada," particularly in modern Hebrew, refers to the natural sciences, and is too narrow. Culture is far greater than science alone.

"Hokhma" is a better term. According to the medrash, "yesh hokhma bagoyim." You can find it among the nations. Professor I. Twersky has shown that the Rambam refers to *hokhma*, even where the Gemara only used *Torah*. For example, in *Makkot*, the Gemara says that a father is *patur* for killing his son if he did it to educate him in Torah or a trade, since he was doing a *mitzva*. The Rambam adds *hokhma*. He considers it a *mitzva* to teach one's child *hokhma*. We see that Torah is not synonymous with *hokhma*, and *hokhma* is not synonymous with *umanut*, trade. It is not the same as accounting, insurance, or computers.

Both Hirsch and YU agree that Torah and *Hokhma* have a common divine origin. They represent the word of God and the world of God respectively. Both are created by divinity, and worthy of study and research. They both reach back to the goal of coming close to *HaKadosh Barukh Hu*. Of course, Torah is preeminent.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

Whereas Torah is essentially fixed, culture (science, art, technology, philosophy) is constantly changing. The problematica for Hirschians in 1984 is not the same as for Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in 1894. Strangely, Orthodox Jews today seem to be recoiling from the effort to live with the outside world. This is true in both East and West Washington Heights. So, where do we go from here? The following four points should be explored:

1) The Communal realm. *Torah im Derekh Eretz*, as manifest in the Breuer's

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## Shavuot—Matan Torah

A synopsis of one section of a *Chumash Shiur* given by the *Rov Shlitia* on June 3, 1981 in *Furst Hall-501*.

By NATI HELFGOT

Two episodes appear in the *Chumash* before it reaches the climax of *Matan Torah*. Immediately prior to Chap. 19-20 of *Sefer Sh'mot* the Torah presents the visit of *Yitro* and his relationship to the Jewish people, culminating, with the verse "and he went to his land" (Ch. 18, v. 27), on which *Chazal* comment (in the *Mechilta*) "he returned to convert his family to Judaism." Before the story of *Yitro*, the Torah presents the sudden attack of *Amalek* at *Refidim*. Prior to *Matan Torah*, the Jew must be cognizant of these two episodes; both deal with non-Jews and their relationship to the Jewish people. However, why is it so crucial that we be aware of them as we enter the momentous event of revelation?

On the verses in *Sidrat Ki Tisah*, Ch. 34 "And God said to Moshe, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone, similar to the first ones...and you shall ascend Mount Sinai in the morning...and no man shall ascend with you...neither shall the sheep nor cattle graze near that mountain'" *Chazal* (in the *Tanhuma*) comment that the Almighty says,

"the first *luchot* as they were given over with lightning and thunder and in the presence of multitudes the evil eye acted upon them. Therefore, there is nothing better than giving the second set in private in *tzniut*."

The question that arises is why then did the Almighty for the first revelation prefer a public display to that of a modest revelation? Apparently, the Almighty wanted the whole world to know of the two *luchot* that were given to Moses. Revelation had to be in public, in front of the eyes of all the nations, so that they should know that there is a transcendent God who created the world, takes care of it and reveals himself to man. Ultimately that is the message of the "Shofarot" passage in the *Rosh HaShanah* liturgy. Thunder and lightning and spectacle are integral parts of this revelation to the whole world. Therefore while the Torah was given to *Knesset Yisrael*, there is clearly a universal aspect to this first *Matan Torah* (in this light we more fully understand the famous *Midrash* which relates that the Almighty offered the Torah to the various nations of the world). Of course, no one was ready to accept the Torah. This acceptance will be finally realized, and only realized, at

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## Hamevaser Elects New Governing Board

After a brief deliberation, the 1983-84 Governing Board of *Hamevaser*, lead by Shalom Stone, elected a new Editor-in-Chief for the fall term of the 1984-85 year. Isaac Corre, last year's Coordinating Editor was unanimously elected Editor-in-Chief.

Isaac, a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and a Skokie Yeshiva graduate, is a Y.C. history major and an IBC Jewish History major.

Daniel Lehman, a Y.C. senior and outgoing vice-president of YCSC, has been chosen as Associate Editor. He is a philosophy major learning in *Rav Parnes' shiur*.

Larry Yudelson, a computer science major from Rochester, N.Y. will serve as Senior Editor. Last year Larry was the Feature Editor of *Hamevaser*.

Saul Rube, the new Executive Editor, is a Y.C. English major who learns in *Rav Parnes' shiur*. Next year Saul will also be President of the English Honors Society.

Gidon Rothstein and Nati Helfgot were chosen as Managing Editors. Gidon and Nati are among *Hamevaser's* most prolific contributors.

Joey Lipner, an English major, and Yossie Prager, a biology major, were chosen as Feature Editors.

Jonathan Feldman, the new News Editor, is a transfer student from Cornell University who will be studying in BRGS. Yosef Shmidman, a pre-med major, and Yehuda Najman, a pre-med and English major, will be Coordinating Editors.

Aviva Ganchrow, a SCW Junior will be

Contributing Editor.

Five members of the 1983-84 Governing Board will be graduating this June. Shalom D. Stone, Editor-in-Chief, will be attending New York University Law School; Moshe Orenbuch, Associate Editor, will be working as an accountant at Deloit Haskins & Sells; Alan Stadtmayer and Steven Cohen will be in S'micha; and Norman Saffra will be attending medical school.

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## Terrorism Abroad, Apathy at Home

Several weeks ago news came from Israel of an attempt to blow up six Arab owned buses carrying civilian passengers including tourists, women and children. Thank God, the Israeli Police were able to find the buses, dismantle the bombs and avert what would surely have been a sheer massacre.

What is even more disturbing than the event itself, is the fact that the suspects taken into custody by Israeli security consisted primarily of Jewish religious settlers of Yehuda and Shomron. The Chilul Hashem that was created as a result of this incident is immeasurable while also raising serious moral questions for Israeli society.

We must speak out against such actions in an attempt to rid ourselves of the blemish that has arisen within our religious community. It is imperative that Yeshiva University students denounce these ruthless acts for we have a unique love for both Torat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. We know the potential that exists for our religious growth as a community in Israel and we more than others feel great pain when that growth is stunted.

Moreover, we and our Rebbeim have the responsibility to educate ourselves and others both here and in Israel toward a greater moral sensitivity for our fellow man—be he Jew or Arab.

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## A Word of Thanks

Dear Editor,

Suddenly he jumped out from his chair behind the desk. His eyes were burning with fire and his cheeks were reddened by the excitement. He smashed the desk with his hand in seeming anger and yelled at the top of his lungs. The students were not shocked, they weren't afraid or even apprehensive. They smiled and listened intently to the rabbi's explanation of the Gemarah. The rabbi was precise in his language, his grammar and tenses. Not a word he said was superfluous, the complex situation was expounded perfectly, intelligently, clearly. The seeming indecipherable text of the Talmud with its twists and turns, its puzzling concepts and mind-boggling dialectic all became so simple. The argument two Tannaim had in the first century about eggs and birds came to life before the eyes of the "Modern Orthodox" pre-med and pre-law students in 1984. But verbal description was enough. The teacher wanted to be complete. He wasn't satisfied until every student in the room understood the complicated issue. A physical demonstration was in order. The rabbi first drew on the blackboard as he talked and physically brought the situation to life.

"Rashi is a master-teacher, his commentary is an example of pure literary precision and genius," he stopped to reflect in the middle of his reading of the text. "Rashi lived in the world. He was a true scholar, and he didn't even get any college credit! He didn't take history 0.1 or Biblical Exegesis 1.2. Rashi was a talmid hacham that learned and Rashi knew. Just look how beautifully he clears up the situation for all to see and understand!" As he spoke I could not help get the feeling that one day I would be describing him the same. "My Rabbi, in IBC was a master-teacher," I would

tell my grandson one day. I finally understood the meaning of "Masoret"—the unbroken chain of tradition that never will break as long as we have people like this Rabbi around to make sure the chain is strong.

Leaning forward in his chair with his big blue yamulka tilted to the side of his head, the one-time English Literature major who dedicates his life to giving of himself to others posed a challenging question to the class. It was exactly 9:01 a.m. on Monday and he had already taken attendance as usual, exactly a minute ago. He looked at the group of tired students with a warm, understanding smile, then changed his look to one of pseudo-anger and repeated the question. Determined to live up to the drowsy class, the rabbi reformulated the problem and posed it individually. Undoubtedly, a few students thought they knew the answer, but they also knew that their reply must be exact. It must be precise, clear, perfect. The rabbi explained the text over and over until it was understood by everyone. Repetitious questions ensued and he answered each one with undue patience. "Oh, by the way, next week is Pruiim, I want to invite you guys to my house," the rabbi said as he reclined to reflect on the amount of Gemarah he covered that day.

"What is Rashi telling us we didn't know before? What was bothering Rashi? What question does Rashi's commentary predict and answer? Think!" Think. The rabbi was a clear thinker. He communicated perfectly and would not mind repeating himself or deducing examples to show the students minor differences in detail. "What is really happening here? What is Rashi's problem?" The problem. The rabbi had no real problem. He was a true scholar and could find an answer to any seeming difficulty.

## A Welcome Addition

This past week, the Dean of the Isaac Breuer College of Hebraic Studies, Rabbi Jacob Rabinowitz, announced that Rabbi Herschel Schachter will be giving the top level Talmud shiur of IBC in the coming year. Rav Schachter, who currently serves as the Rosh Kollel of RIETS as well as a Rosh Yeshiva in MYP will say a shiur once a week in IBC in Tractate Berachot. The shiur will be continued the remaining days of the week by Rabbi Yaacov Neuberger. The shiur, which is currently given jointly by Rav Aaron Kreiser and Rav Neuberger, is being reorganized in light of Rav Kreiser's forthcoming aliya to Israel.

Rav Schachter will maintain his shiur in YP while giving shiur in IBC. Although the *mesechet* for the coming year for both IBC and MYP will be Berachot, Rav Schachter's IBC shiur will be in a different perek than his YP shiur.

Admission to the shiur is available only with permission of Dean Rabinowitz. It is also anticipated that MYP students who wish to enroll in Rav Schachter's shiur in IBC will be admitted, if space allows. IBC students will be given priority in admission to the shiur.

*Hamevaser* lauds IBC's quick response to the need for an upgraded Talmud program in the school. In welcoming Rav Schachter to IBC, the administration of the college reaffirms its commitment to providing its students with first rate Jewish scholarship and dedication to Torah.

## A Word to the Wise

The entire staff of Hamevaser congratulate all of the newly elected student representatives and officers. We hope the coming year under your leadership will build upon the heightened spirit that has characterized this past year and will direct that spirit toward a greater sense of seriousness and purpose.

As students we have so much to accomplish religiously, intellectually and emotionally during our short stay at Yeshiva and our student leadership must constantly keep this in mind as they plan and execute the programs that will fill next year's calendar. A greater attempt should be made to create activities that help us to develop as thinking, religious Jews and not just as American college students.

I remember the night we celebrated Hanukah at his apartment in the village. His study was stuffed wall-to-wall with volumes and volumes of all kinds of encyclopedias. There were books on philosophy, the arts, the sciences, law, math, history, music and, of course, on Torah. I could not help picturing him sitting at his big messy desk reading three books at a time and writing notes for a course he will give on "Eschatology" or "Philosophy of the Rambam". He is the rabbi of a synagogue in New York City and some of his congregants that were at the party seemed to love his company, enjoy his lectures and admire his wit.

The rabbi lives in the world, he is in touch with reality. He is an intellectual with charm, a teacher with unremitting patience and understanding, a true servant of God who loves man. He is a talmid hacham with a strong tie to his people, a person with a strong tie to Torah education, an educator with a strong tie to life. I know I am not alone in my feeling for the Rabbi. He has taught us how to learn and how to think; he has enhanced our college education beyond description. Rabbi Wohlgelemler, we thank you.

JACK H. DOUECK

The editor-in-Chief and the entire Governing Board of *Hamevaser* wish a Mazal-Tov to Rabbi & Mrs. Efraim Kanarfogel on the birth of a son.

## A MINORITY OF ONE

### Someone's Final Song

The End is near. Seniors' last hurrahs are overwhelmed by the roar of jackhammers and bulldozers. Grown men play in a colossal sandbox while we, the not-yet-grown-men, wrestle with our final finals.

Great men and wizards, they say, are cynical of education. Agreed, grades and tassels are far less important than, say, a good heart or a courageous soul. But, the true value of our education lies neither in the struggle of the past four years, nor in the ceremony of the next few days.

The struggle was certainly ennobling, and the ceremony, a just reward. But we should leave with something more than that, more than "X" term papers typed or "Y" *dapim* deciphered. Our prime objective—and hopefully one we've reached—is to learn *how* to learn. To limit our sum of knowledge to our stay in school is foolish. Surely we will learn more of ourselves, our society and our religion in the next twenty years than in the past twenty. If we have at all succeeded here, we now have a foundation on which to build, and the experience with which to build efficiently.

This is not only true of our classmate, but of all student activities, including *Hamevaser*. This past year marks a great watershed for the students of YU. The exuberance of student participation, which is the hallmark of the Class of '84, has decisively displaced the atmosphere of passivity of the last few years. It is imprecise to label the year a "success" inasmuch as neither the student body nor *Hamevaser* had many specific goals in mind. We did what we could with whatever we had.

We've tried to bring the students closer to the issues that affect them. That, of course, is not an end, but merely the means to encourage the students to affect the issues.

Towards that end, there is a long way to go.

\* \* \*

I've been working on *Hamevaser* for over three years, and in that time I've learned to disregard journalism's traditional ban on compliments. Opportunities for criticism have not been lacking, surely, but I have found that negative comments rarely have a positive affect. Sometimes, however...

An idea which has underlined many sensitive issues at YU—an idea which Dr. Lamm has repeatedly defended—is that the students always come first.

I was sadly disillusioned upon hearing an administrator say last week "Graduation is not for the students."

Once upon a time, only undergraduates marched down the aisle, and the duly elected validictorians spoke their predetermined piece. Yet, I'm a realist. I understand that a centralized graduation saves money. I don't mind sharing the ceremony with Ferkauf, Revel, *et al.* I don't begrudge the awards, the speeches, or the eulogies. It's all part of the show, and the show makes good PR, and good PR makes good money. Fine and wonderful.

It's the priority that bothers me. Graduation may indeed serve "to honor our philanthropists," but if that is its only purpose then why were we invited?

Why is there time for 10 honorary degrees yet not for a single legitimate degree? Five minutes for a validictory speech is not so much to ask for.

Graduation remains a celebration—philanthropy notwithstanding—of our achievements and a herald of our

future. The validictorian was elected as our spokesman to represent our selves, to express our sentiments, to "say farewell" which is, after all, what "validictorian" means. Surely Dr. Lamm (validictorian, Class of '5?) can sympathize with that.

It is an insult to the validictorian and his classmates to degrade his words as unworthy of our time at our graduation. It is an insult to assert that "no one wants to hear him speak except his mother and father." It is an insult to the university that we even hesitate to present the best we've got on the day of "the big show."

I apologize to our validictorians, Jeff and Michelle, on behalf of the university and its administrators who couldn't manage that barest of courtesies on their own.

\* \* \*

This year's awards and "thank-you"s (other than those already won by Moshe, Steven, and Jeff) go to—

- the readers, supportive or otherwise;
- the *Hamevaser* governing board and staff, who not just made the paper, but made it all worthwhile (and for proving that decency and dignity can go a long way);
- Berko, for his patience;
- Larry, for making me seem sane by comparison;
- Dr. Lamm, *et al.*, for words of encouragement;
- my parents, for having the courage to go without me;
- DFWTC.

SHALOM D. STONE

"Perhaps a lunatic was simply a minority of one."  
George Orwell 1984

## CONFESSIONS OF AN IBC APOSTATE:

### To MYP And Back

By ERIC ABERMAN

It seems that the various schools and programs within our institution are considered fair game for many attacks and criticisms by both students and faculty. It has become almost a national pastime to criticize and condemn the policies and practices of YC, MYP, IBC and JSS. It is particularly enjoyable to shoot arrows at the two Jewish studies programs in which they are *not* enrolled. I am not an exception, and had my fair share of target practice while an undergrad. The difference is that I always felt that attacks from beyond a particular Jewish studies division are for the most part unjustified, being based on: a) rumors and second hand information, and b) a strong bias against the other school based on the above described predilection to voice disparaging remarks on the other divisions.

Like many students I switched from one Jewish Studies division to another during my YU career and have now seen the green of the grass from both sides. The picture is now somewhat different in my eyes.

While I was in IBC, I complained about the lack of dedication of the students, their apathetic attitude towards Jewish studies and the terrible effects their deficient motivation had on the whole school. I admit that I did enjoy almost every course I took and honestly did gain a huge amount from them. But then again, I *wanted* to.

Recognizing my willingness to work and my desire to learn, Dean Rabinowitz steered me into the best courses available (in my opinion) in IBC with the best instructors (in

everyone's opinion). There, to my surprise, I found a select group of students who had also been so directed by the Dean. Oddly enough, I found many of the same people in class after class. These were the dedicated ones, few as they may have been. These were the students who actively sought out the good courses and made the extra effort required to learn when surrounded by so many other uninterested people.

And then I defected. In my junior year I switched to YP—not because I wanted a free period from 9 to 3 each day (as do so many others) but because I felt I had gone as far as I could go in IBC, had gotten the best available and had reached the point where it was time to move on.

Due to my stubborn persistence I survived the ordeal an IBC student is susceptible to when entering MYP. I could not understand the ridiculous steps that administration took to dissuade me from joining their division. I wanted to learn! Why were they making it so difficult? I finally realized that the target practice and bias of the students is practiced in policy by many administration offices as well.

I got in, finally. For my shiur placement, I got neither my first choice nor my second or my third. I got placed in a shiur whose enrollment and attendance were waning, for reasons I now understand.

In speaking with other friends who had transferred into YP, I discovered that many had similar experiences to share. In most cases they had to be persistent in order to overcome the bureaucracy. They described

their own ordeals of being sent from one office to another to another—and yet another. "Applying to medical school," said one, "would be easier." This procedure which in normal circumstances should take no more than an afternoon, is often dragged out to as much as 3 weeks or more.

Once in the program, many of us found the way to the "good" shiurim blocked. These restrictions, together with the unending lists of requirements and regulations, force us to ask whether the program is successfully promoting education or, in fact, obstructing it. Why it should be so difficult to be allowed to learn is simply beyond us.

In retrospect I cannot help but remember IBC. No, not everyone was serious; this is a condition of which no school or program can claim immunity. But at least those who did show initiative were given every possible assistance. Learning was promoted, not hindered. It sometimes seems that students in MYP who do learn, do it in spite of the

administration. Those who do gain entrance into the better shiurim do it by chance or by pulling strings or *shlick*, or both.

I left IBC so I would have more time to learn. Whatever hours of the clock I have gained have been used up running from office to office or wasted in unstimulating shiurim. I cannot attribute this deficiency to my personal lack of participation, in light of the commonality of such sentiments shared by so many other students.

IBC was an experience in education which I will not forget. The school and its administration work with unending dedication to help the students gain the most from their time in Yeshiva. Both the Torah education and the dedication I gained there will remain with me as rich and meaningful experiences. I hope that the other schools and programs in YU will take a lesson of guidance and assistance from IBC as well as the students. Only dedication brings results.

## CALLING ALL RESUMES

A search committee has been formed to choose a successor to Larry Wachsman, director of student activities at Yeshiva College. Mr. Wachsman will be making aliyah at the end of this summer.

The Director will interact with academic and student services throughout the University. The successful candidate will have a Bachelor's Degree, related experience and be knowledgeable in Jewish Studies. Advanced degree is helpful. For confidential consideration, please send resume to:

MR. DANIEL LEHMANN  
Chairman, Search Committee  
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# A Women's Mezumen

By DEENA SCHRAMM

It is an interesting fact of Halachic practice that there are a number of cases in primary halachic sources in which a permissible ruling was issued, yet throughout the ages the Jewish community did not use the Heter and took the stringent approach as the norm. One example is that of a women's Mezumen, discussed in *Berachot* 45a. The resolution of the Gemara is that women may have a mezumen, the same way גברים may—but the two cannot join together for fear of promiscuity, nor can they insert God's name which is used only in the presence of a minyan. Rashi adds that the situation is analogous to two men—there is no obligation involved but if one desires to exercise his right to say the *Shema* he is allowed to. Rambam, in *Hilchot Berachot* 5:1 says that women and slaves are obligated in *Berachot* (though it is not clear if they are obligated by the Torah since it might be a positive commandment governed by time) and goes on to state in *Halacha* 6 that all who are obligated in *Shema* are obligated in *Zimun*. The result from these two Halachot would be the possibility of an obligation for a women's *Zimun*, depending on their obligation to bench. In *Halacha* 7, however, the Rambam adds the condition that men may not have women, slaves or minors as part of their mezumen, though they may perform one of their own volition—with the stipulation that there should not be a joint group of women and slaves for fear of promiscuity and that they may not use God's name in a *zimun* of ten.)

The Gemara and the Rambam leave us with a pretty clear picture, yet among the later Poskim the issue becomes more complex. The *Shulchan Aruch* quotes the Rambam almost verbatim, but with a slight addition. He adds that women are obligated to answer when eating with men and can fulfill this obligation by answering "Amen" to the men's words—even, according to the Ramah, if they do not understand. The *Mishnah Brurah*, on the other hand, leans toward limiting the permissibility. First he offers a reason that the *Tanna'im* did not want to make it mandatory to have a mezumen when by themselves because it has been found that they are not so well versed in *Halacha* (even though there might be a *tzur* on the Torah according to Rambam). But in addition, he cites the *Shitah MeChetiv* who says that if women want to separate from the men and have their own mezumen, they are allowed. Perhaps the most astounding is the position of Rabbi Yochanan who says that women are obligated to have a mezumen,

"ששים שומעו לעצמם חזק אך העולם לא נהגו כן" but don't because it wasn't their minhag.

The question then remains if it is clearly permissible and possibly even mandatory for women to have a mezumen, why is the mitzva not practiced and why does it seem to be looked down upon? The sources do not deal with this aspect, but perhaps the reason is similar to that of a woman mohel.

In the Gemara, *Avodah Zarah* 27a, the issue of *Milah* is discussed. Using the prooftext from *Shemot* 4:25 when Zipporah took a knife and cut off the foreskin from her son. If Zipporah indeed circumcised her son, there should be no problem. But did she do the act? Some *Tanna'im* like Rashi, hold that she

did the act through a messenger, thus making the verb *והקמת* passive instead of active—she had someone take the knife for her. The problem is that there is no real grammatical construction for *והקמת* in the passive. So the conclusion should be that a woman can perform a *Milah*. The Tosfot, however take the former approach that women cannot perform circumcision since they are not circumcised themselves. On the other hand, *נראה* raises the question of the grammatical construction of the verb and quotes ר' יוחנן who said that women are allowed because *כדמה לא דמיה*—it is considered as if they have already been circumcised. At the end, however, he adds that maybe Zipporah started the rite and Moshe finished. The Rambam agrees that all women are "Kosher" in regard to performing *Milah*, but with the stipulation that they may do so only when there is no other man present. The *Kesef Mishnah*, uses the posuk "וזהו את בריתי אשרו" —"And you (male) my covenant shall obey" as the proof that the obligation regards to men. The *Tur* agrees with the Rambam, while the *Bei Yosef* adding that when given a choice between a woman, a slave or a (male) minor to perform the act—since all may do so—it is better for the minor to do the *Milah* since he will ultimately be elevated into "the rank of *Mitzvot*"—"עוד לא לכלל מצוות". The *Bach* is slightly more expansive in the issue, citing the Rash and the RiF, who agree with Rambam, and the SeMak, who disagrees. The position of the SeMak is that a woman and a non-Jew do not circumcise, even when there is no one in the vicinity who can perform the procedure, but should wait for a man to come.

While the situation of a woman performing *Milah* is not totally analogous to the case of a women's *zimun*, there are many parallels. Both, in certain circumstances, are permissible. Indeed, in some instances there might be an obligation—in the case of *Zimun* according to the Rambam and in the case of *Milah* if there is no one else present. For some reason, neither was practiced extensively, though Raza left the possibility by bringing down the other opinions. I am not advocating any overnight revolutions but perhaps one should reinvestigate the sources before denouncing any practice. And while reinvestigating, it is interesting to note that the Lubavitcher Rebbe, שליט"א, instructed several of his Chassidim to go to a certain female doctor in Moscow and instruct her to circumcize Russian baby boys.

# Revel's Guests

By YEHUDA NAJMAN

In the upcoming year, the Bernard Revel Graduate School will be offering a host of fascinating guest personalities teaching a variety of exciting courses. This summer will welcome three renowned Israeli professors: Professor Yeshayahu Maori, teacher and researcher at Hebrew and Haifa Universities will be teaching Tanakh courses. This will be the third year that Prof. Maori has guest lectured at Y.U.

Professor Zvi Groner, a Y.U. graduate and an oleh, is a professor of Gaonica at Haifa University. Prof. Groner will offer a course in Tefilah.

Professor Daneil Sperber, professor of Talmudic Literature at Bar-Ilan University will analyze the causes and development of selected Minhagim.

In addition, this summer will see the continuation of the newly formed Wurzwiler-Revel joint program. Last summer, in an effort to instill a heightened sensitivity to Jewish issues within graduate and post graduate social work students, a one-year M.S. degree program from BRGS was instituted by the university. The program

entails two summer courses, followed by three winter courses taken directed study, followed by two summer courses. In addition, nine credits from Wurzwiler will be counted towards the degree. Prospects for this program are bright, and it proves to be a rewarding and successful innovation.

The coming Fall/Spring sessions will also see a return of several guest lectures. Professor Mordechai Pachter will return with courses in Kabbala, and in the teachings of its chief proponents: R. Moshe Cordevero and R. Isaac Luria. In the Spring, Prof. Pachter will offer courses in Rav Kook, Ramhal, and an Introduction to Hasidism. In addition, Professor Jacob Katz will offer courses in Medieval/Modern Jewish History. This will be Prof. Katz' third semester teaching at Y.U.

Furthermore, Professor Barry Eichler, a Y.U. graduate, and professor at the University of Pennsylvania, will be teaching TaNakh during the spring semester.

Anyone, including undergraduates, requesting further information is encouraged to contact Dr. Landman at the BRGS office in Furst Hall.

# Reflection on Yom Ha'atzmaut

By STEVEN COHEN

*On Sunday night May 6, Y.U. celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut. This year, a special minyan for the holiday service was held in the evening as well as regular minyanim to say Hallel for the occasion during the day. Two mesibot were held in honor of the day. The first one, on Sunday evening, was attended by 150 people. Rav Blau, mashgiach of the yeshiva, Kenny Brander and Moshe Lichtenstein spoke at the celebration. A student reflects on the experiences of the mesiba and the message delivered Yom Ha'atzmaut in Y.U.*

It wasn't well-advertised. They didn't have live-music or an abundance of food. There were no decorations on the walls. And yet, the ruach of the participants, all of whom had come to share the feeling of religious celebration, totally compensated for any of the common appearances of such gatherings. At 11:30 Sunday night when most people wind down in preparation for the upcoming week, 150 people climbed the back stairs of RIETS to Klein Hall to share in the desire to observe and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut as a religious occasion. The participants, wearing the clothes which would identify them as tzionim datiim, built up a ladder of energy and fervor with their dancing and singing. The destination of their ascent is well known.

These people, the vast majority of whom spent at least one year in Israeli yeshivot, portray a conviction and dedication unparalleled, in any other Jewish institution in North America. These are the same people who have injected new life into our yeshiva and given us a new momentum in the challenge to maintain a Torah institution in a secular world.

Who are these individuals? What special minerals are present in their blood that give them such power and potential to rejuvenate both themselves and us? They are, in fact, just

plain people. Their only difference is that special spark ignited in them and that burning desire within them to see the world of Torah reestablished in its rightful place. They don't advise. They don't wave banners, call elections, send out memos, take attendance or vote. They simply learn...quietly and persistently. They sit and pour over the volumes that infuse in them the will to continue the ascent, the will to survive and grow.

Their quietness would lead others to conclude that they do not really exist—that they're not really there, and if there are a few like them, they must be very few. "Other forces on campus are so visible and vocal, even beyond proportion. If this group is really so big and strong, how come we don't hear them? Why can't we see them?"

But they are there and on occasions such as Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim they are visible and vocal. We just have to know where to look and listen. Not on the streets—not in the lecture halls, theatres or the lounges, but in the Beit Midrash—and in Klein Hall when they sing and dance in praise of God for granting us the State of Israel. They are the chozer' yeshivot, learning now in all the schools of Y.U. and RIETS, but with their eyes and thoughts turned eastward, back to Zion. They constitute the true ruach of Y.U., true to our tradition and true to the real goals of our institution. No, they don't advertise much or make noise, but in their own quiet way they have formed an active organization which benefits and leads our school in a Torah direction and in the Jewish commitment and dedication to Artzenu HaK'dosha with *hitlahavut* and *kiddush Hashem*.

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## Semikha—Yesterday and Today

By DANNY ROSENTHAL

Semikha. Many of us use the term, yet few of us know about its history and how the Yeshiva University program differs from its predecessors. To address this issue properly, it is necessary to examine the institution of Semikha, and its development over past centuries.

Semikha began when Moshe Rabbeinu placed his hands on the head of Yehoshua. Yehoshua so endowed his students with authority and they so authorized their Talmidim until traditional Semikha came to an end, probably sometime between the Fourth and Eighth centuries. A few attempts were made at restoring this Semikha, including one by Yaakov Berav in the 15th century in Safed. They were all unsuccessful.

Yeshivot were established in medieval Europe, and Roshhei Yeshiva were authorized to give documents of Semikha to their pupils. Communities there and in the Middle East were often focused around a distinguished Rabbi, such as the "Chacham Bashi," chief rabbi of the Ottoman empire. Central authority was dissolved, though, with the uprooting of many European yeshivot in the 14th and 15th centuries, necessitating an institutionalized Semikha to insure validity of credentials.

The 18th century ushered in the beginnings of the Haskalah movement, a development which shook the "Orthodox" world. The traditional Jews reacted to the Haskala by increasingly divorcing themselves from secular material and studies.

In the first half of the 19th century, several European governments decided to only recognize the Semikha of those who also received secular training. Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary for instance, instituted such requirements in 1820. The traditional leaders, unwilling to deal with secular materials, refused to meet these requirements and a greater schism was established between them and the Haskala Jews.

During the latter half of the 19th century, an attempt was made at bridging the gap between the two schools of thought, with the founding of the Hildesheimer Seminary in Berlin. The Hildesheimer Seminary was created for the training of Orthodox Rabbis, incorporating secular knowledge and scientific methods in the process. The Hildesheimer Seminary produced many great *talmidei chachamim*, including Rav David Tzvi Hoffman, Dr. Eliezer Berkovits, Rav Yechiel Weinberg and Dr. Yosef Burg.

With mass emigration of European Jewry to the United States, the synagogue took on tremendous significance in Jewish life. As Jews arrived in a strange land, they desired communal institutions where they could meet with emigrants of their own lands, with whom they shared common backgrounds and languages. Securing this purpose, the synagogue became both a religious and social center. As leader of the synagogue congregation, the rabbi took on a functionary

role. He was a communal leader, ceremonial official and liaison between his own congregation and the Jewish and gentile communities at large. It was essential for these rabbis to be cosmopolitan and knowledgeable in general communal affairs. Yet, the two schools of thought persisted in the training of rabbis.

Yeshivat Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, tried to bridge the gap between these two attitudes by employing the "Yeshiva" approach of Eastern Europe in learning, [unlike the Hildesheimer Seminary], while training students with skills required to serve the American Jewish community efficiently. Therefore, while RIETS taught talmidim halacha, it also required its students to have received college educations. In this manner, Yeshiva trained rabbis capable of serving as Torah Jews, while concurrently reaching out to the entire Jewish community.

Over recent years, several changes have come about in the trend of American Jewry concerns. As a higher percentage of the Jewish community has become knowledgeable in areas such as Nidah and Eruv, and "*ba'al habaitim*" increasingly educated in many areas of Jewish law, higher demands are being placed on rabbis. Reflecting this change, Yeshiva's Semikha program has been intensified, and the Shimush program in particular has been solidified.

The changing RIETS program is consistent with the history of Semikha, reflecting the needs of changing societies.

## Torah and Derekh Eretz

(Continued from page 1)

community, has better communal organization, a result of the German sense of community as opposed to the communal chaos in American Jewry. *Torah u Mada* is in danger of losing its identity by being dissolved in a sociological soup called "Modern Orthodoxy." People assume that keeping kosher, keeping shabbos, and earning a B.A. gives one free membership to the *Torah u Mada* society. *Torah u Mada* must stand for uncompromising devotion to *mitzvot*, and must not be mistaken for flippancy.

2) It is necessary for Jews to strive for Torah. *Torah u Mada* must not be viewed as a denial of legitimacy to those who spend time in Torah alone. What must be done is to find a place for exclusive Torah studies in the rubric of *Torah ve'Hokhma*. Rav Kook spoke about 2 movements: one inward, a deepening of the spirit, and the other outward, relating the inner spirit to the outside. Just as the first is embodied in traditional yeshivot, the second is embodied in the university. *Madah* is not meant to make up for a lack of Torah. It is not needed because the "Torah data base" is limited, but in order to create something new in the realm of the spirit. According to Rav Kook, the Sacred vitalizes everything. There is nothing absolutely profane or secular. There is only the holy and the not-yet-holy. *Chas v'shalom* to infer that there is no

difference between them. We must allow *kodesh* to strengthen itself and then to sanctify the profane. If *keddusha* just intensifies, without the second, outward stage, Torah remains sterile and hasn't fulfilled its function. The Torah-only track, as represented by the *kollelim* in YU, is justified and demanded. We need the awareness, though, that the end result of kollel is going out. (This is not identical with the *Torah lishmah* attitude of Rav Hayim Volozhin).

3) In the course of the resurgence of the right wing, Torah-and-Hokhma has been called *bidi'eved*, de facto and not de jure. It was appropriate, it was claimed, to Western Europe, but it is no longer applicable.

Such an attack is obscurantist, since it ignores Spanish, Provençal, German, and American Jewry. *Torah ve'Hokhma* is not a compromise, but a *derekh*.

We must learn to respond to the patronizing position that secular studies are kosher only for *parnasah*. Is their devotion to Torah so fragile that they will sell out for a few thousand more dollars a year? They should defy the civil authorities, since high school literature and history too aren't kosher. That would be consistent—and a denial of the wholeness of Torah, if it would make Torah a cripple.

4) I would like to see an effort to trace a *Torah ve'Hokhma* approach to the heart of Eastern European *machshava*. One of the

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fundamental differences between Hasidim and Mitnagdim was how they viewed the world. Mitnagdim emphasized the transcendent nature of God, His separateness. Hasidim were immanentistic. *Eloku* infuses the world. The world exists within Divinity.

To Hasidim, all of the world has potential for divinity. There are realms of the *reshut*, of the permissible. Just as we can cook, tie our shoes, and sell insurance for the glory of God, so too can we learn secular studies *le'shem shamayim*.

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## The Legacy of Yisachar

Adopted from a shiur of *divrei chizuk* given by Rabbi Simcha Krauss to his shiur in IBC.

In the *Brachot* given by Yaakov to his children, Yisachar, the representative of Torah, was told:

וְיָסַח מִן הַיָּדָה כִּי טוֹב וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ כִּי נִגְמַתָּ וְשָׂמַח לִסְלֵכָהּ וְיָרַד לִפְנֵי עַבְדְּךָ.

And he saw the resting place that it was good  
And the land that it was pleasant;  
And he bowed his shoulders to bear;  
And became a servant under task work.

(Breishit 49:15)

The nature of Yisachar's work, that of "bowing his shoulders" and "becoming a servant with task-work" is interpreted by Rashi in two ways. The first interpretation defines the nature of Yisachar in a relatively passive manner. Yisachar bows his shoulder to accept the yoke of Torah. He is always ready to help his brethren by adjudicating their differences and teaching them what they ought to know. When they are searched out by them, the Yisachars, the bearers of Torah, will accept the yoke of teaching and judging.

Then, Rashi gives us a second interpretation. Yisachar, the symbol of Torah, bows his shoulders "to bear wars and conquer regions."

מלחמתו ולכבוש מחוזות

Yisachar, the bearer of Torah, involves himself in waging wars and in conquering regions.

These two interpretations are not necessarily two conflicting views. Rather, we have two stages in the development of the personality of Yisachar. There is a time when Yisachar, the symbol of Torah, must remain in his tent. He must be dedicated and committed, his only task-work being to answer the questions posed to him. He must have only one *da'aga*, to be involved in questions deciding *chayav* or *patur*, *tahor*, or *tamei*, *mutar* or *asur*. It is truly a great, noble and sacred duty to remain in the tent, ready to answer when someone asks.

There are times, however, when Yisachar—with all his love of learning—dares not remain in the tent. There are times when Yisachar must go forth from the tent and wage war and attack. There are times when Yisachar must go on the offensive—to "conquer regions", to enlarge the sphere of the sacred.

How does Yisachar wage war?

Yisachar's wars are waged in the realm of ideas. When Yisachar wants to wage war and conquer regions, he must first of all enunciate his educational philosophy.

Let us, therefore, clearly and unapologetically articulate some points. It is best to put it in the framework of something that the Rav said some time ago.

When a Jew prays to God for knowledge, he prays in a peculiar manner, a style totally different from his prayers for anything else. Let us analyze the process.

Take the prayer for health. There is the request "heal us, Oh God," and then we offer an explanation of why we turn to God: "Because You, God, can heal." In the prayer for forgiveness we follow the same pattern. "Forgive us, Oh God"—the request. Then we explain why we turn to God for forgiveness: "Because You God grant forgiveness." This *Shemoneh Eseret* is followed in all the requests of the *Shemoneh Eseret*, with the exception of the prayer for knowledge, for success in our

intellectual growth. There the style differs.

First, there is the statement "You, Oh God, grant knowledge and understanding to man," and only after this initial statement do we make the request "Please grant us knowledge, understanding and wisdom." Why the difference in this most important of prayers?

The answer lies in the fact that in all areas of life one can easily discern and openly concede that the good and bounty one possesses is due not to man's own greatness or brilliance but rather results from the fact that God n His Grace provided him with his needs. Certainly if one is not blind and stupid, one can recognize that good health is not of one's own making but *Chessed Hashem*. Likewise, we know that no matter how much one plows and tills the soil, if God does not provide rain in season then all the work is in vain. God's providence in most areas is so evident that it needs no special reinforcement.

There is one exception, however, and that is in the realm of intellectual pursuits.

Someone who is successful in the pursuit of knowledge can easily fall into the trap of thinking, "I owe no thanks to anyone. My success is due to my brilliance, to my diligence, to my painstaking efforts, to my intelligence. I was successful because I was obstinate in trying to solve a problem, because I dedicated myself to finding a solution. The knowledge I have is my own. It is I who have coined a new concept. I have developed a new theory. I have made a major breakthrough in the knowledge of man. The credit belongs to me, and to me alone. I can do with this knowledge whatever I please. In this I am not obligated to anyone."

To remove this false and dangerous notion, the Jew in his prayer for success in the realm of the intellect opens his prayer with a statement. I acknowledge, God, that "You

grant knowledge to man." I know that alone, without Your help, my efforts would be in vain. Without Your help, there would be no progress, no march forward in any branches of knowledge. Without Your help there would be no *Chidushei Torah*, no technological progress, no scientific progress, no artistic creativity.

Only when the Jew acknowledges this point can he stand before God and ask to be granted "Knowledge, understanding and wisdom."

If that is one's theory of knowledge, then certain consequences follow.

First, it becomes evident that the secular can be transformed and elevated. The study of physics, history, or mathematics is not something isolated, secluded, locked up in a particular compartment in one's mind, having nothing to do with one's religious life, no bearing on one's existence as a religious being.

The second point is that knowledge is not and cannot be neutral. If one concedes that knowledge comes from God, then it follows that all knowledge is value-laden; that one cannot say, "These are my findings and I care not for the consequences." Knowledge cannot be used arbitrarily without calculating its social consequences.

If the Damocles Sword of nuclear destruction hangs over man and threatens his extinction, if technology outstrips man's ability to tame this Golem of his own making, it is because man has forgotten the source of knowledge.

Finally, one who acknowledges that God grants knowledge has to go a step further. Given that all areas of knowledge can be transformed into vehicles of *Avodas Hashem* (service of the Lord), Torah study in its very essence is *Avodas Hashem*. While all fields of knowledge have the potential of becoming

holy, Torah is in its very essence holy. In all branches of knowledge one who is profound, wise and perceptive may discern the "mind" of the Creator! Torah is the revealed mind of the Creator. That is why, though we acknowledge the validity and potential sanctity of all knowledge, we yet believe in the primacy of Torah study. And, indeed, after the request for knowledge we hasten to pray "Return us, Oh God, to Thy Torah."

Torah is the standard, the Archimedean point from which one weighs and evaluates all other forms of knowledge. Without Torah as a guide, as a standard, as a corrective, knowledge can be used to annihilate man.

I mention this because I have noticed, among many of our students, a feeling of inadequacy, a feeling of weakness and self-doubt. Are we really justified in calling ourselves Bnei Torah? Can we truly claim to be in the tradition of Yisachar?

Of course you are Bnei Torah. You are Bnei Torah in the noblest sense of the word. You know the meaning of *Atah chonen l'adam da'at*. You embrace the totality of Knowledge. You take courses in Sociology, History and Physics, etc. but you are trained to infuse these with the *ruach chayim* that is Torah. Your education at Yeshiva equips you—when you fully take advantage of it—to be like Yisachar in the tent and answer the questions that the people ask you. Your education at Yeshiva also trains you, again in the spirit of Yisachar, to wage war, to conquer regions for Torah, to bring the Or Torah to a larger audience. So תרנו ויבטנו; take advantage of everything Yeshiva has to offer. Learn and remember that you are descendants of Yisachar of whom it was said, וְיָסַח מִן הַיָּדָה כִּי טוֹב וְשָׂמַח לִסְלֵכָהּ.

Rabbi Simcha Krauss, is the rabbi of the Young Israel of Hillcrest and a former rabbe in Isaac Breuer College.

## FREEDOM FROM FEAR

By YOSSI PRAGER

"The hesdernikim are the best soldiers." A strange remark, coming from a Jew who believes that there are better ways of "wasting one's time" than learning Torah. But my Israeli cousin, Shoshana, explained. "While the hesdernikim dodge some army service by sitting in yeshiva, once on the battlefield, they are the most fearless soldiers."

Although happy to hear of their reputation, I wondered how the hesder boys, with their more limited army experience, so successfully combat the fear of death. Fortunately, I was soon to begin the customary year in a *Yeshivat Hesder*, offering me the opportunity to befriend many hesdernikim just returning from and leaving for the front lines. Hopefully, they would teach me the source of their mysterious courage.

My first attempts to unlock the hesder secret were frustrating. To my great chagrin and naive surprise, none of the boys was eager to discuss his fears with me. It was not that I had failed to make friends; the Israelis seemed to be as open with me as amongst themselves. But "fear" was off limits. While their reticence was disappointing, it should not have been so surprising. In a society that ships every able-bodied man to war, fearing death is simply unacceptable. Acknowledging that of the Israelis did not express their feelings verbally, I resolved to search for signs of fear beneath the surface.

My patience was finally rewarded when Noam Ofir returned to Yeshiva less than a week after his last battle. I was astonished to observe that Noam leaped into his studies, rarely looking up from his book during study hours. As the year progressed, however, my surprise evolved into admiration, as Noam's diligence paid off in ever deep scholarship. Here was the ideal hesder soldier—fearless during war and studious when in yeshiva. However, shortly before Noam was to return to the army, I finally witnessed his reaction to fear. Perhaps more experienced than others, Noam had already perfected a defense mechanism to ward off his dread. Immediately before his departure, Noam exhibited a fanatical devotion to his studies. Some days he did nothing else except, eat, sleep, and study. I now understood why he had rebuffed all my queries about the war. I have heard it said that good men have the fewest fears, but Noam seems to be proof that even the best of souls cannot completely escape them.

At this point, I began to rethink my original proposition. Perhaps Noam was the rule, and not the exception. Maybe the hesder boys are not superhuman. Funerals of close friends too often reminded them about the realities of war. But if so, what displaces the vivid memory of fallen comrades once the hesdernikim climb into their tanks?

This question was finally answered by one of the older boys in the Yeshiva. He showed me a passage in the Rambam's *Mishneh Torah*. He writes, "...After joining the battle ranks, he [the soldier] must rely upon God who is the hope of Israel, its savior in the time of need...He should take his life in his hand, and fear nothing; he should not think of his wife nor his children, but blot out their memory from his mind and concentrate on the battle. Anyone who starts thinking and reflecting in the midst of battle, and gets himself alarmed, transgresses a prohibitive command..." My hesder friends are not starry-eyed, mindless cultists, nor do they have the calm, violent disposition of the Japanese samurai. Yet, before a battle, when the hesdernikim gather to prepare, one of the boys delivers a quiet, purposeful talk, reading from the Rambam and reminding the boys that, indeed, fear must be put aside and God will help them. Following this, they might say some *Tehillim*. Then, temporarily fearless, the soldiers begin their attack.

For the hesdernikim, faith in God dissipated fear. However, perhaps the belief need not be in the Almighty: confidence in oneself, one's friends, or even one's convictions—all inspirations of the non-religious soldier—may diffuse fear. I think that I now understand Noam better. Maybe his increased diligence was not a withdrawal from the world, but rather a reinforcement of his belief in God. Perhaps he is the ideal hesder soldier.

# Nuclear Disarmament an Unknown Issue in Israel

By ROBERT ESHMAN

(JSPS) ISRAEL BUREAU—The nuclear disarmament movement, which has mobilized millions of supporters in the United States and Europe, is virtually nonexistent in Israel, according to activists here. Even the most educated sectors of Israeli society—religious leaders, the press, and members of political parties—have remained detached from the debate over nuclear weapons. At the root of such “apathy and ignorance,” say disarmament organizers, is the ongoing Israeli concern over immediate security needs.

“Actually, what’s happening is nothing,” said Jochanon Meir, a Jerusalem architect whose two-room flat off a downtown alley doubles as the Israeli headquarters of the World Disarmament Campaign. The extent of Israel’s active anti-nuclear arms movement, he said, has been a special issue of the leftist magazine *New Outlook* devoted wholly to the threat of nuclear war, and a

petition in support of the June 1982 Special United Nations Assembly on Disarmament. Meir and Hillel Schenker, the editor of *New Outlook*’s special issue, circulated the petition among 300 prominent Israelis. Forty-two of them signed it.

These activities, along with an open meeting in Tel Aviv on nuclear weapons, were to form the basis of an Israeli anti-nuclear movement, Schenker said. That meeting was abruptly cancelled when Israel invaded Lebanon. Since then, said Schenker, almost nothing has been done.

Organizers here agree that in the minds of almost all Israelis, immediate security problems overshadow the less palpable threat of nuclear war. “The fact is that the Israeli public doesn’t think it’s important which way you die, by nuclear blast or by grenade,” said Yoram Nimrod, a specialist on nuclear weapons in the Middle East.

Nimrod was one of the founders of the

Committee for the Denuclearization of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in 1961, Israel’s first anti-nuclear group. That group finally dissolved with the outbreak of the Six Day War in 1967.

Anti-nuclear activists have long been afraid that nuclear weapons might be used by a Middle Eastern country. Reports have indicated a growing possibility that various Middle Eastern nations are developing or have developed the capacity to produce such weapons. Others feel that a Middle East conflict could escalate into a nuclear war between the superpowers.

Israel itself, although the government will not confirm this, is widely believed to have the capacity to produce nuclear weapons. According to the government, however, Israel “will not be the first” to use nuclear weapons in a conflict.

Outside of Israel, many Jewish

organization and leaders in the United States and Europe have been active against nuclear weapons. In the United States, the Synagogue Council of America and the Central Conference of American Rabbis have issued statements supporting disarmament.

Israel’s Chief Rabbinate has taken no stand on the issue. Its spokesman found JSPS’s question on the subject humorous and responded that it is not the job of the Rabbinate to make a statement on the matter.

Israel’s press has been mostly silent, as well. When the distinguished Pugwash Conference of scientists opposed to nuclear weapons held its international meeting in Israel in 1981, only one journalist showed up—Schenker.

The release of the television film “The Day After” to movie theaters here and the screening of a movie about terrorists threatening Charleston, South Carolina with a nuclear bomb generated only a brief flurry of commentary. After a four week run with “only average” box office receipts, “The Day After” was pulled from distribution. “It’s just not what Israelis want to go out of their way to see,” said a spokesman for the film’s distributor.

Some activists feel that Jews should be particularly sensitive to the nuclear issue in light of their experience during World War II. Bernard Offen, a U.S. citizen from Poland who is a survivor of the Auschwitz concentration camp, came to Israel a year ago to present a slide show relating his experiences in the Nazi Holocaust to his concerns over the “potential holocaust” of nuclear war.

“I’ve discovered a great lack of awareness about the nuclear threat,” said Offen, who has appeared in universities, high schools, and community centers. While the Holocaust sensitized many Jews to the possibility of genocide, he said, many Jews resent its being “used for what they see as political purposes.”

It is rare to hear Israeli political leaders refer to nuclear war. One who has voiced concern is Motta Gur, the former Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces. At a conference on Israel’s security held at Jerusalem’s Van Leer Institute, Gur said, “Another war will bring us closer to the nuclear edge.”

But Gur’s warning has gone for the most part unheeded. “There is ignorance and apathy and the belief that nuclear war is not a top priority,” said Schenker. Added Meir: “Security is a sacred cow. To fight against a weapon, even if it’s an abominable one, is something bad, because weapons are good here, like bread.”

Meir and Schenker hope to change this attitude by translating Jonathan Schell’s bestselling book *The Fate of the Earth* into Hebrew, and making its publication a “media event.” Then, said Schenker, “We will have to come up with convincing arguments that Israel can guarantee security and still forego nuclear weapons.”

One young Israeli summed up the attitude of most of his peers. “We’re too busy worrying about whether we’ll survive,” he said, “to worry about whether we’ll be blown up.”

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## The Fight Against Intermarriage

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totally irrelevant and unnecessary for a gentile, the rabbi noted.

Rabbi Perl reported success in stopping intermarriage by convincing the gentile partner of just these facts. “They say, if my partner does this to his own people (disregards his Jewish social and religious obligations), what is he going to do to me?”

Not that Jewish students and older singles can be blamed for choosing gentile partners, West Hempstead psychiatrist, Dr. Irving Barnet told the group. “If you think your children are crazy, they’re not,” he said. While a very small percentage of these relationships may be the result of unresolved “neurotic situations” or “an attempt to assert themselves in the power struggle between parents and children,” most are the natural consequence of weakening ties to the Jewish community, he said. Since “nothing meaningful was ever communicated” to the majority of Jewish youth about their heritage, Barnet reasoned, how can they be expected to “deal with the question of ‘what responsibility do I have to the group?’”

“They’re honest kids who don’t want to hurt their parents, their people, or their God, but hold to their promises (made to gentile lovers),” Hassidic rabbi and radio personality J.J. Hecht said of those who interdate and intrmarry. Rabbi Hecht said this generation is not able to withstand the “pressure and temptations” of American society and the campus lifestyle.

Rabbi Hecht said traditional Jewish values such as modesty and group loyalty lingered for a while after the majority of American Jewry had given up religious observance because those generations experienced the love and dignity of parents and grandparents who had grown up in the warmth of the European shtet. “Our parents were like kings and queens in the home, but what do our children know about the beauty of Judaism? They’re living in the shadows of shadows,” Hecht lamented.

While intermarriage threatens group survival (the 1984 American Jewish

Yearbook indicate Jews have already reached zero population growth), there is another reason to worry about the problem, according to Rabbi Peri.

He said the situation brings many improperly converted proselytes into the community and people who assume they are

Jewish because their spouses are.

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## Shavuot—Matan Torah

(Continued from page 1)

the Achris Hayamim. Nevertheless, the full realization of the 10 commandments, remains an exalted objective which must be pursued. The Torah had to be given in public because our prayers center around a Torah which is universally accepted. We pray on Rosh HaShanah:

מלך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך : וידע כל פעול כי אתה פעלתו ורבי כל יצור כי אתה יצרתו

and this is the chief prayer of all our prayers.

In this context we can now respond to our original query. The purpose of the Yitro narrative is to show a gentile man or nation who was sensitive to this call and to God’s presence in the world. Yitro is the proof that man can achieve the heights and the greatness that God prepared for him. However, the Torah (through the Amalek narrative) also wanted the Jew to realize that there are and will be nations and people, no matter how capable intellectually and spiritually, who will never reconcile themselves with the event that took place at Sinai. The whole world, though, will finally recognize the majesty of God. These are the two possible reactions that the Torah presents of the non-Jewish world to the universal message of the Torah (and its messengers-Knesset Yisrael), as we reach revelation at Sinai.

The Editor-in-Chief and governing board of HAMEVASER congratulate Michael Unger upon his engagement to Yaffa Kohn.

What did the second luchot have which the first luchot did not? The second luchot represent the Torah given exclusively to the Jewish people. Here the setting is *tzniut*, in private, only to Moshe and the Jewish people. The first luchot were exclusively a *חוק*, while the second luchot had an oral tradition. In the first luchot everything was written, but in the second luchot, a Torah SheBa’al Peh is given as well. The oral tradition is the exclusive domain of the Jewish people as the Talmud in Gitin (60b) states: “The Holy One Blessed be He formed the covenant with the Jewish people only on account of the Torah SheBa’al Peh.” In the written Torah man is totally passive; God reveals all and man receives. In the Oral tradition, man also plays a great role in shaping and transmitting the Torah. After the giving of the first luchot, Moshe’s face did not radiate, because Moshe played no active role. Everything was written and set. However, after the giving of the second luchot, Moshe’s face radiated. Moshe plays an active role in the Oral Tradition. He becomes the Klaf of Torah SheBa’al Peh, the Rabban Shel Yisrael. Man becomes an object and transmitter of Torah. (For a further treatment of these themes see the Rov’s sefer *Shiurim LeZacher Abba Mori Z”L*, pgs. 176-177, N.H.).

The Editor-in-Chief and governing board of HAMEVASER wish a hearty mazel tov to Jeff Schwartz and Debbie Mischa upon their engagement.

## Are We Handicapping Disabled Jews?

By MATTICE RUBENSTEIN

In the past few years, the world community, especially Western society, has become more sensitive to the needs of people who have disabilities. Just recently, 1981 was designated as the International Year of the Disabled Person. People have begun to realize that a disability is not necessarily a handicap; that a disability need not prevent a person from reaching his or her potential. Often the only handicaps that a disabled person faces are the ignorance and negative attitudes that others have towards that disability. Much has been done to dispel these negative attitudes through effective use of the media, especially through television programs (like "The Facts of Life" and "Sesame Street") that include disabled actors/actresses in regular roles on the program. These programs stress that people with disabilities are people like anyone else; individuals who have their own unique personalities, emotions, feelings, ideas and outlooks, just like any other person.

In recent years the Jewish community in North America has also become more aware of Jews with disabilities and has begun to try to meet their previously unmet spiritual needs. It has only been in the past 10 to 15 years that most special schools and programs have been set up to serve Jewish children with disabilities—programs like NCSY's OUR WAY for deaf youth, P'tach for children with learning disabilities, and OTSAR and Project Yachad (NCSY) for those children with developmental disabilities. These services often began because these Jewish children were placed in programs sponsored by the city or state or by non-Jewish religious groups, and parents realized that as a result their children were not only denied a Jewish

education but also became easy prey for missionaries. Much progress has been made in Jewish special education. Just recently the Board of Jewish Education in New York City sponsored its third Annual Jewish Special Education Programs and Materials Fair.

Despite these programs, much more needs to be done. Most of the Jewish programs available only serve Jewish children or young adults, but children do not remain children forever—most of a person's life is spent in adulthood. What is being done to integrate Jewish Adults with disabilities into the Jewish community where they live?

Much of North American Jewish life centers around the local synagogue or Jewish Community Center—are these buildings accessible to people who use wheelchairs or who are in other ways mobility impaired? Are qualified interpreters made available so that hearing-impaired individuals can be involved in synagogue or Jewish Center activities? (A better question might be—are we encouraging the training of interpreters to be qualified to interpret Jewish activities and religious ceremonies?) Are Rabbis and Jewish community leaders made sensitive to the needs of those in their community who have disabilities, and do they try to integrate people with disabilities into the community?

It seems that if a Rabbi shows his concern, his congregants will also become more sensitive, taking a cue from their Rav. Do rabbinical schools offer courses, seminars or workshops to teach rabbinical students about various disabilities, the various programs for Jews with disabilities, and how to counsel people with these disabilities and their families? Unfortunately, Orthodox Rabbinical schools, such as RIETS, do not offer such training for rabbis. Do Jewish

schools of higher learning (Yeshivot-Gedolot, seminaries, Jewish colleges, rabbinical schools,) or Baalei Tshuva programs for adults encourage or actively recruit students with disabilities who qualify for those programs? Would these schools also provide the support services necessary for a disabled person to attend the program successfully? Are Hillel programs at secular colleges accessible for Jewish disabled students on campus? Many adults with disabilities are eager to learn about Yiddishkeit and make up for the lack of knowledge resulting from the absence of Jewish programs for them when they were growing up.

In order to make up for past inequities, HUC-JIR, the Rabbinical school of the Reform movement is now offering a scholarship and free support services (including interpreters) so that a deaf person can attend. Will any Orthodox Rabbinical school make the same offer for a qualified deaf applicant who wishes to become an Orthodox Rabbi? There are quite a few Reform and Reconstructionist Rabbis who are serving as Rabbis for deaf temples or who supply services within a regular Reform or Reconstructionist for deaf congregants. Are there any Orthodox Rabbis or synagogues that offer the same services?

Some positive steps are being taken in the Orthodox community. Lincoln Square Synagogue is accessible and does supply a sign language interpreter for its Wednesday night lecture series. The Hebrew Institute of Riverdale has done much to integrate disabled people into the shul—their new synagogue building was specifically built to be fully accessible. The Hebrew Institute has also made various holiday services, celebrations and other events accessible,

especially to those with developmental disabilities. The Toronto Jewish community has just begun a program to assist Jewish adults with disabilities in that area and in New York, D.A.A.S.—Disabled Activists for Accessibility and Services, a new organization, has begun to serve Jewish disabled people in the N.Y. area. Presently, Rav Tendler is in the midst of completing a halacha guide-book for disabled Jews.

Within Yeshiva University there have been some changes in attitude. Approximately 15 years ago, a friend of mine was denied entrance into Stern College because of a disability. Recently her husband (who has the same disability) graduated with a degree from EMC (IBC), and a woman with this same disability is right now attending Stern College. Even so, more still has to be done to ensure that any qualified Jewish student with a disability can seriously consider Y.U. as a choice when deciding where to attend college.

Yitzchok Avinu was blind, Yaacov Avinu became disabled after his struggle with the angel, and Moshe had a speech impediment. Yet their disabilities did not keep them from being the great spiritual leaders that they were. No Jew is any less a Jew because of a disability. It is the responsibility of the Jewish community to make sure that every Jew has the opportunity to realize his or her spiritual potential. Kol Yisroel arevim zeh la zeh.

(Ed. Note: The writer of this article would like to hear feedback on this issue—any comments on the article and the topic or information on programs that the writer may not be aware of are welcome. Please call 679-7936.)

## The Fight Against Intermarriage: Orthodox Break With Tradition

By N. DINA NERENBERG

(JSPP)—Orthodox community leaders have come up with some very unorthodox tactics for fighting intermarriage, which experts estimate is running as high as 50 per cent in some American Jewish communities.

Their battle plans include reversing advocacy of the traditional Jewish family practice of cutting off contact with children who inter-marry; reaching out to the non-Jewish partner as well as the Jewish one before marriage takes place in an effort to prevent it; and, in cases where it does take place and the new wife is Jewish, reaching out to children of the intermarried couple (who are considered Jewish under traditional Jewish law) in an effort to encourage their Jewish education and observance of *mitzvot*.

These plans were laid out at a unique conference sponsored by Habad-Lubavitch recently on Long Island in New York. The program was the first on the topic ever sponsored by observant Jews for the general community. It attracted a crowd of about 150 Jewish communal workers, concerned parents, and many who admitted they were both.

The communal workers represented a wide range of Jewish organizations, including

the local and regional chapters of the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, Hadassa, National Council of Jewish Women, United Jewish Appeal, as well as neighboring Jewish day schools, coffeehouses and synagogues.

The conference participants heard an unexpected message from Nassau County Lubavitch Director Rabbi Anchelle Perl who urged the crowd, "Don't accept intermarriage

**"If you think your children are crazy, they're not. They're living in the shadows of shadows."**

as a *fait accompli*." In radical contrast to the traditional custom of breaking off communication with an intermarried child, to mourning him or her as if deceased, Rabbi Perl recommended "making every effort, trying every angle" to re-establish a relationship with an intermarried son or daughter.

Rabbi Yehuda Kelemer, leader of Young Israel of West Hempstead, stressed the importance of parents increasing their own religious observance in the home as a means of maintaining the new couple's links both to the family and Jewish life.

But speakers also cautioned that in keeping the channels of discussion open between parents and the couple, there must be respect for the religious beliefs of the non-Jewish partner. "Jews do not seek to missionize," warned Rabbi Morris Gorelik, Yeshiva University professor and president of the Beth Din of America. "Our mission does not repudiate the righteous of other nations."

Rabbi Gorelik termed conversion of

gentile spouses under in-law pressure "immoral and unethical." But he added one must always be "humane and compassionate" in dealing with the situation, and ready to accept the sincere proselyte.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, leader of the Lubavitcher Chassidim, has developed a slightly different outreach program to non-Jews, according to Rabbi Perl—one that includes outreach to non-Jews before intermarriage takes place.

"We tell non-Jews about the Seven Noahide laws that God gave them, that they

have their own mission, purpose in life." Rabbi Perl said. These seven ethical precepts, given to the world before the Jews received the Torah at Mount Sinai according to the Bible, include prohibitions against murder, adultery and promiscuity, stealing, dishonesty, and cruelty to animals. It also includes the positive commandment to establish courts of law and to pursue justice.

These Noahide laws are being publicized in a Hassidic ad campaign to inform gentiles of their moral responsibilities, including worldwide broadcasts over radio and television and through myriads of Lubavitcher books, magazines, and newsletters. It would appear the campaign has a two-fold purpose. While it creates a spiritual climate on earth conducive to Godliness, said Rabbi Perl, it also educates gentiles and Jews to the differences of their roles on earth and the consequent problems involved in intermarriage.

While righteous gentiles are bound by the seven Noahide laws, Jews are required to obey 613. While imperative to the spiritual well-being of the individual Jews and the Jewish nation as a whole, these demands are

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