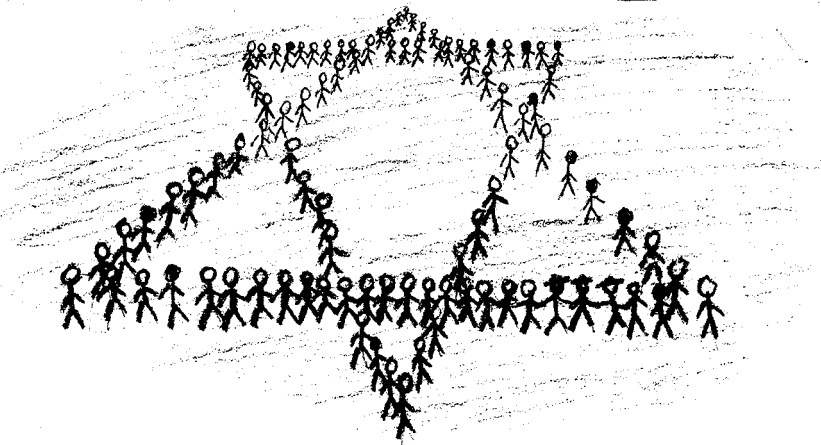
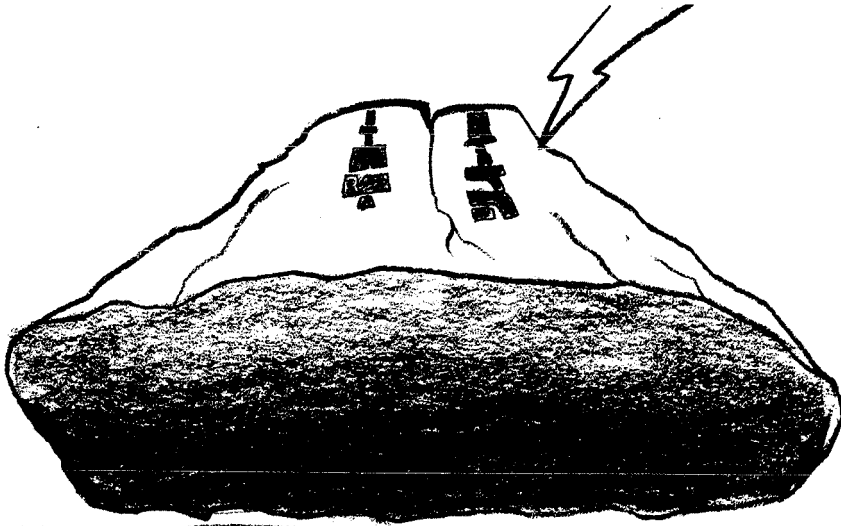


# HAMEVASER

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## HAMEVASER

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# EDITORIALS

## TAXATION

Let us launch a Jewish campaign against hunger.

This is not just another attempt by idealistic college students to change the world; we are conscious (perhaps overly so) of our limits. But this is not our own proposal. Rather, we are passing along the ideas and words of a voice in the Jewish community to our readership, particularly the thousand Orthodox rabbis who have the power to implement the following plan in their communities. What follows are the words of Leonard Fine, excerpted from the April issue of *Moment*.

"When we have, praise God, cause for celebration, and when the form of our celebration involves breaking bread together, let us add a three percent surcharge to our *simcha*, and let the funds thus raised be earmarked to feed the hungry. Specifically, let us prevail on the caterers of our community to pass on to all who come to them the information that the Jewish community now urges this action on us all; let the caterers add this voluntary tax-deductible surcharge to their invoice; and let them be the agents of its transmission to a new council that will allocate the dollars thus raised.

Will people agree to participate? Yes, in numbers that will grow as time goes on, as the tradition becomes established. Imagine an "affair" — a wedding, a bar mitzva party — that costs say, \$4,000; we are talking about a voluntary surcharge of \$120. On \$10,000 — \$300. The sums are scarcely overwhelming.

Can the amount raised make a difference? One source estimates that the American Jewish community in the aggregate, spends — gulp — \$400 million a year on catered functions. Three percent would mean \$12 million; if just half the potential amount were actually raised, \$6 million. Is that a significant sum in the war against hunger? The budget of Oxfam America, one of the most effective agencies in the worldwide battle to defeat hunger, is between \$5 and \$6 million.

If the fact that is required of us, the fact that is, as Isaiah has put it, "favorable" in the sight of God is, "to share your bread with the hungry and to take the wretched poor into your home," *al achat kanah v'kanah* — how much more so still — must that be so of the feasts we observe."

## REPRESENTATION

As the newly elected officials of the various student councils begin to plan for next year, we ask them to rethink the conception of strong leadership. Coordinating events is certainly an important function of the councils, but *representation* must be the basis for any successful student government.

YCSG has done much to improve the quality of campus life over the past two years, but do students influence administration policy more than before? SOY ran ex-

tremely successful sales and *chagigot* this year, but have key MYP issues been properly addressed? IBCSC and JSSC have begun organizing activities, but do they truly represent their student body?

Our elected officials must act with boldness — and tact — to advance the concerns of the students that elected them. As decisions about priorities are made, we hope representation will be granted its proper importance.

# Letters

## Shoot the Dinosaurs

In your issue, Larry Yudelson argued from a *possuk* in *Tehillim* that the biblical chapters on creation can be read allegorically. While I do not deny the possibility of Mr. Yudelson being correct, I think it important to point out the difficulties with his suggestion in particular and non-literal interpretation in general.

The halachic problem with an allegorical creation is of course Shabbat. We keep the seventh day each week as the Sabbath because "during the six weekdays God made heaven and earth, but on the seventh, He ceased working and withdrew to the spiritual." While this is by no means a compelling objection, as the already highly symbolic Shabbat can no doubt be extended one more metaphorical level, I personally find it difficult to believe that Jews must stop working at a specific moment Friday night because... because what? If we are remembering an actual six-day creation, I understand that we cease laboring because God at some time halted dynamic creation, stopped converting *ayin* into *yesh* and clods of earth into man. But evolution is a never-ending, continuous process; there is no real difference between the evolution of apes with fur to men without that supposedly occurred millions of years ago, and that of penicillin-susceptible bacteria into penicillin-resistant strains that occurs even today! And how does a human soul evolve?

There is also a textual difficulty with Mr. Yudelson's suggestion: the amount of detail provided in the biblical account of creation. Is it necessary to state that God created the "great sea monsters" if all we're trying to

do here is explain evolution simply to people who have never seen a sea monster?

But the question that bothers me most is the general one; where do we stop? If creation is allegorical, then presumably Adam and Eve are too, along with the entire Garden of Eden. Even more importantly, we may lose *Avraham*, *Yitzchok* and *Yaakov* and destroy the whole concept of *klal yisroel!* After all, the first Rashi in Chumash equates the historicity of creation with that of Avraham's war against the five kings. Perhaps we should even join modern historians and posthumously kill off Moshe Rabbeinu *alav HaShalom?*

Still, we must deal with Mr. Yudelson's *possuk* from *tehillim*. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork." How, he asks, can they do so if they lie to us and support false scientific theories?

Upon reflection, it becomes clear that the heavens' declaration does not depend on their offering totally reliable scientific data: after all, anyone can see, and until a few hundred years ago did see, that the Earth is flat. Their present stability and regularity, though, do proclaim his handiwork. Even more basically we must remember that the *possuk* does not say that the behavior of the heavens does anything; it says merely that the heavens themselves do. Scientists can postulate a big bang to explain how the present order of the universe came about; they will never be able to tell us where the ingredients for that explosion came from. The very existence of heavens and firmament is the greatest possible declaration of God's glory.

Robert Klapper

# HAMEVASER

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# New Board Chosen

By Daniel Feit

With the graduation of the senior members of its 1984-85 Governing Board, *Hamevaser* has been restaffed with a large and exciting group. Yossi Prager, Feature Editor in 1984-85, was selected as the 1985-86 Editor-in-Chief, replacing Daniel Lehmann. A prolific writer and a Y.P. student, Yossi devotes his spare time to his biology major.

Daniel Feit will be *Hamevaser's* new Senior Editor, assuming the position held this past year by Larry Yudelson. Daniel, a YC senior, majors in English and Political Science.

Aviva Ganchrow has been named Associate Editor. She is a senior, majoring in Psychology. Aviva served on the 1984-85 Governing Board as Contributing Editor.

Gershon Kaplan has been appointed *Hamevaser's* new Executive Editor. Gershon, a pre-med major, is presently enrolled in a combined program with BRGS and anticipates receiving a Masters degree in Bible.

Elihu Siegman will be *Hamevaser's* Literary Editor, a new position on the Governing Board. A senior, Eli majors in English.

The new Managing Editor of *Hamevaser* will be Mordechai Cohen. Mordechai, a YC

senior, majors in philosophy.

*Hamevaser's* new Feature Editors are Yehuda Susman, a junior majoring in computer science and philosophy, as well as an IDF veteran, and Barry Herzog, a junior majoring in English.

Joah Kaszovitz, a pre-Engineering major, Adam Perziger, a Political Science and Jewish History major, and Danny Mann, a philosophy major, will serve *Hamevaser* as Coordinating Editors.

Chosen as *Hamevaser's* new Contributing Editors are Yossi Huttler, a pre-med and History major, Shoshana Jedwab, an SCW senior majoring in Jewish History, and Ron Ziegler, presently Editor-in-Chief of *MTA's Academy News*. Yossi served on *Hamevaser's* Technical Board in 1984-85 and will thus provide valuable experience. Shoshana's selection marks the first time *Hamevaser's* Governing Board will contain two SCW students. It is anticipated that these additions will spark increased participation from Stern.

Many different viewpoints are represented on the Board and this diversity should enable *Hamevaser* to continue presenting issues in an open and intellectually honest fashion.

Larry Yudelson responds:

From the standpoint of halacha, we stop working Friday night because God commanded so. Knowledge of *taamei hamitzvot* may be enlightening and perhaps even crucial to total fulfillment of the mitzva; they do not affect the *din*. Is the fact that God spent one hundred and forty-four hours creating the world reason to kill a Jew who writes two letters Friday night?

I think Mr. Klapper misunderstood my proposal. It was not that Bereshit be viewed as "Physics for Prophets," an allegorical attempt to explain evolution. It is not meant to teach science at all. Its purpose is purely religious, a polemic against the results of man-made theories (be they by Enuma Elish or by Darwin). It is the basis for a proper understanding of the nature of the world, not to understand the world of nature. The details, which are not sufficient for historical or scientific completeness, have a propaganda purpose. Why state that God created sea-monsters (which we have never seen either!) rather than butterflies or nucleic acids? Cassuto suggests the purpose is to rebut the Canaanite theories of creation, in which the

*taninim* played a prominent role.

Most Jewish philosophers (Maimonides, the Ramban, the Kabbalists) did not feel bound to understand creation in accordance with the literal meaning of *Bereshit*. This did not lead them to discard Avraham. Additionally, the overwhelming physical evidence for the age of the universe is of a far different order than the fragmentary remains of ancient Near-East cultures.

I used the *possuk* from *Tehillim* to establish the validity of the scientific endeavor as a means of understanding God's creation, and hence equate scientific knowledge as being a divinely-originated statement. This is the position of the Maharal, among many others. (See the Torah U Mada Reader).

In the end, the choice is between two conceptions of God. One postulates God having written the account of creation to teach history, and creating false heavens to deceive us; the other sees the history of creation as being barely dealt with by the Torah, and the heavens as the creations of and the path of the God of truth. It is the latter which seems to me most in consonance with traditional Jewish thought.

## By Mordechai Cohen

The first section of the Book of *Vayikra* deals with the details of the *korbanot*. Although our acceptance of God's laws can never be contingent upon our understanding, Jewish thinkers throughout the ages have pondered the meaning and particular value of the sacrifices. In our day, this endeavor is more difficult because we have been removed from the practice of the sacrificial rites for almost two thousand years and therefore cannot rely upon our experience for insights into their meaning. On the other hand, since God has recently helped us repossess the Land of Israel and the Temple Mount, and we are once again able to envision the reinstatement of the *korbanot*, it is of primary importance for us to study the significance of the sacrifices.

In his *Guide to the Perplexed*, the Rambam suggests that God incorporated the institution of sacrifice into the Torah as a concession to the religious mentality of the Children of Israel at the time of the Exodus, rather than because of the intrinsic value of the sacrifices. The Chosen People had emerged from a society in which religion and worship were bound together with the practice of animal sacrifices in one form or another. The nation that stood at Mount Sinai would only be able to relate to the lofty religion of the Torah if that religion would include a sacrificial element, much the same as many people in our day would not be able to conceive of a formal religion without the concepts of faith or prayer.

Thus, according to the Rambam, animal sacrifices would not have been commanded if not for the underdeveloped religious understanding of the Children of Israel at the time of the revelation. However, since God recognized the spiritual situation of the nation, He incorporated the sacrifices into the Torah and, by a circuitous route, would gradually lead the Israelites to a perception of the more essential elements of religion.

By way of example, the Rambam cites another case in which God commands the nation in accordance with their slave mentality rather than prescribing the course of action that would have been appropriate in an ideal situation. When God led the Israelites out of Egypt, He "led them not by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said: 'Lest the people repent when they see war and return to Egypt'" (Exodus 13:17). Realizing that the people were not prepared to meet armed confrontation, God did not lead them to the Land of Canaan by the most direct route. Instead, "God led the people about, by way of the wilderness by the Red Sea," (Exodus 13:18) taking a more circuitous path to accom-

# The Korbanot

modate the Israelites' lack of courage. Only after sojourning in the desert and seeing God's great miracles would the people be able to build up their trust in God to a level that would enable them to conquer the mighty inhabitants of Canaan. Similarly, the Rambam claims, God incorporated the notion of animal sacrifices into the Torah to accommodate the religious understanding of the Children of Israel. By being allowed the use of sacrifices, the nation would be able to grasp the entire Torah which contains other, more fundamental commandments.

This interpretation, however, is quite radical and has not been accepted by most Jewish thinkers. It would indeed seem strange that an aspect of Judaism that is dealt with in such great detail throughout the Torah should have no intrinsic value, but was only "tolerated" by God in order to accommodate the people's mentality. In addition, the Rambam, in his commentary to *Vayikra*, points out that the founders of our religion, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all brought sacrifices as part of their worship to God. Our forefathers, who were radical in their day for rejecting idolatry and embracing monotheism, were certainly not in need of any "concessions" to enable them to accept the true religion. They themselves rejected all the false practices of the society around them and established the fundamentals of Judaism. Therefore, if they used sacrifices as part of their worship of God, they must have seen some intrinsic value in the notion of the *korbanot*.

In addition, based on the Rambam's interpretation, the whole institution of sacrifices would have little meaning for our day or for the future. In contrast to the Israelites who were redeemed from Egypt, we can now relate to a religion without the notion of animal sacrifices, for we have been practicing Judaism for close to two thousand years without the Temple service. Nevertheless, the prophets tell of the rebuilding of the Temple and the reinstatement of the sacrifices and the Rambam himself asserts that we will once again bring *korbanot* in the Messianic Era (see *Hilchot Melachim*, 11:1). However, according to the Rambam's understanding, since the whole institution of the sacrifices has lost its usefulness, their reinstatement will perpetuate a set of meaningless, hollow practices. It is for this reason that many Jewish thinkers preferred to find alternative explanations that would give the sacrifices a more intrinsic value and warrant their incorporation into the everlasting laws of the Torah.

The central theme of the other major interpretations is formulated by Rabbi David Hoffman through his analysis and critique of the Rambam's position. Rabbi Hoffman claims that the Rambam's understanding of the sacrifices is consistent with his general outlook on Judaism. Since man's soul is his eternal, godly element, Maimonides, in his *Guide to the Perplexed* (III, 27), claims that the commandments that relate to the soul and mind are of primary importance in comparison to those commandments associated with man's transitory, physical being. Thus, the commandments that are performed through actions, merely serve to enable us to fulfill such commandments as faith in God and the love of God, which relate to our soul and mind. According to the Rambam's approach, it is understandable that prayer, which relates to man's soul, should be considered a superior form of worship than the sacrifice. Thus, Maimonides was forced to explain that the Torah's stress upon sacrifices rather than prayer as the main form of worship must have been a concession to the primitive religious mentality of a people who could only relate to a religion that had a physical form of worship.

The Rambam's general approach to Judaism, however, is not accepted by most Jewish thinkers. A scan of the Torah reveals that the vast majority of its 613 commandments are *mitzvot ma'asiot*, commandments that deal with actions, which would seem to indicate that Judaism centers around actions and practices rather than thought and feelings. Although in some senses man's soul and mind, which are the essence of his *zelem Elokim* (image of God), have a greater significance than his body, man is nevertheless a physical being who can best relate to a tangible religion.

In a similar vein, the Talmud (*Shabbat*, 88b-89a) relates that Moses encountered opposition when he ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. The angels wished to keep the Torah among themselves in the heavens, as they felt that the imperfect human race was unworthy of receiving such a precious gift. Moses replied to their complaint, saying:

What is written in the Torah? . . . 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; you do perform work, that you need to rest? . . . 'Thou shalt not take the name of . . . God in vain [by swearing falsely];' are there any business dealings among you [that

would require you to take oaths?]

. . . 'Thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal;' is there jealousy among you; is the *yetzer hara* among you?

This aggadic statement reflects the notion that the Torah responds to the needs and nature of humans as physical beings rather than as ideal, angelic souls.

Although man's intentions and beliefs are of great importance, Judaism prescribes practical commandments because actions have the impact required to build up our beliefs and feelings toward God. For example, rather than just telling us to believe that God is the creator of the world, the Torah commands that the Jew keep the laws of *Shabbat*. Only through specific ceremonies and prohibitions will we be properly educated in this fundamental belief of our religion. Similarly, rather than merely thinking of the Exodus, we act out an entire *sefer* and celebrate *Pesach* in order to come as close as possible to experiencing the redemption from Egypt.

Analogously, the sacrificial rites may have been incorporated into our religion to give our worship of God a concrete form. When a person enters the Temple, the awe and grandeur of the Divine *Shechina* are imposed upon him. This feeling of proximity to God will heighten the religious sentiments of the worshipper. If a Jew is bringing a sin offering, the notion of coming to God's House and the sacrifice of an animal, which may represent the sinner himself, will enhance his feelings of repentance and subsequent forgiveness. To a Jew who comes with a thank offering, the atmosphere of the Temple will strengthen his feelings of dependence upon his Maker and the sacrificial rites will give him an opportunity to tangibly express his feelings of gratitude towards God.

In our day, prayer has replaced the *korbanot* as Judaism's central form of worship. However, Rabbi David Hoffman points out that prayer, which is *avodah shebalev*, is a weaker form of the classic type of *avodah* (worship), *avodah shebema'aseh*, or the sacrificial rites. Although *avodah shebalev* can potentially elevate man to great heights, the Torah, being consistent with the notion of *mitzvot ma'asiot*, prescribed *avodah shebema'aseh* in the form of animal sacrifices; the philosophy of the Torah would indicate that man can become closest to his Maker through practices and concrete actions. It is therefore our hope and prayer that the Temple will soon be rebuilt so that the sacrifices will once again assume a central role in our worship of God.

## Revel Offerings

By Gershon Kaplan

The upcoming year at Bernard Revel Graduate School looks to be an exciting one. This summer, four stimulating courses are being offered. The first, "Biblical Stories as Reflected in the Aggadic Midrashim," will be given in the morning by Dr. Avigdor Shinan, a professor of Religious Studies at Hebrew University. The course will examine stories about Moshe Rabbeinu and the Avot in Tannaic and Amoraic literature, and contrast them to similar stories in contemporary texts such as the Dead Sea scrolls and the works of Josephus. Dr. Shinan, a visiting professor at Yale University this past year, is considered an expert on this topic and an excellent instructor besides.

Revel's own Professor David Berger will be teaching "From Restoration to Ecumenicism: Jewish-Christian Relations in the Modern World." This course, also being given in the morning, will analyze the interaction between Jews and Christians from

the age of expulsions until the present.

Two courses concerning *Torah She'b'al Peh* are being offered in the evening. "Development of Torah Learning in Spain in the Eleventh Century" deals with the scholars of medieval Spain, the instructor, Shraga Abramson from Hebrew University, has been described as a "professor's professor," having taught many of the current professors in Revel. "Halacha in Conflict and Compromise" examines the interrelationship of Halacha with *aggadah*, *minhag*, and *Kabbalah*. Prof. Daniel Sperber, a Talmid *Chocam* and vegetarian with a degree in Classics from Oxford, will teach this course; he is a prolific author with seven books and close to two hundred articles to his credit.

Next year's schedule also provides some new faces, as well as a fascinating new course. Four Jewish History professors — Drs. Lyod Gardner, Lucjeh Dobroszicki, and Benjamin Gampel will each teach a course, each in his area of specialization. Dr. Katz has said that he particularly enjoys teaching at Y.U. because the solid background of the students provides a strong foundation upon which to build.

A new and unusual course, "Studying

## NEWS FLASH

Rabbi Michael Rosenzweig has been appointed to the faculty of the Mazer Yeshiva Program of RIETS beginning the fall term of 1985.

Also starting this fall will be the contemporary Halacha and *Halacha L'Maaseh* components of the new four year Smicha Program.

This year's Hamevaser made possible by grants from the Student Organization of Yeshiva and the Rabbinic Alumni of RIETS.

Religious Anti-Zionism" will be given in the spring by Dr. Menachem Friedman, Professor of Sociology and History at Bar-Ilan University. He did a study based on a collection of well over 10,000 wall posters gleaned from the walls of Me'ah Shearim and interviewed the authors, sympathizers and opponents of the posters. The publication of his book on the subject, *Cherra Ve'Ha'at*, led to an unprecedented 2-day conference devoted exclusively to his work.

Grand Opening of

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# A Long and Winding Road

## Last Thoughts on Torah uChochma

By Nati Helfgot

It is almost graduation and thus time for a reflective piece on Y.U. and what it represents before the transformation of the undergraduate into a graduate. The beginning and end point of Y.U. is *Torah uMada*. We fight about it, we joke about it, we use it and abuse it. I would like to attempt another try at defining it (fully aware that this is my own definition).

To my mind *Torah uMada* is not so much a question of studies, as an attitude with which we approach life. It is a philosophy that is trying to develop committed *Bnei Torah* who can approach life with the sensitivity and the sophistication needed to deal with the intellectual and moral challenges of the modern era. There are those who view the enterprise of learning *Torah* or *L'havdil* any subject as a simple question of input or output. How many units of knowledge did I gain per minute spent? However, as I wrote last year, a Yeshiva, and certainly this Yeshiva is more than just a place where one learns x amount of hours in *chavrusa* and y amount in *shuir*. A Yeshiva is a place where one grows intellectually, morally and religiously. The purpose of the Yeshiva is not simply to stuff one with facts but to develop spiritual and religious personalities of the highest order, the *Ben Torah* in the full sense of the term.

Specifically our Yeshiva was created in the spirit of Rav Kook who wanted to develop "Men of great spirit". We study secular studies not only because it can help us understand a *Tosafot* in *Erubin*. If that were the case we should only study the sciences as some have suggested. Rather we also study fields that help sensitize us to the human condition in all its various forms. It is a certain type of *ben Torah* that we are trying to develop. Thus the *Torah uMada* concept is not just limited to the three years of undergraduate courses that one takes at Y.U. *Torah uMada* is an attitude toward life and this expresses itself and should express itself in the types of Rabbis and professionals that we produce.

This approach also affects our perception of what we do day to day. For too many of us schizophrenia is the accepted norm. We learn in the morning, take courses in the afternoon and that is it. We never seem to see any overall unifying purpose in our stay here. We must be wary of this phenomenon and fight against it. Without blurring the distinctions between *kodesh* and *chol* we still have an opportunity to develop a unified *personality* and world view. The primary purpose of our stay at Yeshiva is to develop as committed and sincere *Avdai Hashem*. We must ask ourselves if in that context do we

By Joel Hirach

In a final statement of what may be considered a relatively short career at Yeshiva, two important topics come to mind. These two topics are KIRUV and the American Jew. For those who are unaware, KIRUV is a fairly new organization sponsored by the Rabbinical Council of America and the Division of Communal Services of YU. It consists of a small group of students largely from YC and Stern along with a good number from Barnard, who reach out to other college campuses and attempt to bolster pre-existing Jewish student organizations. The goals of the group are rather modest: to stir up and excite some measure of intellectual curiosity, feeling, and identity for Judaism in the student who would seek out such things. For indeed, the programs KIRUV runs invariably only interest those who have

properly understand the tasks we take upon ourselves. We must learn with an awareness not only of the text in front of us. Rather we must be cognizant at some level of the telos and goals of Halacha. We must not only learn thirty or sixty blatt a year but rather also measure our progress in *darchei halimud*. Secondly, are we developing in our *havanat* and *yediar Torah* in an orderly and intelligent fashion or are we simply involved in learning *zear poh zear sham*? In a similar fashion we must ask ourselves what do we gain out of our secular studies. I have friends who took literature courses and told me they found it a waste of time. I asked them, did you do the reading? "No." did you do the assignments? "No." Such people will never get a thing out of college. If one sits in a literature class to gain facts and more facts he will never be happy. A good literature class should broaden one's knowledge of texts. However more importantly it should sensitize one to reading a text, to human problems, to develop writing skills and to spurring the imagination's creativity. One who is just looking for an easy mark will always feel as if his net time was wasted.

As I argued above, *Torah uMada* is more than the study of secular studies. It is basically an attitude towards life and the world. It is an attitude that contrasts with those who favor a siege mentality. It argues that one can gain insights, wisdom etc. from the outside

popular book in the Orthodox community is called *Gateway To Happiness*. The Rav shitta in his article *Sacred and Profane* points to the dangers of such an approach and presents a vastly different notion of religious experience. Because of the significance of the ideas expounded there I would like to present an extended quote from that article. The Rav writes:

"The religious experience however, is beyond granting man a hedonic status or spiritual complacency. To the contrary the religious experience is fraught with pitfalls and continual challenge. God, if man finds Him, does not relieve the God-seeker of his imperatives but imposes new ones. Religion enriches life, gives it depth and multi-dimensional visions, but does not always grant man the comfort and complacency that nearly always spell superficiality and shallowness. The equation of a happy and concomitantly profound life is inadequate... The grandeur of religion lies in its mysterious tremendum, its magnitude, and its ultimate incomprehensibility

... It is an empirical fact that *Kedusha* elevates man, not by vouchsafing him harmony and synthesis, balance and proportionate thinking, but by revealing to him the non-rationality and insolubility of existence. *Kedusha* is not a paradise but a paradox."

## "For too many of us, schizophrenia is the accepted norm"

and integrate them, thereby helping develop one's religious and spiritual sensitivities. It means one approaches a problem without knee jerk reactions but with the wisdom of the "men of the great spirit." *Anashim Baal Shiur Komah* to use the Hebrew phrase. The goal is to produce *Bnei Torah* with *Gadlut Hanefesh*. In this respect we are striving to be heirs to such spiritual giants as the Ramchal, Kotzker Rebbe, and Rav Yisrael Salanter among others.

This religious philosophy is not an easy one. It is fraught with challenges, dichotomies and requires of the individual serious and critical thinking in all his endeavors. *Torah uMada* as R. Lamm has written, is not for those seeking spiritual nirvana. In fact this is not only a quality of this philosophy but to a great extent of *Yahadut* in general. Many people view religion as a sort of panacea for the resolution of all intellectual and moral problems. Indeed one

(In this context the reader is urged to read or reread the long footnote at the beginning of *Ish Hahalacha* which may be viewed as an introduction to the Rav's religious philosophy in general.)

To my mind *Torah uMada* is an approach in the spirit of this *Hashkafa*. It recognizes the complexity of the religious quest especially in the context of modern society. It is this basic quality of our institution that causes many here to shy away from identifying with *Torah V'chochma* in a meaningful fashion. People want simple answers and easy solutions. I think this is particularly a problem with some of those returning from learning for a year or two in Israel (and I remember myself with similar attitudes on my return). There is a certain cock-sureness about what is right and what is wrong. There are no gray areas and subtleties to confront. They have just experienced an unbelievable year or two and have worked out their

## Kiruv and the American Jew

a modicum of comitment or interest in such arcane topics as religion and culture.

My personal experience in KIRUV this past year was fairly extensive. Accordingly, I can tell you that topics such as religion and culture are regarded as arcane, dull subjects with very little pragmatic use. At any given program KIRUV operates or for that matter any event that an indigenous Jewish organization runs, at most five percent of the Jewish population on campus will show interest by attending the program. Moreover, it appears as if nothing will attract the balance to come to any event under the rubric of a "Jewish" activity. First hand knowledge indicates that even a belly-dancer sponsored by the Jewish group at an engineering school

with over an 85% male student body can muster only twenty to thirty people out of two hundred Jewish students. KIRUV, to be sure, does not entertain any idea of running such programs but even if it would, the gains would be negligible. What is it that leaves students with no interest whatsoever in social "Judaism," let alone Judaism itself? Many might argue that the answer lies in the plague of apathy which has stricken the student population across the country. That argument does contain some kernel of truth but clearly the problem runs much deeper.

Arnold Eisen, formerly a professor of religion at Columbia University, now interestingly enough living in Israel, two years ago published a study in Jewish religious

*hashkafat olam* and direction. Everything was so black and white when one was in the warm and insulated atmosphere of Yeshiva in Israel. However the world and spiritual challenges and opportunities are more complex than is articulated in the average *musarrach* *schmooze*. Slowly one is confronted with priorities of values, choices and crucial spiritual and moral issues that require both intelligence and sensitivity. Many would like simple answers to everything but this is not the way of the men of the great spirit. A beautiful passage from the Victorian essayist, John Ruskin comes to mind: "And therefore, while in all things that we see or do we are to desire perfection, and strive for it, we are nevertheless not to set the meaner thing, in its narrow accomplishment, above the nobler thing in its mighty progress; not to esteem smooth minuteness above shattered majesty... not to lower the level of our aim, that we may surely enjoy the complacency of success."

This approach is clearly not for everyone and each person must seriously consider if he is developing properly as a *Ben Torah*, as a religio-moral personality to the fullest. In this context more students should be encouraged to stretch their college careers over a five year span. This would enhance one's opportunities to fully devote his efforts to his primary goal of developing into a *Talmid Chacham*. One would get more from his learning and college work as well if some of the time pressures were alleviated.

Finally, I feel that a point must be made in response to statements made over the years by those opposed to the ideas expressed above. Let us keep the debate in the proper realm and not confuse issues. To attack *Torah uMada* by saying it believes in beer parties in the dorm and car smashes, is unfair to say the least. It is easy to set up such straw men and conveniently knock them down. However, this is in effect a skirting of the basic issues. Those who truly believe in *Torah uMada* may be as opposed to such activities as others. *Torah uMada* never meant and should never mean a lessening of commitment to Halacha and its norms. Your dispute is not with these groups but rather with a *Gadol* and *Talmidei Chachamim* here and in other Yeshivot. As I said above *Torah uMada* is fundamentally an attitude and not a question of minutes or seconds. *Torah uMada* is the boys who learn at night into the late hours, give of themselves in *kiruv* and other worthwhile endeavors. *Torah uMada* is the *Semicha* and *kollel* students who espouse this attitude in their approach to life. Your disagreement is not with the boy who sits in front of the T.V. all day. Rather it with the boy who learns till late and then goes to his room to read Kierkegaard, delves into the intricacies of quantum mechanics or is inspired by the beautiful lyrics of a Tenyson. *Torah uMada* is the boy who may be a *masmid* but would also like to seriously study *Tanach*, *Machshava*, Jewish History, and Jewish Literature.

Therefore, let us keep the issues in proper perspective — remembering our common goal of working *l'shem Shamayim* for Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.

ideology, entitled *The Chosen People in America* (Indiana University Press). The book focuses on the evolution and development of Jewish religious thought in United States from 1935 to 1980 through the prism of the central idea, *am nivchar* or the chosen people. Eisen states the dilemma integral to his discussion succinctly:

"America was different," its Jews would soon proclaim, because, for the first time really, they were not.

In America, Jews were not ghettoized or persecuted; they were given, for the most part, equal opportunity and seized upon it with great success. The doors of assimilation opened wide and Jews rushed through them not merely acculturating but assimilating. Ideologies (not theologues as Eisen aptly points out) such as Kaplan's

# PRIESTHOOD AT SINAI

By Joel Finkelstein

At the time of the revelation at Sinai, Moses sent the "naarei Bnei Yisrael," literally, "the youths of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings, and they brought peace offerings." This verse grates on our halachic sensibilities. How could mere children, of non-priestly descent, have offered sacrifices? If priesthood was not required in this instance, what were the grounds for this violation of priesthood? If priesthood had not as yet been established, what were the criteria for sacrificing at this historic moment?

The challenge for a solution is so compelling that the Talmud (Megillah, 9a) claims that this is one of the instances in which the seventy authors of the original Septuagint simultaneously interpreted "youths" as "men of distinction". As a result of this translation, an alternate text of the Torah developed with this translation in it. They once found such a Torah in the Temple (Yerushalmi, Taanit, 4:2). By translating this way, they silenced the skeptic who could charge that Moses sent the least distinguished of people to sacrifice (Rashi, Meg. ibid). But if that is the polemical answer, what is the real answer? Furthermore, what were the specific criteria for being a "man of distinction" and hence, a priest?

The most traditional approach to this is that the *bechorim*, the firstborn males, were the "naarei Bnei Yisrael," Isaac, and Jacob (after buying the birthright), all firstborn, held the exclusive right to sacrifice during their generations. In accordance with this tradition, the firstborn were also chosen by Moses to serve as priests.

According to this approach, the Levites replaced the *bechorim* as priests after the *bechorim* abused their right to sacrifice by sacrificing in front of the *egel*, the golden calf. The source for this exchange of religious duties, they claim, is Numbers (3:41) in which the firstborn are exchanged for the Levites.

This *midrash*, possibly representative of an early oral tradition, formulates the original notion of priesthood as both elitist and oligarchic and yet democratic. It is democratic in that, unlike Aharonic priesthood, the priests emanate from the rank and file of all the tribes. Yet it is oligarchic and elitist in that not everyone could be a priest, and in that the *bechorim* are the aristocracy. Primogeniture was an important status in the ancient Near East as is evident from all of the stories concerning Esau and Jacob and Joseph and his brothers. The firstborn were not mere representatives of the people, who attained their holiness by being saved from the plague of the firstborn. These were people of high stature whose importance can be seen from God's selection to smite the *bechorim* of Egypt in particular as the ultimate revenge.

The entire *bechorim* theory, however, is

problematic. Firstly, as the Rambam (24:5) asks, what are the grounds to interpret "naarei" as the firstborn? Secondly, the *midrash* claims that the exchange of the *bechorim* for the Levites in Numbers, is a source for the fact that the *bechorim* once held the right to sacrifice. If this was the case, the *bechorim* should have been exchanged with the priest. Only the priests can sacrifice, not the Levites, the Temple servants. Rather, the exchange was a convenient way of bestowing sanctity on the Levites. The firstborn, it could be claimed, were no more priestly than the firstborn animals which were also exchanged for the Levites' animals. (See Haamek Davar, Num., 3:41.)

Alternate interpretations abound. One approach is that the "naarei Bnei Yisrael" are indeed merely children of non-Aharonic descent. There may have been one of two causes for the violation of Aharonic priesthood. It could either have been a one time occurrence or a *pre-egel* form of priesthood.

One could say that Aharon was long destined for priesthood (eg. Rashi, Ex. 4:14) and there was never any intention to create an alternate mode of priesthood. On this occasion, however, it was fitting for members of all tribes to participate. This too could be for one of two reasons.

According to Beit Hillel (Chagigah, 6a), one of the burnt offerings at Sinai was the initiator of the daily burnt offering, the *Korban Hatamid*. The *Tamid* is the collective sacrifice of the entire nation. The initiation of this sacrifice could best be accomplished, not through mere representative priests, but through the sacrificing of each and every Israelite. The masses were best represented by the children, the common denominator of the nation. They were not older nor greater than anyone they represented. That was the secret of "naarei Bnei Yisrael" which the 70 Rabbis of the Septuagint withheld.

The same explanation could be given if some of the additional burnt offerings they brought were the sacrifices for national conversation (*Erchin*, 9a; *Ramban*, *Isurei Biah*, 13:3), which these children brought on behalf of every Israelite individually. (This "conversion" represented their acceptance of the Torah and their resultant responsibilities.)

The portion in the Torah following the Decalogue commands the building of an earthen altar (Ex.20:21). This poses a great difficulty since the altars in the *mishkan*, the Tabernacle, were all metal. The *Rabbis* have grappled with this (*Mechilta*, Jethro, portion 11), but according to our interpretation, the altar described there was merely a one time altar on which the *naarim* sacrificed. (See Ibn Ezra, Ex. ibid.)

The other approach to popular priesthood represents more of a philosophy than a one time happening. The original plan prescribed priesthood as a function of each citizen, irrespective of familial or tribal standing.

Popular priesthood is a less organized plan for the implementation of religious communal rites than Aharonic priesthood. The religious responsibilities could easily undergo the "bystander effect" or the diffusion of responsibility; each person might say, "let the other Israelite do the work." Despite its organizational failings, though, popular priesthood is more compatible with the concept of tribal equality.

Tribal equality comes to full bloom in Ezekiel's equal allotment of land to each tribe, in his prophesies of Israel (47:14). One of the most beautiful statements of spiritual equality is the Rambam's remark at the conclusion of his Book of Seeds, *Zeraim*, "And not the tribe of Levi alone, but any man from all those who walk the earth, whose spirit lifts him . . . to service and worship God . . . he is sanctified as the holiest of holies."

The Rambam's source might be the statement in tractate *Kalah* (Heiger, p.149), that "anyone who turns himself away from the sin and does not commit it, even if he is an Israelite (non-priest), is fit to sacrifice burnt offerings on the altar as a high priest." It cites the "naarei Bnei Yisrael" as a proof. (The Rambam learns the verse similarly (Ex. 24:5).)

But the operation of tribal equality in a Utopian prophecy, or in the instance of a pure saint as at Sinai or anytime, does not imply that popular priesthood was proposed as a real plan for this world, and for true *naarim*, children.

It would have been heretical to have proposed that God's original plan was for a nation composed entirely of priests, had the *Mechilta* not said it first.

God tells the nation at Sinai, "*Vaatem itheu le namlecheth Cohanim vegoy kadosh*" "And you shall be unto me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation" (19:6). The *Mechilta*, after citing another opinion, comments on this verse, "From this the Sages come to say, 'All of Israel were worthy to have partaken of the holy sacrifices, until they made the *egel*, the golden calf. Once they made the *egel*, it (presumably, priesthood) was taken from them and given to the *cohanim*, the priests'."

"All of Israel" has been interpreted as referring to the *bechorim* who are representative of all of Israel. But, clearly, that interpretation is reading the *bechorim* theory into this *Mechilta*. Whereas *Bamidbar Rabah* transfers the priesthood from the *bechorim* to the Levites, the *Mechilta* is transferring the priesthood from "all of Israel" to the *cohanim*. This, as we said before, is a more logical exchange.

At Sinai, the Israelites entered together into one covenant of national priesthood. Each person could bring his own sacrifice in his own backyard, earthen altar. This was the meaning of the post Decalogue chapter on the altar. Unlike the Ibn Ezra, who claimed

that this referred to a one time altar at Sinai, this was actually referring to the *banah*, the private altar, on which one could always sacrifice, "In any place in which I shall mention My Name" (Ex. 20:21), when the *banot* were allowed (see *mishna*, *Zebachim*, 14:4-8). That remained constant even after the *egel*. The plan which was foiled by the *egel*, was that the common Israelite would be able to sacrifice as a priest, even in the central place of worship, even communal offerings. Only at Sinai did the child sacrifice the communal *Tamid*, for the entire nation.

The lack of an exclusive *cohanic* group explains why the recipient of the redemption money for the firstborn is not specified (Ex., 23:19). According to this plan of popular priesthood, maybe the priests would not receive the money nor the fruits. Since they themselves were offering these gifts, they could not partake of them. A similar law is found with regard to the flour offering, the *mincha*, of the *cohen*, that it must be totally consumed and not eaten by the priest himself (Lev. 6:16). (There is a verse referring to *cohanim* before the *egel* (Ex., 19:22) but the *Rashbam*, the *Hizkuni*, R. Abraham son of the *Rambam*, and others have already interpreted it as referring to non-Aharonic, non-*bechorim* people; the elite among the elite.)

Only after the *egel*, in front of which these Israelite priests sacrificed, was the entire design for popular priesthood crushed. Aharon and his children replaced the nation. The twelve tribes were no longer priests but mere stones on the shoulders of the high priest (*Aggadta Bereishit*, 79:2).

The people wanted to build the house of God on their own. "Naase, 'we will act,' they repeated over and over, but instead 'vayasa,' the Torah stresses repeatedly that Moses alone erected the *mishkan*. Instead of the 'youths,' representatives of the masses, playing a key at the sacrificial level, the "chacham lev," the elite, crafty, insightful Israelites dominated the building of the *mishkan*, the *cohanim* took over the right to sacrifice.

As the *Rambam* says, the priesthood, in a broader sense, is still attainable for every man. But the Divine plan for a nation of priests, each going up on the ramp of the altar, each a high priest, was spoiled by serving as priests for the *egel*, a corruption of their magnanimous role.

Of course, as Ezekiel promises, Aharonic priesthood will return in the end of days (44:15). But the broader concept of a priestly kingdom can be attained by "teaching the entire race of man to recite the name of God and to worship him together" (*Seforno*, Ex. 19:6). This priestly function will one day be restored to all of Israel, as the *Seforno*, the *Baal Hatrumim*, and others remind us of *Isaiah's* prophecies: "And you shall be called the priests of God" (61:6), and "For from Zion shall go forth Torah and word of God from Jerusalem" (2:4).

Reconstructionism grew up in an effort to capture the imagination of the Americanized Jew. Many of these ideologies reflected the pressures of the people's unwillingness to believe in a personal God and their demands to maintain those religious symbols which gave them some semblance of meaning and security.

Even more relevant are the effects of the greater society on the American Jewish community. As secularization increased in America, so it did amongst the Jews. Attitudes in the United States mirror certain basic assumptions about life and one's approach to it, affected by the secularization. An optimistic, superficial, materialistic notion of the meanings of life pervade. This trend has become quite apparent in the eighties with the advent of Reaganism and

the rosy, simplistic imagery recalled from America's Puritan roots. Careerism and the yuppie symbolize the period. These feelings penetrate the campuses in a very real way. A visit to the University of Georgia for KIRUV this winter uncovered the fact that the student body had voted out their own student government. Students simply have other things on their minds. No longer do guitarists play on the steps of its library as in the sixties and seventies. A high degree of homogeneity manifests itself throughout schools like Georgia and Duke (another campus visited by KIRUV) especially in the middle-class, well groomed, stylish dress of their students. A lack of depth glares at the observer of the scene. Thus, the absence of "chosenness" and societal influences has had a marked effect on the American Jews

whether student or non-student. He lacks the *roch* or substance, the depth, the search of some kind for inner meaning. He lacks the experience upon which to base his religious symbols. As Eisen indicates, it is telling that the three leading Jewish thinkers of our century, Rabbi Soloveitchik, Martin Buber, and A.J. Heschel came from Eastern Europe. Our country has yet to produce an outstanding thinker and when it does he will undoubtedly emerge from a background similar to that of Europe rather than a purely American experience.

The disinterest of the average American Jewish student I attribute largely to these pervasive attitudes, experiences, and values. These questions remain: how to eradicate the indifference or can it be eradicated? Has the proverbial (NCSY) "flame" for the majority

of Jews burnt out or perhaps sparks are still to be found? At times I become a skeptic, fed by frustration. Despite the limited resources, the need to provide fuel to those whose flames are still burning even so slightly, perpetuates the obligation to reach out. KIRUV is a very good medium to meet that obligation especially with peers and equals who desire it. Original programming, honest and straight-forward thinking, and sincere preparation can and does have an effect in filling a sometimes total void for the college student. Alas, the bars of Ray Charles' "America, America" ring heavily in my ears and from Jewish students I hear only echoes of emptiness and the sound of silence. It is time for that to change even in the smallest way, in whatever manner possible.

## Revolutionary Women in Palestine

By Judy Rubinstein

Ardent Zionists, Stern women, Yeshiva faculty, and various combinations thereof attended the fourth in a series of five Yeshiva Interdisciplinary Discussions on Monday night, May thirteenth at Stern College. The speaker, Professor Anita Shapira of Tel Aviv University who occupies the Miller Chair of Zionism at Yeshiva, spoke of "The Revolutionary Women in Pre-State Palestine." These women proved to be both politically and socially revolutionary, first making their appearance on Palestine's shores before World War I.

The period of the Second Aliya (1904-1918) saw some 35,000 new Olim enter the country. These were mostly European members of the *Yishuv HaYashan*, religious Jews intent on settling in Eretz Yisrael's four Holy Cities. Not more than a few thousand were secular Zionist pioneers, hoping to remake Jewish society. Who, then, were these women, willing and even anxious to leave home for this new homeland?

These were the women coming of age in the years of the socialist Russian revolution, from the middle/lower classes of the shtetl that supported Hibat Zion and raised families with strong Zionist ideals. Yet the wishes of sons to go to the Holy Land were not supported. For daughters to leave, great independence of spirit and firm resolution was demanded. Their deep motivation came from the inspiration of famous Zionist socialists of the past, who also maintained the ideals of equality and participation for a better Jewish society.

The women persevered and arrived on the blue Mediterranean's shores, only to be assigned second-class roles. They expressed a strong desire to work in the fields, and judging themselves according to men's criteria, they felt that equality meant complete similarity in work routine. Eventually, the women conformed to the notion that some jobs were physically easier for men. This social issue began a trend that would diversify agriculture and percuss economically, leading to vegetable-growing and the raising of livestock.

The men of these early settlements wanted the women to be caretakers, housewives and mothers, modeling their environments after Russian/Ukrainian villages. These *Kvutzot* had the women preparing meals and washing clothes, though even these skills were as new to them as they would have been to the men. Housework was not seen by the women as worthwhile and important to productivity, but rather, as primitive, thankless drudgery. Humiliation was also an unpleasant by-product: The smoky soup they prepared due to limited facilities received sneers that led to abuse. Their communal kitchen symbolized agony, and the fields — off-limits to them — freedom and the realization of their socialist ideals. Yet they never insisted that the men do kitchen work, though time spent on their duties far exceeded that spent by their male counterparts (7 days a week/18 hours a day to the men's 6 days, 12 hours).

Acquiring muscles from strenuous kitchen work, however, was not enough to permit them entry into Hashomer, the defense organization founded in 1908. While they repeatedly protested, their virile husbands wished they had married submissive Bedouin women rather than Jewish girls whose "heads were stuffed with lofty, impudent ideals."

Often, these farm women gave birth, raised and buried children alone, yet were expected to be cheerful when their husbands returned from the watch. Riding a horse and

using a gun still didn't allow them membership, but they did not give up. An infant would often watch his mother work with the cows from his seat in the feeding trough. Women were also excluded from signing the formal document making D'Ganya an official Kibbutz. Yet they were reserved the roles of chief cooks and bottle-washers. By this time though, rather than throw in the towel, they got the men to grab hold and get that "Ivory look" too.

A great step in preserving the self-image and independence of women was the formation of the *Beit hayitadim*. Society finally realized that it, as a whole, was and is responsible for its children and the revolutionary children's houses insured much freedom for their mothers.

But did formation of these houses affect today's Kibbutz movement? Not really, asserted Professor Shapira. There is still a tendency to assign women certain jobs, these jobs being considered a woman's domain. A reluctance on the part of some women to be involved in public life still exists, due to the ridicule they were used to receiving for their non-conformist views. The fanatical insistence by women on copying men's jobs has disappeared, and they've resigned themselves to certain tasks. Again, a (this time quelled) social issue manifested itself in an economic form — as the kitchen was the last to become mechanized on the Kibbutz.

Later, when the Palmach began mobilizing women, a natural acceptance of equality was the norm, due to a quarter-century of education and inculcation of egalitarian ideals on this first generation of sabras.

Professor Shapira concluded that our notions of equality and feminism, however they manifest themselves, are modern: Norms take much longer to change than the ideologues that purport them realize. Often the ideals of one generation become the accepted code of the subsequent generation, but without cooperation from both sexes, changes will not occur.

## We and Thou

By Alan Silverman

The "Me" seventies have dissipated, leaving the shattered single executives and their wealthy psychiatrists to innovate the generation of "We." The "We" celebrities from Bob Dylan and Prince to the Rev. Falwell have wooed us to take a walk with God. Reports are frequently published in testimony to their successful crooning, donning the eighties an age of moral observance and religious servitude. And sure as chicken soup cures, the Jews are jogging after that bandwagon.

The Orthodox community over the past ten years has witnessed and espoused the growth of religious students who attend full time yeshiva programs both here and in Israel. This surge, along with the prosperous *Daat Teshuva* movement has made our community a more intelligent, seeking, and halachic *kahal*. It leads me to wonder, however, if we, in thought as well as in action have grown in our relationship to this world vis-a-vis God's omnipresence. Where does, (as I see) *Daat Yehudit* (Jewish thought/awareness) triumph and secular trail? I question if we have established the motives of our actions as being intertwined in our being *avaday Hashem*, or merely good people.

Jewish households give philanthropic funds, but do they give *tzeddakah*? They flock to the hospitals to do volunteer work, but does their *bikor cholim* ever enter the wards? The *maaseh* is there, but where's the *machshava*? We pride ourselves on being good Samaritans and humanitarians, but are we lauded for being good Jews?

It is innate in our tradition that man, part and parcel to his service to God, must serve fellow man (as is evident from our *Yom Kip-*

*pur kaporah*). The good Jew, as opposed to the good person, views his life through a Torah framework. Benignity is not shown merely because it will help the poor, orphaned, or widowed, but because there is a divine prescription of *gemilut chasadim* and *chesed*.

I was raised like many secular Jews believing that *mitzvot* meant good deeds. Hence, when I visited my sick grandmother, gave my precious Kit-Kat candy money to that rattling, bronze cup, or helped clean the house for the holidays I was doing a good deed, nice boy. I was not of the mind set that I was fulfilling holy commandments, and it is, I fear this mentality that plagues even the most sincere circles of our yeshiva world. The scope of my concern is not narrowed to acts of kindness, but to an attitude, a *weltanschauung* of how we perceive our everyday experiences and actions.

As Jewish society recognizes the individual in the whole, so too does the eighties. Is the Jew, however, so overwhelmed with the concept of "self" that he can't bring himself to say "with God's help," or "be it the will of God" when discussing something he plans to accomplish in the future? When we hear good tidings, or are graced with an additional something, is "boy am I lucky" more appropriate than, "thank God?" Instead of wishing our fellow Jews a good week-end, how about a good *shabbos*? Certainly a Hebrew date on letters to friends can't hurt!

A Torah-aware Jew seeks to find divinity in his world. He structures his merits and successes on a force greater than he, not leaving fate of chance or simple human morality to aid him. A noted authority states it well, "... those values which are anchored to divine principles remain unchanging." Dr. Belkin stated a similar idea when he wrote, "Judaism . . . desired rather to evolve a corpus of practices, a code of religious acts which would establish a mode of religious living."

"We" have made the eighties. In our decade where religious morals and values are the trend, we must look at ourselves not as deed-doers of the decade, but as links to generations of Jews who have for centuries found it "in" to be humanitarian, and benevolent . . . *holech b'druchav*. The challenge we face as we gain mobility in both our Jewish and secular worlds is to create and instill within ourselves a *Daat Yehudit*. In our attempt to view specific acts as appropriate to Hashem's design, we must enlarge our intellect to examine our speech, life style, and commitments as being in consonance with God's. In our performance there must be a permeating neon light to remind, "a good person helps others and lives a proper life, a good Jew fulfills *mitzot v'et adam l'chavaro* and strives to bring holiness to the mundane." And while the latter may include the former, the inverse is not necessarily true.

## The Israel of Our Dreams

By Bonnie Miller

After spending some time in Israel and trying to keep up with what is happening there, I can't help but wonder to myself: Is this the Israel which we have yearned to return to for thousands of years? Is this "the land of milk and honey?" Does our very survival need to be threatened in order for us to get along with each other? How can we help to relieve some of the incredible tensions that exists in Israeli society while still in America? This past year I accidentally stumbled on one way to contribute while doing an internship at the New Israel Fund (NIF).

The New Israel Fund has an ambiguous name. It is a new fund in that it was established just six years ago and is only now beginning to make itself known. It's a new kind of Israel being funded because NIF projects

are the sort that have never been dealt with by traditional philanthropies. The problems are not necessarily new to Israelis, but it seems that diaspora Jews generally don't recognize that they exist, or if we do, we tend to wish them out of our minds. However, even wishful thinking has not permitted us to disregard the fact that these are the realities of Israeli society.

Since its formation in 1979, the Fund has provided support to nearly 100 Israeli citizens' action organizations working to achieve social and political equality and to strengthen Israel's democratic process. New Israel Fund grants focus primarily on grass roots organizations which promote civil rights and liberties, social equality for women, community action programs in lower income neighborhoods, environmental projects and the improvement of Jewish-Arab relations.

Among the recipients of NIF grants are battered women shelters and rape crisis centers. Violence against women has become a major concern in Israel. Estimates of women battered by their husbands have reached as high as one in five, and rape was reported to be the fastest growing crime in Israel. Organizations working on behalf of these women suffered from extensive government budget cuts. The New Israel Fund made an emergency grant to the Haifa Battered Womens' Shelter when its anticipated government funding did not arrive.

Other recipients include The Association of Civil Rights in Israel; Magen David Yarok (an Orthodox group which seeks to improve the environment in Bnei Brak); El Am (which works towards the improvement of services for the blind); East Towards Peace (which seeks to break down stereotypes about oriental/sephardic Jews in Israel); Eli Association for Protection of the Child; Association for Protection and Defense of Bedouin Rights in Israel; and an organization of consumers fighting for better hygiene of kosher meat and other foods. Another group that receives funding is Shatili, which provides counseling and support for citizens' groups that want to become nonprofit organizations.

The New Israel Fund also has a leadership program which provides stipends to young Israelis who are potential leaders to spend a year traveling and learning. One past recipient of this is Avrum Burg, now the prime minister's adviser on Diaspora affairs. He credits the New Israel Fund with raising his consciousness of Israel-Diaspora affairs.

The Fund also supports an Israel-U.S. Civil Liberties Law program which runs in conjunction with the American University in Washington D.C. The program brings Israeli lawyers to the U.S. for a special Master of Laws degree in civil liberties, followed by a one year internship with an Israeli civil rights organization.

The New Israel Fund, located in New York and Jerusalem, has a small staff — mostly volunteers — and is run with little overhead. Less than two years ago, a joint Israeli-American board was established motivated by the idea that it is undesirable simply for Americans to give and Israelis to spend. Activists on both sides decide which applicants will receive grants.

It may appear as though the New Israel Fund is competing with other fundraising organizations like the UJA. However it is not. Rather, the New Israel Fund seeks to complement other philanthropic efforts by providing support to groups who are unable to receive funding. After all, UJA money can't provide for everything.

How can we help to build the Israel of our dreams? The New Israel Fund is dedicated to aiding grass roots organizations to realize the goals stated in Israel's Declaration of Independence, of a State "based on freedom, justice, and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel," an Israel that "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race, or sex."



# TALMUD TORAH AND DERECH ERETZ

By Y. Ghatan

"And you shall teach them diligently to your children and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:7). This is the biblical source for the positive commandment number 174 commanding us to engage in the study of Torah. This verse seems to imply that one should be learning Torah at all times. Another source which may even further reinforce such an impression is found in Joshua 1:8 "This book of the Torah shall not leave your mouth, you shall meditate therein day and night, in order that you observe to do all that is written in it, for then you will succeed in all your ways and then will you prosper." In the Talmud Sanhedrin 44b we find a discussion regarding the coming of the angel of God to Joshua and rebuking him for not engaging in the study of Torah even at a time when he and the rest of the Israelites were fighting the enemy and defending themselves. The rabbis learn from this conversation that learning Torah is even more important than offering the daily sacrifices. Are we required to learn Torah day and night?

Thus far it seems that we may be required to engage in the study of Torah at all times. However, R. Yochanan quoting R. Shimon Ben Yochi (Talmud Menachot 99b), states that even if one just recites the *parshat* Shema in the morning and in the evening, he will have fulfilled the obligation of *Lo Yamush*. Then the Talmud later on (ibid) concludes that the "commandment" of *Lo Yamush* is neither an obligation nor an optional commandment, rather it is a special blessing given to Joshua. Since the words of Torah were so dear to Joshua and since he was so successful in his learning, God gave him this special blessing that this book of Torah shall be learned by him day and night.

The Rambam in Talmud Torah 1:8 interprets the verse in Joshua 1:8 as an obligation for everybody to spend some time during the day and some time at night to learn Torah, but that there is no obligation to engage in the study of Torah day and night, constantly. Therefore, the halacha does not require of us to be constantly engaged in the study of Torah; however, there is no question that we are all required to live a life in accordance with God's will at all times following His Torah way of life. And this is the major thrust of the verse in Deut. 6:7

In fact, our sages throughout the generations have very much emphasized the importance of Torah and Derech Eretz. The Vilna Gaon states, "According to a person's lack of knowledge in secular studies there will be a hundred fold loss of Torah wisdom, for Torah and secular knowledge are intricately bound together." The Rambam underlines the importance of combining secular vocations with Talmud Torah, as our rabbis set the precedent for us. "Of the great sages of Israel, there were those who were cutters of trees, those who were drawers of water . . . yet they spent time to learn Torah day and night" (Talmud Torah 1:9). The Rambam himself was a practicing physician, and so were many Tannaim and Amoraim. Therefore, we learn in Pirkei Avot Ch. 2, "The combined study of Torah and Derech Eretz is beautiful." And in Ch. 3 we learn, "If there is no Derech Eretz, there is no Torah, and if there is no Torah, there is no flour." Therefore, Torah and Derech Eretz are intrinsically dependent on each other and one without the other will not be sufficient for the proper service of God.

Knowledge without practice thereof will not perpetuate. For example, one could spend years studying medicine and learning about all the diseases and their appropriate

treatments, but if he never sees a patient and never applies his book knowledge to the practical case of treating the patients, it would be doubtful if he could render the best care to his patients. Many cases are not as clear cut as they may be in the books. In a similar vein, the overwhelming majority of us need to apply our Torah knowledge to our daily activities. We need to go out to the outside world, the world of challenges, the world of problems, the world of temptations, and apply our Torah knowledge to meet the challenges of life, and to overcome the myriad of daily problems. Then it would be much easier to perpetuate our Torah knowledge and live a life in accordance with God's will. As the Talmud Kiddushin 40a testifies: "Anyone who engages in Torah and Derech Eretz does not come to sin quickly." Obviously, there is a definite need for a solid background in Torah knowledge before one can attempt to tackle the daily worldly challenges. And this need hopefully will be met adequately through formal education in yeshivot.

## How do we permit the existence of Kollels nowadays?

In each generation there are only a very small number of people who can dedicate all their lives and daily activities to the study of Torah and still be very successful. However, even this small minority will have practical experience and will perpetuate and reinforce their learnings. Since they will be known experts of Jewish Law, people will be constantly presenting to them problems and questions and seeking their advice in accordance with the law of God. Then these experts will be in actuality like a practicing physician — one who applies his book knowledge to practical cases.

The Rambam, indeed, defines a very rigorous lifestyle for those who engage in Torah study. He writes in Talmud Torah 3:6 that one who wants to properly fulfill the commandment of Torah study, should not want to gain Torah with wealth and honor. . . . this is the way of Torah, he shall eat bread and salt, and drink water and sleep on the earth and live a hard life and engage in Torah . . . The Rambam has very harsh words for those who use Torah to earn a livelihood. "Anybody who engages in Torah so that he should not work and be sustained by charity, he has profaned God's Name, and spoiled the Torah and has extinguished the light of religion and has caused evil to himself and has forfeited his portion of life in the world to come . . . (Our rabbis taught) love work and despise office of rabbi, and any Torah without work will eventually be useless and will cause sin, and such person (who acts in this manner) will eventually rob people. It is a praiseworthy activity for one who earns his own livelihood, and this was the practice of the early pious people, and in this way one will merit honor and good in this world and in the world to come, as it is said, 'When you eat the labor of your hands, you are praiseworthy, and all is well with you' (Ps. 128:2)" (Talmud Torah 3:11,12). And Rabbi Yehuda teaches in Kiddushin 29a that anybody who does not teach his son a profession it is as if he teaches him robbery. Tanna D'bei Elyahu Rabbah 27 also praises one who supports himself: "The man who manages on his own income follows the example of God Himself, for He is totally self-sufficient."

Given that the proper service of God is through Torah and Derech Eretz, how do we permit the existence of Kollels nowadays?

And how do we support young men in the prime of their life who engage in full time study of Torah? There are a number of explanations that could shed light on this paradox. It is a well-established principle that the enabler of an act is greater than the performer (Baba Batra 9a). In ancient Israel the two tribes of Zebulun and Issachar formed a partnership. Zebulun settled on the coast and engaged in commerce to support Issachar who sat and toiled in Torah. Thus Zebulun's worldly work became a religious dedication. The Torah states regarding this partnership: "Rejoice Zebulun in your going out, and Issachar in your tents" (Duet. 33:18). Here Zebulun precedes Issachar. Hence, the work of Zebulun, the enabler is considered of a high religious quality. Nowadays, though, there exists an unwritten contract. Those of us who earn a livelihood and share it with our partners who are engaged in the study of Torah, are in fact sharing the fruits of our striving as our ancestors Zebulun and Issachar did. This idea is also echoed by Beur Halacha (Mishnah Brurah, vol 2 155:2) that

most people would not be able to be engaged in Torah at all times and succeed, as is concluded in Talmud Berachot 36b; but there is a minority of people who would succeed. Then these two groups shall form a partnership similar to Zebulun and Issachar's and share the fruits of their works.

Another possible explanation may be that the nature of today's job market is such that it is extremely difficult to excel in Torah learning and simultaneously maintain a successful career. Yet, there are those who consider the money given to those who engage in full time study of Torah as no more than a form of scholarship grant and it is not considered almsgiving. Just as the government, universities, and other institutions offer full scholarship to students to study sciences, so too we are offering our students scholarships to engage in the study of Torah.

One cannot deny the fact that there are always a number of people who spend time in yeshivot with ulterior motives and are not sincerely motivated to learn Torah. This cannot be a major or any justification to deprive those who are highly motivated and are purely and devotedly interested in studying the Torah. Also, we hope that *Lo I'shma* (Pesachim 50b), even though initially the intention might not be pure, with passage of time the ulterior motives may fade away and he shall study Torah with pure and devoted intentions.

As much as our rabbis have emphasized Torah and Derech Eretz, it seems that they put special emphasis on the Torah aspect of this ideal combination. This idea is reflected in the following quotes: Torah is gained at expense of Derech Eretz (Avot Ch. 6) Try to decrease your work and engage in Torah (Avot Ch.4). Anyone who accepts the yoke of Torah upon himself . . . of Derech Eretz is removed from him (ibid). The Rambam in Talmud Torah 3:7 admonishes the one who thinks to himself that he will work now and amass wealth then he will learn Torah; since if he postpones his learning he may never have time to learn. Rather, he should make set times to learn and postpone his work.

R. Nehorai with respect to his own son said: I would set aside every craft and profession in the world, and I would teach my son only Torah, because a profession is secure only as long as a person has the

energy to pursue it. If he should fall sick or grow old, he would die of starvation. But Torah not only honors a man and protects him from harm in his youth, but it also provides him with a future and with security in old age. In describing young Torah scholars, the Scripture states: "Those who place confidence in God shall renew their strength, they shall mount up opinions as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and tire" (Isaiah 40:31). And of the aged Torah Scholar it says: "They will still be fruitful in old age, full of sap and freshness they will be" (Kiddushin 82a). In Talmud Sanhedrin 88b, the question is asked, "Who is destined for the world to come? He who is meek, humble . . . and a constant student of the Torah, without claiming merit thereof."

Therefore, study of Torah shall be our ultimate goal and our involvement in secular matters shall be aimed in the direction to further our Torah learning and practice.

So, how long, to what degree, when, how and what are we to learn? The Rambam (Talmud Torah 1:10) states that one is obligated to engage in Torah until the day of his death. R. Safrin quoting R. Yehoshua Ben Chananiah learns that one is to divide his time into three portions. One third to learn Torah, one third to learn Mishnah, and one third to learn Gemara (Kiddushin 30a).

The Rambam believes that even though one is to learn day and night, one learns better at night. Therefore, one should strive to learn more at night (Talmud Torah 3:13). However, the Mishnah Berurah (vol.2,155:1) suggests that it is best to set time aside for learning immediately after morning prayer. How much is one to learn? Mishnah Peah 1:1 sets Talmud Torah in the category of those commandments for which there is no measure, no upper limits. But what if a person is learned and "knows it all?" Mishnah Avot 2:16 answers that the yoke of Torah is upon us all the days of our lives and we have no right to exempt ourselves from this obligation. Alternatively, as R. Yehoshua ben Karcha states in Sanhedrin 99a, "Anyone who learns Torah but does not review it is like one who sows without reaping." And in fact the verse in Joshua 1:8 establishes an ongoing obligation to study Torah even if the subject matter has been totally mastered; since, "If you forget me one day, I will forget you two days" (Sifri).

Therefore, all men are obligated to study Torah, and there is an obligation to set aside specific time(s) every day for this purpose. Then at the time of judgement when we are asked, "Did you set aside time for Torah study?" (Sabbath 31a), our answer will be in the affirmative. Talmud Yoma 35a, at length discusses how on the day of judgement different excuses from poor or rich or other who overlooked their obligation to study Torah will be discredited and not accepted. Why is it that setting aside time to learn is such an ideal approach to the study of Torah? The answer is given in Shir Hashirim Rabbah: water is used as a metaphor for Torah, just as water falls drop by drop and gradually becomes an ocean, so too, one learns two laws today and two tomorrow till he acquires great knowledge and becomes an ocean of knowledge. Why is Torah study so important? Surely not only because of the intellectual pleasure that one derives from the study of the Torah, as King David alluded to: "The commandments of the Lord are upright, gladdening the heart . . ." (Ps. 19:9), but more importantly, because learning brings one to knowing and knowing to the fear of God and fear of God brings us closer to fulfilling His commandments (Kiddushin 50b).

# COURTING TORAH UMADA

By Daniel Lehmann

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May 1985 - Shvat 5745

It was only four years ago that I began my relationship with the ideas and personalities that make up Y.U., Torah uMada and Modern Orthodoxy. And yet, this relationship has overwhelmed me, occupying my mind and soul since my Freshman year. It has not been a passive relationship. I have attempted to understand Torah uMada through long discussions in the dorm, lunch and dinner conversations with professors, battles in shiur, philosophy and literature courses, and many *Tradition* articles. I have also tried to shape Torah uMada through my involvement in *Hamevaser*, the creation of student discussion groups (The Society For The Preservation Of Thought At Yeshiva, Torah and Chochma, Inc., etc.), Y.C.S.C., Yeshiva College and RIETS committees and finally KIRUV. However, despite this abundance of activity, I have come to realize in my naivete that the struggle with modernity is a personal and particular one, that my relationship with that confrontation is highly intimate. It involves not only the meeting of the world and our tradition but necessarily includes the individuality of my personality with its strengths and profound limitations. I can therefore only offer at best a personal sketch of the harmonies and dissonances that have marked these four years.

I am not a Lithuanian and certainly not a Brisker. My roots are firmly planted in western soil and I have always felt somewhat uncomfortable with the world that grew out of the Eastern European Yeshivot. That is not to say that I do not recognize the importance of *Lomdas* and its helpfulness in understanding halachic conceptions. But the

attempt to categorize every aspect of our existence seems fruitless. The religious life is not only characterized by the creativity of the scientific endeavor, the rational construction of new worlds; it is also an experience of the complex and multiple that creates the matrix of man's relationship with God. I see in our Biblical and Rabbinic tradition a variety of worldviews that cannot be summed up in a flippant "Shitah Chazal" or "Torah Hashkafa". The interweaving of literary forms, philosophies, histories as well as the purely legalistic in Judaism suggests the need for a response that is flexible, diverse and creative. As Americans and children of the twentieth century, we have an intuitive understanding of the world's plurality and perhaps our monolithic approach stems more from our Eastern European allegiance than our own experience.

I am indeed thankful for the opportunity that Yeshiva has given me to acquire the sensitivities of several academic disciplines while at the same time gain a thorough knowledge of Torah in its broadest sense. With these skills I will hopefully be able to make some sense of the complexity of the human condition in light of our religious tradition. My frustration, however, has been that this endeavor must be carried on without the full support of the institution as a whole. Much of my time has been spent justifying my goals and not enough working toward obtaining them. The polemics that abound are not totally healthy and reveal an inner tension that may be used more productively.

So much for the cognitive element. In the ethical realm, I have also experienced frustration and disappointment. In my home,

not religious by orthodox standards, the ethical was paramount. As I became more religious, I discovered the ethical to be insufficient but nonetheless the basis for all spirituality. My disappointment, and at times despair, at the state of the orthodox community in general and our institution in particular: with regard to Torah ethics has led to many a depression. Where are the sensitivities of *Choshen Mishpat*? Why are talmidim forced to speak of *Roshei Yeshiva* and *Talmidei Chachomim* as one might describe the local mafioso? Is it not sad that a figure like Martin Luther King Jr. serves as a greater model for ethical strength and courage than does our own religious leadership?

And yet, here too, the potential exists for great heights to be reached within the spectrum that is Modern Orthodoxy. We only have to delve into the halacha, the moral imperatives that underlie it, and the wealth of western ethical development to grow in this fundamental area. My struggle has been to create within myself a general humanistic thrust that is shaped by God's will. Culling from the depths of halacha and the aspirations of moral men, I might have a chance to reach for the truly religious that beckons us.

Which leads me to the spiritual dimension of our religious lives. The *Chovot HaLevavot*'s cry for conscious spiritual concern echoed later by the Mussar movement and developed along different lines in Hasidut, rings in my ear. Many times I have felt my existence bereft of the sensitivity to God's presence. Too seldom did I turn to Tehillim for insight into the infinite. How infrequently did Rav Kook's flame ignite within me a bur-

ning desire for God's nearness. The humanities can also provide us with inspiration toward this end. St. Augustine, George Herbert, S. Kierkegaard, to name but a few, contain a wealth of religious insight that can propel us ever inward and upward. It is left to us to avail ourselves of the spiritual greats in Judaism and amongst *Chasidei Umat HaOlam* and integrate their wisdom into our lives.

My personal feelings in the quest for greater spirituality reflect a general malaise and benign neglect of these concerns both in our institutions and our communities. Our education must be geared to heighten our awareness of the Omnipresent lest we dull our spiritual senses. A community that does not strive for the lofty even as it confronts the world must surely dissipate into the mundane.

Finally, a thought on the importance of community. Throughout my ups and downs during these years of painful growth and development, I have been supported by a small core-community of those who share, if not my idiosyncrasies, at least my basic concerns. If Torah uMada is to become a vibrant force in the history of *Klal Yisrael*, no matter which interpretation you choose, it must live as a part of a community. To merely be a motto of an academic institution is not enough. During the next four years and beyond, I pray that I will help translate the great potentialities that I have discovered in my relationship with Torah uMada into the life of a thriving halachic/spiritual community.

## NAME CALLING

By Larry Yudelson

### What Are You Going to Be When You Grow Up?

A friend told me about the apartment he was considering renting. After seven years spent living with dozens of guys in dormitories, he'd be alone with only two other people, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a washer and dryer. "Mazel tov," I told him, "Now you can play *baal habaas*."

He turned pale. "That's what my mother told me," he said in a hurt tone. A dedicated *lamdan*, he is planning, last I heard, to stay in the dormitory after all.

There is no doubt that "Baal habaathish," indicating intellectually unsophisticated, is the worst insult in Yeshiva. After all, a *manzer talmid chacham* comes before a *cohen gadol am haaretz*. However, as another friend said when his *sevara* was accused of being *baal habaathish*, "Rebbe, my father's a *baal habaas*." He's not alone. The father of us all, Avraham Avinu, was a *baal habaas*. We all know how he sat out in the sun, waiting for travellers he could invite in. Yet somehow the term which represents all of this *hessed* has become a term of abuse.

I know the defense. *Baal habaatin* can also be *lamdanim*. Of course. But the mental image of a *baal habaas* will naturally be someone who is *baal habaathish*, that is, stupid and ignorant. This has ramifications. Firstly, rabbis and teachers who walk into the congregation or pulpit with a disdain for their students cannot be effective. Teaching demands respect for the student; if we do not respect the *baal habaas*, we cannot teach him.

A second consequence is our own self-image. The majority of us will not go into *chinuch*. We will be, painful as it is to admit, *baal habaatin*. But the moment we say the words, we divorce ourselves from *lom-*

*das*, and we have facilitated the end of learning.

This denigration of who we will be has consequences while we are still in Yeshiva. The curriculum in all yeshivot is geared to produce *lamdanim*. It is aimed at providing a *derech* for someone who will learn forever. A rebbe says shiur on a certain level; *talmidim* on that level attend the shiur; and the next year, the rebbe has new *talmidim*, and the old students either are in a higher shiur — or they have left. The system does not recognize that students leave after four years, and attempt to provide them with a specified set of skills and knowledge to equip them for their life as *baal habaatin*. Traditionally, you do not graduate a yeshiva, you leave it. It is too easy to drop out, in the full sense of the term.

I suspect that the root of the problematic equation of *baal habaas* and *ignoramus* is the notion that the *talmid chacham* is the man who should be philosopher-king. Placing aside the debate over the questionable doctrine of *daas Torah* (Hamevaser, January 1984), what does the *talmid chacham* have over a doctor? The former is competent to decide halacha; the latter is not. The former may have a clearer conception of the will of God. Yet this does not necessarily make him a better person. I was discussing a major leader in the Jewish Community with a friend, and the friend said, "too bad he's not a *talmid chacham*. It is too bad indeed that the leader in question does not have all the knowledge he could. It is also too bad that he cannot play the piano, and I think equally relevant to his position. Assuming he is not speaking on that which he does not know (something which *talmidei chachamim* are

known to do from time to time, does his inability to fully conceptualize a Rambam detract from his contributions to *Klal Yisrael*? Furthermore, who has the greater reward: Someone who teaches and learns, with all of the pleasures and stimulation which learning accrues, or someone who spends his days in

interminable meetings, engrossed in the painfully trivial minutiae that is necessary to keep the Jewish community alive? *Klal Yisrael* is dependent on *baal habaatin*: it is also dependent on committed Jews who are not *lamdanim*. The denigration of both is harmful to the community, and to ourselves.

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