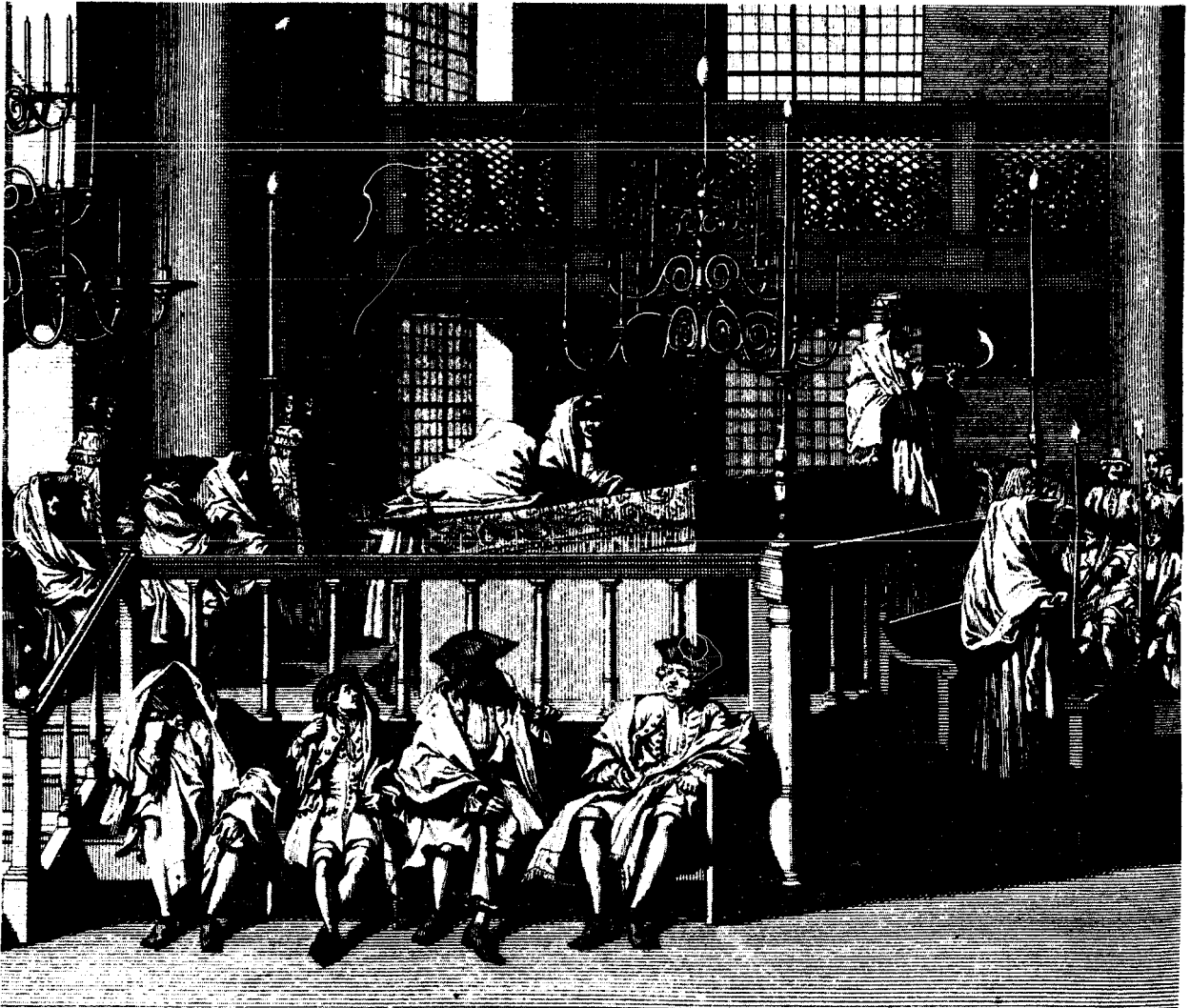


HAMEVASER

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T'kiat Shofar in the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam, 1723.

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HAMEVASER

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Sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Ha-Shanah in the
Portuguese Synagogue
From Bernard Picart, *Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses
de tous les peuples du monde...*
Amsterdam: J. F. Bernard, 1728

Editorials

Communal Responsibility

Involvement in student affairs is more than a privilege for the Y.U. student; it is an obligation. Rather than demonstrating an isolationist *laissez-faire* attitude, we all should concern ourselves with the community surrounding us. Certainly many avenues are available for student expression: Various publications constantly seek contributors and student councils always request volunteers.

Undeniably, learning Torah is of cardinal importance and time drawn from it must be strictly accounted for. Nevertheless, the few hours necessary to compose an article addressing an important issue or to participate in a council activity is certainly time well spent. In the past, some familiar names went even further. Rabbi Yosef Blau served (consecutively) as S.O.Y. and Y.C.S.C. vice-president over his tenure here. Rabbi Yitzchak Handel (president) and Rabbi Shimon Eider (secretary-treasurer) both offered precious time to S.O.Y. Rabbi Herschel Schachter edited *Beit Yitzchak* one year.

While it can be dangerous to generalize from a small sampling, these examples suggest that involvement in student affairs and *Limud HaTorah* can co-exist in a way that benefits both the individual and Yeshiva.

Letter to the Reader

Having seriously considered the criticisms aimed at *Hamevaser* over the past year (see below), we would like to register a complaint of our own. Even more so than a newspaper, a publication of thought thrives on reader response — to correct when we err, to disagree when we offer a controversial opinion, to complain when we venture beyond our scope or ignore a vital issue. Even, and often especially, outraged letters arguing an opposing viewpoint reassure us that we have succeeded in stimulating thought on a given issue. Send them to:

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Y.P. on Y.U.

Restatement of Purpose and Other Thoughts

By YOSSI PRAGER

Last year in this space, then editor-in-chief Isaac Corre discussed *Hamevaser's* shift in scope and emphasis. No longer a newspaper, *Hamevaser* would continue to become, as its masthead boldly asserts, "A publication of traditional thoughts and ideas." It would live up to its stated purpose by "discussing various issues — religious, social, political, and Halachic, from the standpoint of Orthodox Judaism." With themes such as Darchei Halimud, views on non-Jews, the *Machoret*, and Women and Halacha, as well as numerous other topics discussed in individual articles, last year's *Hamevaser* certainly completed its movement to magazine. As a new year begins, however, so must an assessment of that shift.

The response of the Jewish community at large to the "new" *Hamevaser* has been extremely positive. Many have applauded Yeshiva's students for the depth of their research and thought in the struggle to deal with the complex issues facing Orthodox Judaism. Probably more importantly, *Hamevaser* has been lauded for stimulating thought in others. The Y.U. Jewish Studies faculty recognized *Hamevaser's* achievement by granting five of its graduating board members a special graduation award.

Within the Y.U. student body, however, reaction has been decidedly more ambivalent. While many students have expressed favorable views, two major criticisms have been voiced. First, "thought and ideas" need not always be about universal Jewish issues; when acrid debates rage over the propriety of social parties at Yeshiva, *Hamevaser* must not remain silent. Second, although Commentator is our official undergraduate newspaper, it caters almost exclusively to YC and YCSC stories and events. No campus paper affords room to a column from the Jewish Studies Divisions' Councils' presidents, nor does any report the Jewish Studies Divisions' news. (As was pointed out to me last year, Commentator devoted a front page article to the YC

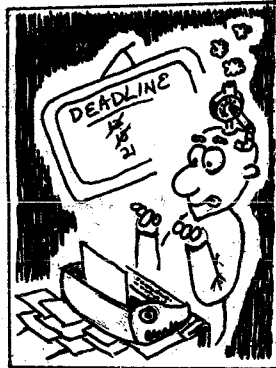
valedictorian, but nowhere were the IBC, YP and JSS valedictorians mentioned.)

Of the above two complaints, the first is more compelling. If *Hamevaser* is to serve the Yeshiva students foremost (and is to retain editorial privilege, as well), it cannot neglect Yeshiva issues. To this end, *Hamevaser* will this year, without significantly changing its emphasis, attempt to deal with YU questions as they arise, much as it did last year when Meir Kahane came to speak.

The second criticism of *Hamevaser*, coming mainly from Jewish Studies student council officials, is less intellectual than pragmatic. In an institution striving for synthesis, it makes no sense to have separate newspapers for "Jewish" and "secular" news. Nevertheless, until Commentator changes its policy, *Hamevaser* is being asked to fill the void. Since those student leaders doing the asking represent all of JSS, YP and IBC we have agreed to allocate one page per issue to cover Jewish Studies news and their student councils' presidents' columns. The decision to do so was a painful one, as we were induced to relinquish editorial discretion over the presidents' columns; nevertheless it is our hope that the increased coverage will infuse additional vitality into events and issues surrounding the Jewish Studies Divisions.

Self-Respect

Over lunch in Manhattan this summer with a number of friends from YU, I observed a disturbing phenomenon: the flip side of the "in YU syndrome." This syndrome, familiar to many who have been asked which college they attend, consists of a student mumbling that he's "in YU," hoping that the listener misunderstands him to mean "NYU." This summer, however, was my first exposure to the other side of this coin. Three young men with dark suits and beards sat down near us and inquired where we learned. My YU companions, all bright *masmidim*, stared despondently at the floor and muttered, "YU." (Apparently no combination of words can make YU sound like Mir or Chaim Berlin.) As the conversation progressed and we were asked what *perek* we would learn this year, my friends brightened, eager to discuss the intricacies



of *shinuy koneh*. Unfortunately, our companions had misplaced *Merubah* in *Baba Metzia* and did not seem prepared for serious conversation. My point is not a haughty one, nor should it be taken in any way as a generalization about people from the "black" community; my point is only that we should be proud of YU as a Torah institution. The quality of Roshei Yeshiva and Jewish Studies faculty, as well as the serious commitment of many talmidim, justify our pride in Yeshiva not just as a Torah U'Mada institution, but also as a place for *limud haTorah* at the highest levels.

From Bavel to Belfer

Last year on campus, the student body experienced a number of bitter conflicts that left us promising to avoid controversy this coming year. I hope not. While intolerance and refusal to compromise (within certain bounds) can damage Yeshiva, controversy itself is almost a necessity for the creative process. In the weeks after *Succot* we will read *parshiot Bereshit* and *Noach*, culminating with the enigmatic story of Migdal Bavel. I would like to suggest an approach to understand the unfolding of these two *parshiot* that may teach us about the need for conflicting views.

God commanded Man to share with Him in the creative process with His "*V'Chivshuha*." However, Adam himself could not shoulder this great burden; God realized the need for "*ezer k'negdo*." Troubled by this paradoxical terminology, Rashi explains that the phrase refers to alternative conditions: "If he is worthy, [she will be] a help; if he

is not worthy, [she will be] against him."

Another explanation occurred to me. Perhaps the two words are not contradictory; the method in which Woman helps Man to create (and the reverse) is by opposing him. If God had created another being identical to man, their two heads would have been equal to one. Only someone with different thoughts and sensitivities can induce a person to rethink a position and work towards finding a better one. By creating Chava, God supplied mankind with the tool necessary to fulfill *V'chivshuha*: creative tension.

The world's second generation created its share of tension, but Kayin never learned to use controversy constructively. Instead, the world saw its first murder. Succeeding generations did not do much better, and when violence and theft filled the earth, God was forced to destroy it.

When the world began rebuilding itself, it may have been possible that people were afraid of controversy. After all, if conflict had led to the world's destruction, the ultimate solution would be to develop a totally uniform society. To that end, the people in the world congregated in one valley and worked together on a common project. *Migdal Bavel*, lest "we be scattered across the face of the earth." Were different cultures to develop, controversy would shortly follow. Displeased with their action, God took the two steps that guaranteed diverse cultural development. First, He created a communication barrier; then He scattered the people throughout the world. This story does have a happy ending, though. Because the earth developed in a way that encouraged differing views, Avraham Avinu evaluated his situation with an open mind and realized people were worshipping falsehoods. By applying all his creative and analytical abilities, Avraham realized that there must be a God. As they say, the rest is history.

The lesson for us as we look forward to a productive year is to anticipate conflict. An idea not ambitious enough to raise Cain with someone for either practical or ideological concerns probably has little to offer, anyway. Of course, it is not Cain from whom we should learn. Tension can only be justified if it propels toward new and better ideas. Unfortunately, at times our conflicts at Yeshiva are too deep-rooted for simple compromise. If we learn to expect — and value — controversy, however, perhaps the coming year's conflicts, rather than polarizing, will draw us together in creativity.

In Order To Form a More Perfect Union

By JONAH KASZOVITZ

"Purify our hearts to serve you in truth, for you are a forgiver of Israel and a pardoner (*machalan*) of the tribes of Yeshurun (*Shivtei Yeshurun*), and there is no king besides you who forgives and pardons (concluding *bracha* of *Shemoneh Esrai*)." *Esrai*.

Reading this prayer, one is immediately struck by the expression "*Shivtei Yeshurun*," a descriptive term for the nation of Israel familiar to us from the *Korbanot* ("*Karata et sh'mo Yisrael Vi Yeshurun*") recited daily, but one that in fact appears only four times in all of Tanach. What does this description denote, and, more specifically, how is it appropriate to this particular place in the *tefillah*?

The word "*Yeshurun*," surfaces also in the *Machzor*, in one of the verses in *sefer Malchiot*: "And there was a King in *Yeshurun*, when all of the nations were gathered, and the tribes of Israel were as one." This *pasuk* seems to define the status of *Yeshurun* as "*yachad shivtei Yisrael*," the complete unification of the nation of Israel. Actually, this definition is in consonance with Ibn Ezra's statement (Duet. 32:15) that *Yeshurun* derives from the root *yashar* — straight, perfect. For an individual, perfection might include learning Torah and doing *mitzvot*; for a nation, however, perfection is unity and the elimination of all conflicts. "*Yeshurun*" thus denotes *Am Yisrael* in a state of complete unity.

This idea is supported by a *Gemara* in *Yoma* (73b) which says that the words "*Shivtei Yeshurun*" were inscribed on the *Urim V'tumim* to provide the letter *tes* (since that letter does not occur in the names of the twelve tribes). Why specifically *Yeshurun*? Wouldn't "*shivtei Yisrael*?" also have supplied that letter? The answer is that *Yeshurun* symbolizes a united, "perfect" nation of Israel, a "*tamim*" nation. This is a necessary requirement for the *Urim V'tumim*: as the Yerushalmi (*Yoma* 7:3) says, "It was called *Urim* because it straightened (*meiyamin*) the path before them — when b'nei Yisrael were perfect (*t'minim*), it would direct them along the (correct) path." In fact, the Yerushalmi cites the incident of "*pilegish b'giva*" as an example of a lack of this *t'minim* in the nation of Israel: civil war is a blatant deficiency in the unity of a nation.

The words, "*Vayehi biyeshurun melech*" reveal that a level of "*Yeshurun*" is a prerequisite for "*malchut*," the crowning of God and the acceptance of his rule. A king crowned by one officer, no matter what that officer's rank or title, remains a dictator until he is fully accepted by his subjects.

The *Ramban* on this verse emphasizes this idea:

"(This verse) refers to God, who — became King over Israel (at the con-



T'kiat Shofar, from Sefer Minhagim, Amsterdam 1707.

gregation at Har Sinai when they were in a state of perfection ("yesharim") . . . and all the tribes were gathered together . . . (and) all of us accepted his rulership upon ourselves forever."

The importance of that unity embodied by the name *Yeshurun* and its significance in the context of repentance is explored by the Rav *Shlit'a* in his book *On Repentance* ("Between the Individual and the Community"). The *tzibbur*, or community, he explains, has the right not only to expect, but to demand forgiveness for their collective transgressions: thus, in the Musaf service of the *Shliach Tzibbur* for Yom Kippur, we request forgiveness: even before we say *vidui*. However, the individual, who has no such rights or expectations, is *misvadeh* first, and only then proceeds to request — actually, beg is more like it — forgiveness in his *Shemoneh*

Esrai.

Now we can examine the precise relevance of "*Shivtei Yeshurun*" in the quote at the beginning of this article. The *Anaf Yosef* explains that the adjectives *sachan* and *machalan* indicate consistency and reliability: God is a constant forgiver. On the other hand, the words *mochel* and *sole'ach* in the second half of the quote indicate happenstance; i.e., He will occasionally — perhaps often, even — forgive the sinner, but it's not something to be counted on. The first half of this quote is appropriate to the community of Israel, who can consistently expect forgiveness. *Yeshurun*, of course, is quite relevant to a discussion of communal pardon.

Furthermore, the Magen Avraham (*Orech Chaim* 621:5) differentiates between *selicha* and *mechila*: the former forgives only

unintentional sins (*shog'gim*), whereas the latter cancels even those sins committed intentionally (*meizidim*), provided they were committed out of human weakness, rather than deliberately (*leha'ach'is*).

The Malbin (*Mishle* 2:7) expresses a similar concept to explain the difference between the words *yashar* and *tamim*: *yashar* reflects a personality essentially dedicated to the service of God, but one that hasn't learned to resist temptation; only one who has reached absolute perfection in nature, thought and deed can be considered a *tamin*. *Yeshurun* reflects the inherent, "perfect" unity of the nation of Israel, despite occasional lapses of strife and discord. *Mechila*, we see now, is really the choicest counterpart for the forgiveness of *Yeshurun* — an essentially "perfect" community striving to return to its former glory at *Har Sinai*.

NIGHT FEVER

By SIMCHA HOCHMAN

At the beginning of a new year, for many their first in Yeshiva College, it is imperative to clarify one's varied and often conflicting objectives and attempt to plan a course of action which fulfills them. Only through such an evaluation can one "get some satisfaction."

While some students attend Yeshiva University merely following in the footsteps of a parent or older sibling, most come to Y.U. for its unique Jewish environment and "chevrah." Those purely interested in secular education enroll in academically superior and more prestigious private universities, while those simply seeking a college education attend less expensive state schools. Y.U. is certainly not known for wild partying.

Yet what often ensues is that one's high

ideals, especially for those returning from an insulated, low-pressure year in the Holy Land, tend to "get lost in the shuffle" as they are quickly relegated to "low-priority" and start to get rationalized away: Minyan in the morning detracts from essential sleep, while shiur wastes valuable study time.

An effective means to avoid and combat religious lethargy is a "night *sefer chavruta*." At night, when attendance is not taken and few Rebbeim are present in the Beit Medrash, one truly has the opportunity to demonstrate "lishmoh" purposes. The sense of fulfillment which accrues from such an action beyond the required (by the college) minimum pervades all aspects of Yeshiva life and heightens religious awareness.

One does not have to spend 4-5 hours a

night in the Beit Medrash, as some of the more dedicated individuals do: even a short *sefer* can be extremely beneficial, especially if organized around a *Maariv minyan*. While most study Gemara, a night seder can be utilized to learn Halacha, Mussar, or Chumash which are usually neglected in the morning. Much can be accomplished even during a brief period as long as it is "religiously" maintained.

Yet the key and determining factor is "k'viut." If inconsistency sets in, a precedent allowing increasing flimsy excuses is established. A regular *chavruta*, however, forces one to decide between an occasional night-out and an evening in the Beit Medrash, certainly a quantum leap from a choice among TV reruns.

To some, being seen in the Beit Medrash other than on a test night risks being brand-

ed with a reputation as a "Yeshiva guy." But even for those of us to whom "Rush" is more than one of the most important Rishonim, the Beit Medrash must be a focal point of one's nightly activities, even without "buses from Stern." Contrary to popular thought, one does not have to wear the stereotypical dark polyester uniform to enter the Beit Medrash: rather, pink shirts, argyle socks, and yes, even jeans are commonly found.

Two years ago in response to a Commentator query, an MYP senior cynically answered that graduation should be held "in the Beit Medrash — I love to explore new places." In order to transform theoretical principles into constructive reality, one cannot wait until his senior year to discover and develop this last frontier.

By MORDECHAI COHEN

The popularity of the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* is attested to by the fact that the cities and countryside of Israel are dotted with *sukkot* during this season. In the diaspora, too, many Jews expend time and energy, often bearing the familiar inconveniences, to eat and even sleep in the *sukkah*. Understanding the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* may add to our perception of Judaism in general and will also enhance our performance of this particular commandment, which is central to the festival of *Sukkot*.

The basic theme of *Sukkot* is related to the redemption from Egypt. This is reflected in the *Sukkot* liturgy, as both the *kiddush* and the *shmoneh esreh* mention that *Sukkot*, along with *Pesach* and *Shavuot*, is "zecher l'yetzit mitzraim", a memorial of the exodus from Egypt. The source for this association may be the verse on the Torah which relates the specific ritual of dwelling on the *sukkah* with the era of the exodus:

Ye shall dwell in booths seven days

... So that your generations may know that I made the Children of Israel dwell in booths *sukkot* when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God (Leviticus 23:42-43).

However, unlike Passover, which is celebrated by reliving the actual departure from Egypt, *Sukkot* deals with a subsequent stage, when Israel journeyed through the desert and lived in the *sukkot*. Thus, while *Pesach* represents a one-time event, *Sukkot* commemorates an entire era during which God's constant love and providence enabled the Children of Israel to survive the hostile environment of the wilderness. This forty year period is characterized by the manna and the quail, the well and Divine cloud and pillar of fire, all of which miraculously preserved the nation during their wanderings in the desert. The *sukkah*, the flimsy hut in which the people dwelt, was chosen to represent God's enduring love and care, for these huts, which provide little protection of their own, attest to the fact that God alone protected the Israelites in the desert.

This offers a perspective on the dispute between R. Akiva and R. Eliezer (*Sukkah 11b*) regarding the meaning of the word "*sukkot*" in the verse quoted above (Leviticus 23:43). R. Akiva understands "*sukkot*" to be the huts which Israel inhabited in the desert; R. Eliezer dissents and holds that "*sukkot*" refers to the *Ananei HaKavod*, the Divine clouds, which surrounded the Israelite camp. Thus, while R. Akiva feels that the *sukkot* we sit in every year represent the huts from which our forefathers witnessed God's presence, R.

'The natural agricultural process may lead a person to forget that God is responsible for nature.'

Eliezer maintains that our *sukkot* represent the Divine presence itself. According to R. Eliezer, the Divine clouds, rather than the huts, represent the gamut of miracles that God performed to preserve our forefathers in the desert.

Nevertheless, all of the above interpretations leave us with the problem of understanding the timing of *Sukkot*, for unlike Passover which clearly relates to a specific historical date, *Sukkot* does not seem to correspond with any particular event within the framework of the exodus era. Indeed, since God's protection began immediately after the exodus (for example, the parting of the Red Sea occurred on the seventh day of *Pesach*), a time soon after *Pesach* would seem more appropriate for commemorating God's providence over the Children of Israel. If so, we must understand why the festival of *Sukkot*

The Sukkah

is celebrated in the fall, a full six months after the date of the exodus.

Ibn Ezra, in his commentary to Leviticus 23:43, provides an historical answer for this question:

... and if one should ask why this commandment (*sukkah*) occurs during *Tishrei*, I would answer that [the Children of Israel did not live in the huts during the spring and summer because] the Divine cloud protected them from the sun; the Israelites [therefore] began building the huts only in the month of *Tishrei* to protect themselves from the cold.

Thus, Ibn Ezra claims that *Sukkot*, too, relates to a specific occurrence in the exodus era. The *sukkah*, which was chosen to represent God's providence, was built during the fall, in the month of *Tishrei*; therefore, every fall, on the fifteenth of *Tishrei*, the Jews of later generations are commanded to recall the experiences of their forefathers in the desert by building similar huts.

Maimonides, however, while not directly taking issue with Ibn Ezra, sees the significance of the timing of *Sukkot* from the perspective of the subsequent generations rather than from an historical point of view. The Rambam (in his *Guide* III, 43) maintains that *Sukkot* is celebrated specifically in the autumn because it is meant to be a feast celebrating the completion of the harvest, as the Torah also calls *Sukkot* "the Feast of Ingathering (*chag ha'asif*)... when you gather the fruit of your labors from the field" (Exod. 23:16). Particularly at this time, when an agricultural society begins to enjoy the fruits of its labors, the Jews are commanded to dwell in huts as their forefathers did in order to recognize that all of their material wealth comes from God. By sitting in the *sukkah*, one remembers that there was a time in our history when God preserved and cared for our forefathers in the desolate wilderness. In the desert, it was abundantly clear that God was the source of all sustenance; the manna, the quail, and the well were all overt miracles (*nisim glyumim*) which undeniably came from God. In the land of Israel, however, this fact would be less obvious; the natural agricultural process may lead a person to forget that God is responsible for nature as well. Right after the harvest, when the tendency would be to attribute one's wealth exclusively to one's own hard labor, the *sukkah* reminds the Jew that God is always the ultimate source of his sustenance and very existence.

In a similar fashion, Moses warns the Israelites who were soon to enter Canaan not to forget their experience in the desert. If only they would keep God's providence and miracles in mind, they would always remain grateful to God in the land of milk and honey:

And thou shalt remember all way which God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness... And He fed thee with the manna... Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years... For God bringeth thee into a good land... wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it... Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God... who led thee through the great and dreadful wilderness wherein there were fiery serpents and thirsty ground where there was no water... and thou saith in thy heart: "My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God for it is He that giveth power to get wealth (Deut. 8:2-18).

According to Maimonides, *Sukkot* is the time of year when every generation must follow the advice that Moses gave to his generation and remember the miracles of the wilderness.

In a more general sense, some commentators see the *sukkah* as a way of reliving the experience of the desert in order to compare the society and achievements of each of the subsequent generations with those of the Israelites in the wilderness. This method of comparison was used by the prophets who were confronted with the idolatrous practices of Israel and contrasted their generation with the Israelites who faithfully followed God into the wilderness. When referring to this era, Jeremiah says:

Thus saith the Lord:

I remember for thee the affection of thy youth, the love of thine espousals.



How thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, In a land that was not sown (Jeremiah 2:2).

The prophet Hosea, who witnessed the religious decline of Israel, saw the only hope for the Israelites of his generation in their being led forth into the wilderness to relive what their forefathers had experienced:

Therefore, behold, I will allure her (referring to Israel), And bring her into the wilderness... And she shall respond there as in the days of her youth, And as the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt (Hosea 2:15-17).

In a similar way, the *sukkah* beckons each generation to "enter the wilderness" and compare its level of devotion to God with the faith of the Israelites in the desert, as depicted by the prophets.

A more specific lesson, that is quite relevant to our society, may be derived from recalling the occupation and activities of the Children of Israel in the wilderness. That generation was not required to expend the energy that man usually invests in his struggle to sustain himself since all of the physical needs of the people were met by the manna and other such miracles. Thus, the Israelites were free to pursue spiritual matters and many *midrashim* therefore indicate that the nation occupied itself with the study of the Torah during this forty year period. While subsequent generations did not have the luxury of the manna, *sukkah* nevertheless requires them to recall the pursuits of the Israelites of the desert; by remembering that era, each subsequent generation must evaluate its own allocation of time and effort for spiritual matters. Precisely at the time of harvest, when the wealth of an agricultural society is gathered, the people must remove themselves from their everyday habits and thoughts to dwell in the *sukkah* and

remember that a portion of that wealth must be devoted to religious development. The tendency to over-emphasize the importance of possessions and material wealth, which might come with the harvest, is countered by recalling a generation that was freed from material concerns to develop its spiritual character. The lesson derived from this is that physical sustenance and material wealth are not the ultimate goals of existence but only means to a higher end.

The message of the *sukkah* extends to the social realm as well, for the unusual economic situation in the desert brought about a unique and ideal type of community. As opposed to a land-based agricultural economy (which would later exist in Israel) which makes the landless lower classes dependent on the wealthy landowners, the Israelites of the desert all received equal sustenance from heaven; both rich and poor

alike depended on God alone and not their fellow man. This simple, egalitarian society was a stark contrast to the Israelite society in Canaan where the wealthy used their power to extort the meager possessions of the poor, rather than sharing part of their own wealth with their less fortunate brethren. It is perhaps for this reason that the prophets, who constantly battled the social evils of their time, looked to the wilderness generation as ideal (as mentioned above), even to the extent that this idealization tended to ignore the sins of the desert generation. Thus, even though they had worshipped the Golden Calf and had sent the spies, the Israelites of the desert were considered by the prophets to be a model for later generations since they formed an egalitarian society that was free from the oppression and social injustices that would later arise. Sitting in the *sukkah* fulfills the demand of the prophets that each generation compare its social system with the community of the wilderness. This comparison is meant to inspire each generation to emulate the social equality and justice that prevailed in the desert by utilizing society's resources to aid those members of society who are in need. The comparison of the harvest is the ideal time for this introspection; precisely when man sees the fruit of his labors and is tempted to recognize only his own needs, he must remember the needs of those who are less fortunate than himself. In a practical sense, the time of the harvest, when the newly gathered wealth of society is at hand, is a particularly good time for the community to properly plan the allocation of that wealth.

In this vein, one modern Jewish thinker writes:

... having the Israelites relive their wilderness experience is bound to place them in a frame of mind which enables them to detach themselves from the

Continued on page 6

Talmud Torah at Stern College

By SHOSHANA JEDWAB

Great diversity of religious-educational philosophy and approach coexist under the single roof of the Stern College Judaic Studies department. Stern students' exposure to the varieties of Biblical scholarship and intellectual Jewish history in particular have been significantly upgraded over the recent years under the leadership of Rabbi Saul Beran and Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel. While expectations are rising among the students and faculty and real improvements can be pointed to, it is time to assess the effectiveness of a department dedicated to disparate and often contradictory visions of women's Torah education.

The teaching of Halakha and Talmud studies at Stern reveals the inherent divisions in the department and betrays a serious lack of effectiveness in achieving short run and especially long-lasting educational-religious goals which are held by the institution.

In some classes students are spoon-fed Halakha information. No books are required, only the motivation to practice and continue to ask "she'aylot" of the teacher or of other Poskim. These classes are for the most part filled with students already committed to Halakhaic living.

In most Jewish Law classes, however, students are required to become familiar with the primary sources conveniently gathered and xeroxed by the teacher. The degree to which the teacher will encourage analysis of the sources greatly varies. Most students do not have learning skills in Talmudic material and the teaching of those skills is not systematically addressed in these content-important courses. Therefore "preparation" and "class analysis" is a repeatedly frustrating and, for some, discouraging educational-religious experience.

Two more approaches can be identified at Stern. There are Talmud classes at the highest level where students are trained to study Talmudic texts including Rishonim. Only six women joined the Stern Beit Midrash under the tutelage of Rabbi Moshe Kahn in the spring of 1985.

There is also the irony of the intellectual Jewish history phenomenon. In the high level Jewish history and Jewish philosophy courses, Talmudic texts inscrutable to most of the students form the basis for class discussion and provide a major thrust for the course work. While high level historiographical or philosophical discourse is expected of the class, the level of comprehension of the basic sources of Chazal are extremely limited. The inconsistency of the Judaic Studies department is evident in these cases where "sophistication" towards Jewish Studies coexists with eloquent ignorance. This schizophrenia is unique to Stern and is not generally shared by other women's educational-religious institutions.

While Stern College is rich in Judaic Studies, it is poor in skills of studying the Oral Tradition. With the popularity of the "xeroxed booklet," students' familiarity with Halakhaic texts, which could serve them well in building their religious life beyond graduation, is almost eliminated. **Long lasting, responsible, intelligent, commitment to Torah is compromised not only by estrangement from the texts but the lack of an across-the-board program teaching the basic skills and exposing women to classical, active Talmudic-Halakhaic learning.**

The present divisions in the Stern College Torah studies curriculum (what women are taught), and methodology (how women are to be taught), have their roots in the Halakhaic traditions of the Rishonim and Achronim. (For a detailed essay on the various Halakhaic positions concerning the teaching of Torah to women see Rabbi Moshe Weinberger's article "Teaching Torah to Women" in the

Pesach issue of *Journal of Halakha and Contemporary Society* pp. 19-52).

While weighty opinions in this area limit or even prohibit women's formal educational involvement in Talmud Torah, other criteria must be considered. Stern College's clientele, the nature and needs of today's generation of women, and the betterment of the religious life of the female personality demand that Stern College adopt what is presently the minority stance on women and serious Talmudic-Halakhaic learning.

'Talmudic learning must fill the void in female Jewish education.'

"There are authorities who subscribe to a moderate heter: *Women may study the written Torah with all its commentaries. The Oral Torah may be studied on an individual basis under careful supervision and guidance. Other authorities in this school permit 'open enrollment' of women into all areas of Torah, under the condition that such a program constructively caters to the needs of a good number of women in a particular society.*

There are nine reasons for undertaking an ambitious enrichment program of traditional

Halakhaic and Talmudic learning at Stern. They are:

— "Kabbalah," or the tradition¹ education of the family, once the mainstay of female Jewish education, no longer exists. For many of us these traditions were interrupted by the upheavals and dislocations of the mid-twentieth century, or were abandoned by parents and grandparents. Therefore, Talmudic learning must fill the void in female Jewish education.

— In today's day and age society respects

women's intellect and has expanded her societal responsibilities. A new self-perception among women has emerged. They can be motivated, intellectually honest, competent in a field of interest and dedicated to their religious pursuits as well.

— Today's student can gain a deeper commitment to Torah if she participates in active — not passive — traditional learning.

— Traditional Jewish learning eventually enables students to study and utilize other Aramaic Halakhaic texts which can help the student during and after her graduation.

— The female religious personality is

The Confident Sinner

By AVIVA GANCHROW

Based on a *shiur* delivered by Rabbi Ephraim Kanarfogel.

The Mishna in *Yoma* (85b) introduces the personality of the confident sinner, stating "Ha'omer echta ve-ashuv, echta ve-ashuv, ain maspikin beyado la'asot t'shuva." "He who says, I will sin and then I'll repent, I will sin and then I'll repent," will not have the opportunity to do Teshuva." The question arising directly from the language of the Mishna is, why is the clause "Echta ve-Ashuv" stated twice by the confident sinner? Furthermore, when the Rambam in *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot T'shuva* (4:1) lists twenty-four things that are *Me'akev T'shuva*, he includes among them "Ha'omer Echta ve-Ashov," only using the clause once. What is the motivation behind the Rambam's deliberate choice to stray from the phraseology of the Mishna? What conclusions may be drawn about the personality and fate of the confident sinner based on the differing presentations by the Mishna and the Rambam?

The Gemara in *Yoma* (87a) points out the repetition in our Mishna. The explanation provided by Rav Huna is that once a person has acted upon the premise of "Echta Ve-Ashuv" twice, it is as if the sin is permissible in his eyes. We can derive from this statement that a person who transgresses a particular commandment only once (even though he is in the category of "Echta ve-Ashuv") still has every possibility of doing T'shuva. After repeating the same *Averah*, however, it will become less serious in his eyes, and he will thus be prevented from doing T'shuva.

The *Lechem Mishna* on the Rambam attempts to explain why the Rambam deviated from the language of the Mishna. He first says that the Rambam did have a source for his wording — the Rif in *Yoma*, on the spot quotes a *braita* that only mentions "Echta ve-Ashuv" once. He also posits that there is no real contradiction between the *braita* cited by the Rif and the Mishna. In the *braita*, it is God who withholds the T'shuva, after

the person has sinned once. The Mishna, according to the principle proposed by Rav Huna, is speaking of a case in which the person causes his own downfall as the sin loses impact through repetition. According to the *Lechem Mishna*, the Rambam chose the *braita* over the Mishna because he held that it is God who prevents the T'shuva, as is evidenced by the opening of 4:1 — "Ain Hakadosh Baruch Hu maspik beyado."

It is not altogether clear from the *Lechem Mishna* whether the Rambam could argue with the Mishna and the explanation of Rav Huna, and if he could, why he chose not to. This possibility leads us to question the explanation of the *Lechem Mishna*. In Halacha 4, the Rambam mentions five actions that, if a person commits them, "ain hekato lashuv mehem," he is not "likely" to repent from them. The reason Rambam gives for this is "Lefi she'hem d'varim kalim b'inei rav ha'adam ve-nimta choteh ve-hu yedameh she'ein zeh chet." — that these things a person will treat lightly and come to believe that they are not sins. This motivation sounds very much like that of "Na'aseh lo ke-heter" that Rav Huna proposed. Accepting the explanation of the *Lechem Mishna*, we are left with two questions. If the Rambam reflects the "na'aseh lo ke-heter" model of the Mishna totally we want to know why. If the Rambam does not reject the Mishna's portrayal of the effect of the repetition of a sin on the confident sinner, then why does he not mention it in halacha 4?

An alternative explanation of the Rambam can be offered. The Rambam is not favoring the *braita* over the Mishna per se. Rather, he rejects Rav Huna's principle of "Na'aseh lo ke-heter" as the explanation of our Mishna, for it implies that only after the sin has been committed twice is the opportunity for T'shuva lessened psychologically. (The *Yad Hamelech* on the Rambam cites another context in *Hilchot T'shuva* (2:8) in which the Rambam also rejects this line of thinking of Rav Huna.) According to the Rambam, transgressing an *Averah* even

"Isha," not only "Chava," and therefore has the capacity to love God and fear Him through the intellectual-religious experience which is Talmudic learning.

— Talmudic learning will enhance women's ability to ask the right questions in halakhot that pertain to her.

— The Stern College enriched Judaic Studies program in Talmud Torah can eventually contribute to the number of female role models and women experts available for the Jewish community. Stern's program might inspire more women to go to learn at Drisha or in Israel.

— Married graduates of Stern could become less reliant on their husbands, who may not know enough themselves, if they had a stronger Talmud Torah experience at Stern.

— Finally, the centrality of the Oral Law in the educational lives of Stern women would positively affect their Bible studies and Hashkafa and Mussar involvement. (Female Jewish higher education stresses these three areas).

At present the Stern College Judaic Studies department is an umbrella for many diverse visions of higher female Jewish education. One unified vision is required. In light of the particular needs and character of today's generation of women, an educational-Halakhaic position which endorses teaching women Talmud and Hlakha must carry more weight at Stern than the others.

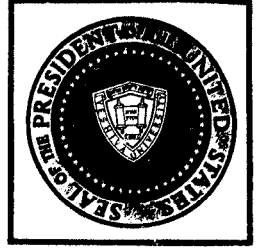
once is enough to set a behavioral pattern, whereupon God will make repentance difficult. The Rambam in his "Perush Hamishnayot" on our Mishna says, "Ain maspikin be'yado la'asot t'shuva, k'lomar lo yesay'o Hashem la'asot be'oto hayom." The Rambam does not agree with Rav Huna's principle that after two transgressions, a pattern has been set, and therefore the sin seems permissible. Rather, he holds that a sin committed even once, if done pre-emptively — i.e., "Echta ve-Ashuv" — sets a pattern by itself, and God will make T'shuva difficult for that individual.

On a deeper level, the question remains: What is behind the argument of twice vs. once? What importance does the number of occurrences have in a case like this?

We can posit that, according to Rav Huna, transgressing the same sin twice would constitute a *hazaka*. The concept of *hazaka* indicates that if a particular phenomenon has occurred three or four times, its occurrence is not random, and even the first occurrence is part of a particular pattern. According to the Rambam, then, at least in certain areas of sinning and repenting, a person can establish a *hazaka* for himself after only one occurrence.

To support this theory, we can turn to 4:4 in *Hilchot T'shuva*, where the language of the Rambam differs from that of the Rif on the same subject. According to the Rambam, a person who eats from a meal where there is not enough food for the *Ba'al Habayit* falls into the category of "Ain Hezkato Lashuv Me'hen." Now whether or not one wants to consider the play on words between "Hezkato" and *Hazaka* to support the idea that the Rambam believes a *Hazaka* can be established after only one occurrence, we still, have the Rif saying on the same *halacha* that if a person is "ragil," i.e. this has happened more than once, then and only then will the sinner have difficulty doing *teshuva*. The Rif was probably working with the standard concept of *hazaka*, whereas the Ram-

Continued on page 6



YU: Yeshiva Unity

By **RAM ROTH**
IBCSC President

As a student of Yeshiva University I demand the right to participate in its growth, and so should every student. Albeit our stay of a few short years is only a moment in the history of our 99-year-old institution, it is our responsibility to help shape its progress. Years ago Yeshiva students had the power of unity and were active in deciding their fate and that of the university's. In the 50th Anniversary issue of the Commentator many students were pleasantly surprised to see how "radical" Yeshiva men could be. A unified student body was able to take hold of an issue and strongly voice their views to the administration.

Over the years several factors may have mellowed student activism. Perhaps people think that the great issues of the 60's and 70's are no longer here and students don't see the need to act. Most recently it might have been due to student apathy which has plagued Yeshiva for the last few years. The main problem, however, is that the student body is no longer unified.

I believe that the overall apathy problem has passed. During the past year the student governments, as well as the new office of the Dean of Students, have worked hard to resurrect student life at Yeshiva. This appears to have solved the apathy problem. As for the lack of issues, they are still here; one only has to look for them. There are a wide range of pressing issues at YU, such as the need for cafeteria meal plans and graduation valedictory orations. We should wake up to act on international issues too. Currently subjects such as Apartheid in South Africa and world hunger are lost "in the shuffle" between the different councils. A single unified governing body would be able to attend to all these issues. This can only serve to help the University to grow and mature. Individual personal pride in YU will increase

as students get involved. Not every demand of the student body will be granted by the University but the student voice will have been heard! As an active member of student government I feel pride in having been a minor part of Yeshiva's constant change and improvement.

The current and most devastating of our problems is ultimately disunity. Universities with five times the number of students manage to have student unity with one governing body. Yeshiva University has student dis-union with a "right wing" government, a "left wing" government and two little republics. This only serves to alienate students who then feel that they are not being represented properly by any government. As our system is now, our student motto should be: **DIVIDED AND USELESS.**

Granted that Yeshiva and its population have varying views and opinions on a number of issues. Nonetheless they are all ultimately governed by the standards of the Yeshiva and of the University. Does having four student governments further our interests? Should every point of view elect its own student council? No! It holds us back.

Indeed every attitude and point of view should vote, but the result should be a single unified student body. This body would be under the control of one student council president, but will be made up of an agreed upon number of representatives from each of the present student governments. A unity government or congress of some sort will prove to have more power and financial support to act on behalf of the student population.

This idea of a single government should be considered by us during the coming semester, and hopefully a referendum later this year will decide if such a proposal should be adopted.

In the meantime, I will certainly be working closely with my colleagues from Yeshiva College, Stern College, SOY and JSS in a unified effort to make the most of the coming year. Ketiva VaChatima Tova.

The Open Book

By **CHAIM BOOK**
SOY President

"My door is always open.
Drop in anytime.
If you have a problem, you must
come and see me."

These phrases probably seem familiar to us all. At the beginning of every year, someone repeats them to us, only later to tell us, "Sorry, but you must make an appointment," or "I'm too busy right now, come back some other time." Sitting here before the school year begins, I can't help but think how wonderful it would be to establish an "open door" policy. Wouldn't it be great if the executive board of S.O.Y. could listen to all complaints and suggestions in the attempt to formulate effective programs?

Realistically, we all realize that once the school year begins, academic pressures will prevent me from hearing everyone. All is not lost, however. The position of shiur representative was established to bring S.O.Y. into every shiur all the time. Every shiur level elects between two and four representatives to communicate their views. When nominating and electing shiur representatives, each student must decide whether to elect a friend requiring an additional line on his resume or a capable, responsible person interested in working to help his fellow students. The choice becomes

clearer when one remembers that next year's S.O.Y. president must, according to the S.O.Y. constitution, have been a shiur representative this year. Elections for representatives will be held soon; please take them seriously and vote for the best, not just a friend.

I stress the importance of elected representatives this year especially, because a new committee has been formed. This committee will be a forum for students to discuss their concerns and ideas together with both Roshei Yeshiva and administration. Obviously, only a limited number of students can participate and those who do should best represent you. They must know your feelings and suggestions. As the year progresses, feel free to raise ideas and thoughts with shiur representatives, as well as with the S.O.Y. executive board.

This Elul marks the fiftieth yearzeit of Rav Kook ztl. To commemorate this occasion we have prepared a lecture series on different aspects of Rav Kook's thought. This month Rabbis Blau, Charlop, and Carmy will discuss Rav Kook on Teshuva. Throughout the year, this continuing series will concentrate on other aspects of Rav Kook.

There are many other things I would like to mention, but perhaps they are better left for another time. Till then, I would like to wish everyone a Ketiva VaChatima Tova and a healthy and successful year.

Shabbat at Yeshiva: A Viable Alternative

By **DANIEL FEIT**

Rabbi Joshua Cheifetz and Danny Mann, a Y.C. Senior who has been appointed Shabbat Program Coordinator, have spearheaded a new effort to enhance Shabbat at Yeshiva. An invigorating program has been planned to accomplish this goal.

Mann views Shabbat as an opportunity to foster feelings of "camaraderie" that will help unite the diverse groups at Y.U. In addition, an effective Shabbat program will help people realize that an enriching Shabbat can be spent at Y.U. Many students have spent time studying in Israel and have enjoyed the Yeshiva Shabbat experience. Such an experience can, and should be, enjoyed at Y.U., too.

Chaim Book, President of S.O.Y., maintains that one should want to stay in Y.U. for Shabbat. In order to generate this interest, exciting programs have been planned. These include a speaker series involving both Roshei Yeshiva and Jewish community leaders. In the recent past, one of the Roshei Yeshiva spoke on Friday night, followed by an informal "tisch." This has been successful in accomplishing its primary goal: to forge a stronger relationship between the Rosh Yeshiva and his student. But, according to Rabbi Cheifetz, there is a growing interest in hearing Jewish community leaders. These speakers would help broaden the students' community awareness.

One community leader already scheduled to speak is Dr. Jerry Hochbaum, Director of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. He is responsible for funding much Halachic research that is undertaken. A Y.U. graduate and a former Y.U. faculty member, Dr. Hochbaum is one of the top Jewish leaders in the world.

Another aspect of Shabbat at Yeshiva is Zemirot. A strong session of Zemirot obviously adds to the Shabbat experience. Rabbi Cheifetz has said that he would like to establish a set order for the Zemirot so that those students who are not yet acquainted with the Shabbat songs can learn them quickly. Other aspects of the Shabbat program include a visit to a nearby nursing home every Shabbat afternoon, a class in *Parshat HaShavuah* given by Rabbi Cohen, and a *D'vor Torah* at each meal.

The main goal of the programs, according to Rabbi Cheifetz, is to attract more students to Y.U. for Shabbat. This was one of the reasons for starting S.O.Y. Shabbat. Various clubs and societies have also sponsored a Shabbat. This helps strengthen the society as well as the Yeshiva in general. JSS and IBC have also had faculty members stay for Shabbat.

Mann has also stated that increasing the reach of the Yeshiva would help eliminate the "grub Shabbat" mentality. Once people perceive that Shabbat at Yeshiva is a vibrant experience, they will begin to feel that Y.U. really is more than a university. "Hopefully, this will be part of a wider change in attitude towards the Yeshiva."

Some of the Shabbat programs are already in place. Rabbi Reichman will be at Yeshiva in the next few weeks, as will Rabbi Blau. S.O.Y. has already scheduled two Shabbat. People expect that advance scheduling and intensified PR will generate extensive interest within the student body. As Mann said, "I don't expect that everybody will be dying to stay in Yeshiva for Shabbat. What I do hope for is that people's attitudes will be changed and that it will be a viable and attractive alternative that will enhance the Yeshiva atmosphere."

ELECTIONS

for

S.O.Y. Shiur Representatives

Three representaives from each Shiur level.

Elections will be held Wed., Sept. 18 (*Tzom Gedaliah*) after Mincha outside the Beit Medrash.

Only those who are Shiur representaives this year may run for S.O.Y. President next year.

Address inquiries to Chaim Book (M221) or Ben Adler (M422)

DO THEY KNOW WE'RE JEWISH?

By LARRY YUDELSON

Allow me the perverse pleasure of presenting the season's first quiz:

You are a third-year semicha student. In two months, you will be a rabbi, another representative of Yeshivat Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, out to save the world. Leonard Fine calls from *Moment* magazine. He wants you to participate in a round-table discussion; the topic is rabbis, why you want to be one, what you want to do as one, and what are the challenges you see ahead of you. With you at the table will be Leonard, his tape recorder, his photographer, a fellow RIETS student, and six representatives of JTS, HUC, and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

Before continuing read the question carefully. You have ten minutes to complete the test. If you have spare time, check your work.

- 1) Who is Leonard Fine? (3 points)
- 2) What is *Moment* Magazine? (3 points)
- 3) Is it O.K. to participate? (16 points)

While you're all chewing on your #2 pencils, a few words about my great-aunt are in order. This summer Aunt Jo survived two potentially traumatic experiences. She went out in a canoe for the first time since the death of JFK. And for one week she ate kosher food. For the first time . . . ever.

The vague circumstances of this are simple: she was celebrating her brother-in-law's marriage, which had survived fifty years, and had, to the surprise of all concerned, produced several kosher-keeping descendants.

I'm acquainting you with Aunt Jo for a couple of reasons. One is that it is worthwhile to realize that not everyone is Orthodox, or freshly lapsed. More about them later. The other reason is the question Aunt Jo asked me in the midst of her kosher week: "Larry, do you think I'm Jewish?"

Ponder that a second. In the meantime, a hint to question number three above: Rabbi Lamm says yes.

Enough pondering. By now it should be clear that my great-aunt doesn't really care what I think. That is, my answer, my psak as it were, will make no difference in her life. She is not going to change her "heathen" ways to make me — or anyone else — happy.

She asked the question not to find out about herself, but to find out about me. Is there a connection between my bold regressive Orthodoxy and the Judaism she's been paying synagogue dues to all these years? On a blunt level: am I mensch — not that the word is in her very un-Yiddish vocabulary — or am I a Moonie? The ramifications of my answer range from her relationship to Judaism, to my receiving a Chanukah present next year.



And now, back to the quiz.

The third question is not hypothetical. In the July/August issue of *Moment* Leonard Fine describes his desire to "chat with some of this year's (seminary) graduates, to find out a little about them and their hopes and fears as they enter the rabbinate." Fine contacted Rabbi Charlop and was informed that YU students would not meet with students of the other schools.

Is this YU's policy? Fine didn't think so, and it turned out he was right. At least, that's what Rabbi Lamm told him.

But when he got back to Rabbi Charlop, Rabbi Charlop clarified the situation: the meeting Fine proposed wasn't against YU policy; rather, the students would be reluctant to take part.

In the end, none of our boys sat at the table, and none of their comments on the rabbinate were recorded, and all of the readers of *Moment* are a bit — if not a lot — more convinced that Orthodoxy has nothing to say to contemporary Judaism. YU is outside the pale. Rabbi Charlop, by not making the effort to find those semicha students who would participate, failed Aunt Jo's test.

Of course, Rabbi Charlop and those students who would not want to participate have their reasons. Are they good ones?

One objection is that sitting with non-Orthodox Rabbis would be admitting that they, despite their lack of adherence to Torah and mitzvot, are rabbis. But what is a rabbi anyway? Halachically, a rabbi is someone qualified to pasken. Practically, a rabbi is someone who plays all the roles assigned to him by his congregation: teacher, social worker, bureaucrat, orator, ad nauseum. For the article, *Moment* wanted the latter kind of rabbi. If Fine had wanted a scholar or a theologian or a posek, he wouldn't have asked for student rabbis; he could have gotten "big name" rabbis. (Frequently he has — see Rabbis Lamm and Wolf in the September 1983 issue).

So what is a rabbi? For starters, someone with a great commitment to Jewish survival.

(I hear cynics snickering about starting pay in Reform temples. Keep in mind that if you don't believe in the afterlife, you need cash up front). Someone who cares enough to go out to Iowa — where he's the only person who cares at all, except for the other rabbis. Someone who . . . you can fill in the blank. Or you can look in *Moment*, and see half a dozen rabbis describe their perception of their job, and discover that 90% of what they said could have been said by a YU musmach headed towards the pulpit. So would joining them have been admitting they were rabbis? Of course. Did sitting out prove otherwise? Of course not.

Another objection is that we don't belong in the company of the other seminaries. We are not a seminary, the argument goes; we are a yeshiva.

It's clear we're a yeshiva. Does this exclude our being a seminary? I would hope not. A seminary trains rabbis for the career of the rabbinate. Isn't that what RIETS is about? Of course, we are also training our musmachim to be identical to that of other yeshivas, and is accomplished by the yeshiva

dispense "Rabbinic Wisdom" in press releases. The claim of the separatists is that by joining in those rabbinic pronouncements, we lead people to believe that non-Orthodox rabbis are, in fact, appropriate people to comment in a rabbinic role. That is, the rabbinic role of theologian and halachic authority, the role of interpreter of God's will.

Yet in terms of the professional aspects of the rabbinate, what is there to legitimize? Reform rabbis go to work on Shabbos. So do Orthodox rabbis. Probably no one else in their congregation does. It is this part of the rabbinate that *Moment* wanted to discuss. To fear the Board of Rabbis is one thing. To fear the rabbis is something else.

But the preceding pipul aside. Assume that to sit with a Reform rabbi is to legitimize him. Legitimize him to whom? Surely not to Aunt Jo. Maybe the Orthodox rabbi might appear a bit legitimate if his Reform colleagues can sit at the same table without flinching.

And again, when the Aggudas HaRabonim issued a statement a year ago in the Jewish Week pointing out that "it is a serious viola-

'To fear the Board of Rabbis is one thing. To fear the rabbis themselves is something else.'

aspect of RIETS. There is no contradiction between seminary and yeshiva, despite what we may hear from other yeshivas and seminaries. If others can't understand that, that's their problem; we have an obligation to be the best yeshiva, and the best seminary, that we can.

The final argument is that by sitting with them, we're legitimizing the Reform and Conservative and Reconstructionist movements. It's the old Board of Rabbis question. But not really. The Board of Rabbis and the Synagogue council exist to

tion of the Halacha to pray in a Reform or Conservative temple," which halacha-abiding Jews were they speaking to?

There is no doubt in the minds of the vast majority of America's millions of Jews that Reform and Conservative rabbis are authentic spokesmen for the Jewish tradition. The question is, are the Orthodox?

By the way, if you want the answers to first two questions at the beginning of this article — who and what are Leonard Fine and *Moment* Magazine — they have copies of *Moment* in the library. Now go and learn.

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