

HAMEVASER

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ISRAEL crisis and conciliation



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EDITORIALS

Welcome Home

In 1966 Hamevaser mourned the departure of Rav Aharon Soloveitchik from Yeshiva University to Chicago. Note was made of Rav Aharon's weekly *hashkafa shiur*, his *halakha shiurim* and his special devotion to his students.

Precisely twenty years later, we are overjoyed to welcome Rav Aharon back to Yeshiva. His return has ignited excitement and anticipation in the *Beit Midrash*. Rav Aharon's first *shiurim* have attracted a capacity crowd of anxious and eager *talmidim*. They have not been disappointed. Rav Aharon's vigorous presentation of *shiur* showcases his extraordinary scholarship and *lamdaus*, his love of Torah and teaching, and a sophisticated wit. Hamevaser hopes that Rav Aharon will choose to bless us with his presence for many years to come.

Kenai Lekha "Chaver"

The typical school newspaper seems destined to an annual condemnation of the particular student council's inactivity and lack of imagination. It is therefore particularly pleasurable to witness the implementation of SOY's "Chaver" program. In brief, the

program matches YP freshmen with *alteh bochurim*. These older students can help the newcomer orient himself to the yeshiva and adjust to the challenges of the dual program. The *Chaver* may serve as mentor and counselor, advisor and guide or simply someone to talk to. The effectiveness of the "Chaver" program remains to be seen. Yet, in the optimistic flush of a new year, the program evinces our unqualified approval.

Rescuing Equality

Hatzolah is more than a phone number on a milk carton. It is a vibrant and essential organization dedicated to saving life, a goal compared by *Chazal* to saving the entire world.

However, an integral part of our community is barred from joining this life-saving organization. No women. Halakhic objections have been raised. But one chapter, pressed for numbers, has found it possible to accept (married) women in order to augment its staff. Certainly the problem is more one of attitude than ethics. Sensitivity, dexterity and other essential qualities are not gender-related. Hatzolah's exclusivity seems unreasonably chauvinistic. The Jewish community deserves better.

Great Expectations

A Message from the SOY President

By HESHY SUMMER

As we start the new semester and everyone gets settled in, each student wonders what is in store for him in the coming semester. The veterans of YU look for changes or think of what could be changed in the system. The newcomers look to their older friends to learn what to expect. Like everyone else, I am in a similar position — looking to change our yeshiva for the better.

One of my goals for this year is to try to make the yeshiva's presence felt by every student. One method of accomplishing this is to sponsor *shabbatonim*. I am sure that I am not alone in reminiscing over the *shabbat* I spent in yeshiva in *Eretz Yisrael*. I remember a certain feeling of closeness to my yeshiva and its *roshei yeshiva*. I'd like to foster such a relationship here at YU.

There is much more to gain from our *roshei yeshiva* than the *gemara shiurim* we hear during the week. For instance, the *divrei Torah* they give us or the *tishim* they present. Furthermore, it provides an extra opportunity for a *rebbe — talmid* relationship to develop.

A second goal is to show that SOY does more than organize various *chagigot* and sales. For this year plans include assorted school-wide learn-ins, discussions and *shiurim* on current topics. This is a chance to get something extra without expending too much effort. I sincerely hope everyone recognizes this opportunity as one to take something from our yeshiva rather than just contributing to it. I wish everyone much *hatzlacha* over the coming year and a *gemar chatima tovah*.

HAMEVASER

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LETTERS

Harbater Revisited

To The Editor:

Rabbi Harbater's essay and Rabbi Eisenman's response both indicate what appears to be a lacuna in the way we educate Orthodox young men for their tasks as rabbis and teachers. Somewhere we do not communicate sufficiently the need for incisive and clear definitions of genre in *safrutah shel Torah*. The distinction between *halakha* and *agada*, for example, is not clear enough. Though there are instances when it is hard to tell what genre one is dealing with, generally speaking the sources speak for themselves. Perhaps it is the Modern Orthodox penchant for the connection between these two genres as a means of giving greater meaning to *shemirat mitzvot* which leaves the boundary lines blurred, but in the area of *emunot v' deot* the markers between the two should be scrupulously guarded.

The prohibitions on women's study of Torah are not predicated on the limits or profundity of women's intelligence, not, at least, in the Talmud. The concern in *Mishna Sota* is with the protective merit of Torah. R. Eliezer's concern was that this merit might lead some women into adultery in the belief that the protection granted by Torah would protect them from the *mayim hame'arerin*. The *gemara* continues this theme with R. Abbahu's view that Torah knowledge increases shrewdness and subtlety which can lead to deceit (*Sotah* 21b).

As regards women's intelligence, *Chazal* have a variety of views ranging from high regard to low esteem, i.e., from *bina yeteira* to *nashim daatan kala*. These speculations about women's intellectual natures are in the realm of *agada*. As such, one is free to agree or disagree with them, at least if one subscribes to the views of Gaon DeSura, R. Shmuel b. Chafni, R. Avraham b. HaRambam and Ramban in his *Sefer Vikuach*. The Halakha supported by such *sevarot* or *agadot* obviously remains in force no matter what one's attitude toward the speculation.

Alternatives to denigration of *Chazal* or to idolizing them do exist in traditional Jewish thought. It seems that our *Musmachim* are

sorely unaware of them. For example, R. Tendler has frequently iterated that *Chazal's* scientific expertise, even when it is marshalled to support *Halakia*, is only as good as the science of their particular age. Thus, if Halakha permits killing a louse on *Shabbat*, that is the *din*. The rationale that this permission is due to the "fact" that lice are spontaneously generated does not change the *din* even though it is scientifically incorrect. Other approaches, perhaps less satisfying, but nevertheless traditional, have accepted the possibility of *nishtanu hativim* — that natural phenomena change. Indeed, differentiated conditions are likely to produce differences in the "nature" of things. This is what R. Shmuel b. Yitzchak implied when he stated that boys mature intellectually faster than girls because of greater contact with intellectual stimuli — *Mitoch shehatinok matzui bevait rabo, nichneset bo*. Equalized education for women may have already produced an intellectual woman not frequently met by *Chazal*, a possibility which R. Samuel B. Isaac would not seem to have denied.

More troubling than the lack of adequate definition of genre is the sense that in areas other than Halakha, *Chazal* are infallible. Indeed, even in the area of Halakha there are those who would not ascribe to individual Sages absolute control over the halakhic *masoret*. For example, see Rabbenu Tam's introduction to his *Sefer Hayashar*. The comments of the *Rav*, R. Soloveitchik *shlita*, do not indicate more than *Chazal's* collective authority, integrity and *neemanut* in respect to the halakhic tradition and their personal lives. Intimating, as R. Eisenman does, that one borders on heresy for denial of a non-halakhic view of *Chazal* is an action which one would have hoped the Raavad's comment on *Rambam's Hil. Teshuva* 3:7 would have cured. Alas, witch-hunting has become popular in contemporary Orthodox circles. Apparently in our inability to deal with our fear of the smallest of doubts (or, perhaps, the smartest of women), we find some relief from the terrible tensions we confront as

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When I'm Sixty Four

Dignity for the Elderly in Jerusalem

By WENDY ZIERLER

Jerusalem, a July morning, nine A.M. We are sitting on the stone pavement in the courtyard of *Yad L'Kashish*, waiting. And here she comes, hopping over our feet, bulleting around our shoulders, to take her place on the bench in the middle of our circle. As we listen to her speak, we wonder: How can such a petite figure contain all that bursting energy? Miriam Mendilow is gutsy, strong, principled and 77 years old. "I feel young!" she tells our group of United Synagogue teenagers. This morning she teaches us what it really means to be young.

Yad L'Kashish, (Lifeline for the Old) began in 1962 when Miriam Mendilow decided to quit her job of twenty-two years as a schoolteacher and devote herself to the task of improving the lives of the destitute elderly. At that time the number of elderly beggars in *Machane Yehuda* and other areas of Jerusalem was increasing. Mrs. Mendilow believed that tossing coins or handing over bills to a beggar did him more harm than good because it encouraged beggary as a vocation. Purpose. Self respect. Dignity. These sustain man, give him reason to live. As the Rambam writes in *Hilchot Matanot Aniym*, chapter ten, halakha seven:

There are eight degrees of *Tzedakah*, one higher than the other... The highest degree of all, above which there is no other is the level of he who takes his fellow Jew by the hand and gives him a gift, or a loan, or establishes him as his partner, or creates for him a job to strengthen his hand until he is no longer dependant upon others...

Mrs. Mendilow was a teacher of the

young. As such she felt the need and the imperative to teach the young something even more basic than reading and arithmetic: respect for the aged and for human life. But society would have to raise the level of the decrepit old in order to foster this feeling of respect in its youth. Instead of casting them away like old parts, society would have to somehow reintegrate the elderly into the work force. Her idea was a workshop.

The first workshop was a bookbindery, equipped with Miriam's determination, a Ministry of Labour teacher, and a load of tattered textbooks. The workers refashioned the books with new bindings and covers. On the inside flap of the covers they affixed notes to the children which said: "Your book has been renewed by the old people of Jerusalem."

After the bookbindery came the ceramics shop, the leather and metalworks, the weavery and the bakery... Today, Lifeline for the Old occupies a complex of buildings on *Shivtei Yisrael* street (five minutes from the centre of Jerusalem, near the Russian Compound) in which 250 elderly and handicapped people work, in thirteen different workshops.

At Lifeline for the Old, Danny Siegel, a poet and lecturer, can be found spending his mornings speaking to groups of young people from every walk of Jewish life. He is chairman of the *Ziv Tzedakah* fund. Every summer he travels to Israel to distribute collected funds to unique charities. The workers at Lifeline come from all corners of the earth — a real ingathering of the exiled. He asks our group. "Who speaks Spanish, French, Hungarian, Russian?" encouraging us to speak freely with the workers and ask them



The workers of *Yad L'Kashish*

to share their feelings about their craft. Nor are they only Jews, for Lifeline has reached out to Christians and Moslems as well.

Many of the workers at Lifeline were those condemned to nursing homes, mental institutions, or the streets. Now, they are artists and craftsmen. As Danny Siegel writes in his book *Gym Shoes and Irises*: "People come from their own homes on foot, by bus, by two buses, to work Sunday through Thursday mornings. They complain of Shabbos and Yontiff because they can't come to work. They are happy."

True, they are human, and human beings are not happy all the time. On the morning that we visited Lifeline, one of the younger workers broke out into uncontrollable sobs because one of the teenagers neglected to take her picture when he was photographing the rest of the women in her workshop. "L'Azazel!" she screamed and would not be consoled. Everyone is entitled to her bad moments. For many of the workers, the good moments come more often and stay longer.

All the workers at Lifeline are given a small stipend for their work. The amount given is the same for each worker regardless of production capability. It is a reimbursement for effort, not results. But to look at their product! "The Elder Craftsman," the gift shop at Lifeline for the Old, sells an array of beautiful items, all handcrafted: *mezuzot*, jewelry, sweaters, baby clothes and shoes, stuffed toys, woven tablecloths, scarves, leather bags, dresses, Judaica pieces. Lifeline's crafts have won prizes all over Israel and the world — including a first prize at an internationally juried exhibit in Germany. A few years ago the Israeli government awarded Miriam Mendilow the Presidential Award — the highest national honor for volunteer service. (Yes, Miriam Mendilow is a volunteer: since 1962 she has been working with Lifeline, receiving no salary at all.) The night of the acceptance ceremony, Mrs. Mendilow brought her workers with her. They had all earned the award together.

The workshops are not the end of the Lifeline story, either. Lifeline provides dental care, shoe repair, a laundry service and an eyeglass dispensary for the elderly and the handicapped. Every day a fleet of three vans traverses city roads and dirt paths alike to bring hot meals to 180 homebound Jerusalemites. Lifeline workers themselves prepare these meals in the Lifeline kitchen. Mrs. Mendilow hopes to raise enough money to employ a few teachers (at \$7,000 a year

per teacher) to visit the homebound on the meals-on-wheels route and teach them a craft that they can do at home. Their work, in turn, could be sold in "The Elder Craftsman." The idea behind her plan is clear — to bring new incentive and inspiration to the homebound.

This year, Lifeline for the Old will be celebrating its 25th anniversary. Plans for the festivities, which are scheduled for March or April of 1987 are underway, in the United States as well as in Israel. The American Friends of Lifeline for the Old (an all-volunteer group) is planning a national short story contest for elementary schools, along with some fundraising projects. Forty-five percent of Lifeline's budget is covered by the sale of goods in "The Elder Craftsman." An

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"synthesized" Orthodox Jews by suppressing those who finally recognize their cognitive dissonances by trying to place them "outside the camp." We have arrived at the antithesis of the Lithuanian view that "no one ever died from a *kashya*." In order to protect ourselves from feeling as though we're dying, we resort to killing each other, hoping to survive in peace.

The tensions of being a Modern Orthodox Jew will not go away unless one decides that living in this world at this time as an Orthodox Jew is impossible. One can then resort to all sorts of escapes; but it is unlikely that contemporary reality and its tensions can be staved off indefinitely. I, for one, give R. Harbater at least the credit for speaking the truth — painful though it must have been — as he saw it. Speaking one's truth needs the sophistication — the much touted *arummit* of our passages above — to speak it in a manner which befits a *Talmid Chacham*. One needs the patience and the understanding that comes from knowing how accurate is the statement, *Ein adam omed al divrei Torah elah im ken nichshal bahem* (*Gitin* 43a). One cannot represent the halakha of *Chazal* without *yirat kavod* for them, but R. Harbater would not be the first to disagree with them on matters of *hashkafa*. As R. Eisenman knows, Ramban, Abravanel, Radak and others have done so. Whether that qualifies R. Harbater to do so is entirely

another matter.

Nevertheless, in the area of Halakha R. Harbater has not taken a stance which is unsupported by major *Acharonim*. His criticism is directed at the poor quality of Torah education for women and the failure to carry out the visions of Hirsch, Hildesheimer, the Chafetz Chaim, Weinberg and, before them all, the *Smag* and Ramoh at the highest, most honest and effective levels. That a great deal of what passes for the Torah education of women is an obscene parody of Jewish study at best and fit for cretins at worst cannot be denied by any observer with an ounce of honest judgment in his or her heart. That this gross insult to women, which is an insult to their Creator as well, should continue without the strongest critique from concerned Orthodox Jews would be a *chillul Hashem* and *bizayon haTorah*.

R. Harbater should take heart that he is not alone in his championing of Jewish women's right (if not obligation) to a respectful and respectable Jewish education. R. Eisenman deserves *kol hakavod*, despite my harshness, for demanding that we not rush to judgment against *Chazal* when faced by the tremendous tensions created by the intersection of Orthodox Jewish values and the present scene. Now, gentlemen and gentlewomen, what are we going to do about seriously upgrading Jewish education for everyone, so we can face the complexities of a Torah life in a much changed Jewish reality with more light and less heat?

Rabbi Michael Chernick
YC '65, RIETS '68



additional five percent comes from government aid. The rest comes from contributors from all over the world. The fundraising activities of the American Friends of Lifeline for the Old are crucial.

But raising money is not the ultimate goal of the American Friends of Lifeline. As Linda Kantor, director of the American Friends says, "We want to bring the Lifeline philosophy to Jewish communities outside Israel." To date, there is no established organization in North America which serves the community in the all-embracing way that Lifeline does. Indeed, *Yad L'Kashish's* success speaks to us like a prophecy:

Ki Mi' Tzion Terze Torah — From Zion Torah will spring forth.

For more information about *Yad L'Kashish*, write:

The American Friends of Lifeline for the Old
52 Wellington Drive
Orange, CT. 06477.
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Heirs of Herzl

Secular Zionism in Disarray

By BARRY HERZOG

Over the past few years, the Zionist spirit has changed its address. It seems to have abandoned its former secularist home in order to reside among the more dynamic religious ideologues. Once, ideological debate among Zionists disregarded religious thought. Today nearly the opposite is true. Religionists, like Meir Kahane and Gush Emunim, increasingly set the tone of ideological debate in Israel, while the secularists merely react. One can argue that the secularists enjoy a large majority of the population, and that they have already shaped the country according to their own ideology since 1948. Their concern is not to change but to preserve the status quo. Thus, though religionists draw more press coverage, the secularists may have as powerful a vision of Israel. Yet, this point doesn't account for a more telling sign of the country's ideological shift — immigration. The secularists largely account for the tens of thousands who leave Israel, while *Aliyah* attracts chiefly the religious. Has secular Zionism lost its appeal? If yes, why?

Secular Zionism posits three arguments. First, the Jews need a homeland for self preservation; a state enables the Jew to defend himself against his gentle oppressors. Secondly, a state is seen as a way to eradicate anti-Semitism not by holding a gun but by gaining the acceptance of world opinion. Secularists recognize that the emancipation alone isn't sufficient to gain full equality, if the Jew is still a stranger in a foreign land. Only after the establishment of a Jewish state would the Gentile treat the Jew as an equal and not as a burden. In the third argument, Zionists adopted nationalism, not to win

Jewish nationalism dictates that Jews have a right to a homeland, yet Israel denies that right to West Bank Palestinians

points with the non-Jew, but because of what it would accomplish for the Jewish people. Zionists, emulating the nationalism of nineteenth-century Europe, believed that all Jews belong together, just as all Germans or French unite under one flag.

Jewish nationalism takes on two forms — ethnic and cultural. The first is nationalism for its own sake; the very notion of a common ethnicity warrants a common country. The second probes deeper into the rich Jewish heritage to find a unifying factor for the people. The Jewish State must advance the Jewish culture and its ideals, its traditions and its ethics. Furthermore, Israel becomes more than just a place for the Jewish culture to thrive; the land itself is part of the Jewish heritage.

Of the different strains of Secular Zionism, this last one most resembles the religious idea of practicing one's religion (read: culture) in one's homeland. Yet, it differs in that

cultural Zionists, or the *Mesorati* (traditional), value tradition, yet they do not wish to live strictly according to Halakha. Were the religious influence in Israel minimal, *Mesorati* Jews might have found an acceptable medium between the extremes of halakha observance and a total disregard for heritage. They might even have defined the religious character of the Jewish State as a whole. However, the *Dati* (religious) movement's insistence that certain halakhot be instituted as law has forced the *Mesorati* Jews to define themselves instead. Though they value tradition, do they wish national institutions to be open on *Shabbat*? If they cherish the land, are they willing to relinquish sacred soil in the name of peace? Theoretically the *Mesorati* offer a viable form of Zionism, but practically they find themselves between the extremes of ahalakhaic and halakhaic Zionism.

Most Israelis today do have a sense of tradition. On Yom Kippur the streets are empty and on the eve of Passover most every family conducts a *seder* at home. However, this is about all the Jewish culture Israelis have. Abba Eban doesn't typify the average Israeli; the second generation Sephardi does. Those who immigrated remain religious, while their children abandon tradition altogether. The middle somehow is lost.

Surrendering tradition to the religionists leaves Secular Zionism in its ethnic form, devoid of any deeper substance. Yet, ethnicity does have one strength. Over the past thirty-eight years, Israel has developed a distinct character which bonds Israelis together and gives them a sense of home. Simply growing up in a particular country instills loyalty and patriotism in its citizens. The Israeli community is further strengthened by its frequent wars. The same friendship and loyalties that life in the trenches forges during war exist in Israel on a national scale. Every battle threatens Israel's survival; every town becomes a battleground. Israelis, and even many *Yordim*, retain their nationalism by this alone.

Yet, even the patriotism created by the constant threat of war is waning. Since 1973, Israel hasn't fought for its survival, but it has fought. Whether or not the Lebanon War was necessary or successful is irrelevant; Israelis don't deny the need to eradicate terrorism or to protect its border towns. But the fact remains that Israel went beyond its border to fight a war which lacked the direct relationship between war and survival that every previous war possessed. The sacrifice of Israeli soldiers lost part of its meaning. Instead of a *mizbeach* (altar), the battleground became the scene of an *aish zara* (foreign, frivolous sacrifice). The Lebanon War killed more than the soldiers in the field; it killed part of Israel's soul as a people. In the aftermath of past wars, Israelis questioned how many must die. This time they wondered why they must die.

While the Lebanon War tested the strength of nationalism, the Palestinian problem challenges its very roots. Jewish nationalism claims that Jews have a right to a homeland and self-autonomy, yet Israel presently denies that right to Palestinians on the West Bank. Numerous arguments can prove both that Israel needs the West Bank for security and that Jordan and the refugees themselves caused their own fate. While these arguments might determine Israeli policy, they don't control the psyche of the Israeli citizen. Having to defend one's right to a land day after day for eighteen years wears one down emo-

tionally. A release is needed to calm the pressure and weight of the burden that the West Bank bears on every Israeli. Meir Kahane on the right and Peace Now on the left both attempt to do so by eliminating the moral dilemma. Others erase it from their minds — abandoning the problem by abandoning Israel. Lebanon and the West Bank have melted away the romanticism of nationalism.

Israel's nationalism also suffers from a change in world geopolitics. In the nineteenth



century, nationalism became a driving force throughout Europe. Jewish secularists welcomed the idea of a Jewish nation partly because of nationalism's international appeal. Since World War II, however, the world has shifted from regional and national divisions to an East-West conflict with most nations allied one way or the other. Israel is decidedly Western. The ideological line that once existed between nations has weakened, and thus so have the differences between Israeli and American. While some Russian Jews who emigrate seek a return to Zion, many others are escaping from Eastern oppression to Western freedom, regardless of where in the West that freedom lies.

The fact that many Russian Jews settle in America also undermines the argument for supporting a Jewish state because of anti-Semitism. Israel has certainly not disposed of anti-Semitism; Zionism was in full swing during the Hitler era, and Russian Jews still suffer from blatant anti-Semitism. In fact, Israel has given a new guise to anti-Semitism — anti-Zionism. Nearly all the Arab countries call for Israel's extinction. The persistence of anti-Semitism in the wake of the State shattered the naive Zionist dream of Jews being accepted as a people.

If Zionism hasn't abetted anti-Semitism, does it at least respond to it by providing a haven for Jews? Some argue that it doesn't for two reasons. First, Jews in America live in religious freedom without fear of danger. The chances of America adopting anti-Semitic policies are negligible. Meanwhile, the Arabs pose a constant threat to Israel's security. Secondly, if America was to turn against the Jews, Israel would not be refuge. Not only does Israel rely on America for defense, but America also has the ability to wipe out Israel in one nuclear stroke. Compressing all the Jews into one small area only makes them easier to be destroyed by a nuclear blast or an overpowering army.

The first argument is compelling. America differs from all previous countries where Jews have wandered. Rather than living as

a guest in a host country, Jews form a part of the nation of immigrants. The individual Jew arguably is safer in the United States than in Israel, where he risks the dangers of war and terrorist attack. American mothers use this equation to squelch the dreams of their children when planning their future.

Yet, while this equation suffices for the individual Jew, the Jewish people as a whole depend on Israel for protection. Operation Moses reawakened the awareness of this necessity. Israel, and not America, saved thousands of Ethiopian Jews from starvation and oppression. Jews helping Jews; it's an old concept with new meaning. Because of Israel Jews finally have the self-autonomy to make Jewish survival a priority. Though circumstance dictates that only America can bargain for the release of Russian refuseniks as a prelude to arms talks, only Israel can be counted upon to sincerely care. Everyone can use powerful friends but one can only rely on his brothers. Thus, whether or not the Western Jew views Jewish safety as a basis for Zionism depends on whose safety he cares for — his own or that of the entire Jewish people.

The second criticism of the preservationist argument — that in case of future American anti-Semitism, Jews are safer if dispersed — makes two claims. First, Israel can never, or not in the foreseeable future, attain a level of military strength equal to every potential enemy. Israel, and consequently all Israelis, are vulnerable to annihilation. Secondly, since this is so, Jewish survival depends on decentralizing, so that one concerted effort will not suffice to kill all Jews.

The counterclaim challenges both assertions. A potential nuclear attack is unlikely both due to Israel's supposed nuclear capacity and to the prevalent fear of deploying nuclear weapons. Israel's military strength also deters a conventional attack, since an enemy would encounter heavy losses in attempting Israel's destruction. Thus, anti-Semitism would more likely lead to a holocaust if the Jews remained defenseless. Even if anti-Semitism rose to a degree that Israel would be attacked, Israel's defenders argue, that is still a better option for Jews than the Diaspora. At least in Israel Jews can defend themselves. Though annihilation might occur more quickly in Israel, it is more certain to occur without a Jewish state. Ultimately, this disagreement in survivalist strategy cannot be decided by argumentation but by empirical evidence, evidence only available *ex post facto*.

What bothers Zionists about this criticism of Israel isn't its logic, but the underlying emotive charge. The current runs contrary to the essence of Zionism. For nearly two thousand years Jewish survival depended on the whim of the Gentile. Since Bar Kochba's time, thoughts of uprising and self-autonomy never took hold. Zionism represented a radical shift away from this passive acceptance of the Diaspora. Zionism was a dream that refused to be deterred by reality. Instead, Jews reshaped the reality to coincide with the dream. Accepting the notion that Jews are safer in America means more than accepting its logic; it means rejecting the Zionist dream and reverting to the Diaspora mentality. Precisely now, when the Jew is no longer imprisoned by ghetto walls, the opportunity exists to forge ahead in the dream. Israel affords the Jew the chance to be proud, not paranoid, about his Jewishness. Perhaps that's what Zionism is all about.

Messianic Pioneers

The Philosophical Roots of Gush Emunim

By ADAM FERZIGER

Their aim was "the reorientation of the base upon which Zionism stands," specifically the "value of the land . . . altering certain social and cultural values as a people returning to its homeland." To this end, Gush Emunim became the standard bearer for those, both religious and non-religious, who believed in settling all the lands captured by Israel in 1967 and insuring that they would never be returned. Along with this basic political stance of no-compromise on territorial issues, has come a distinct messianic flavor combined with a pioneering spirit reminiscent of the original Jewish settlers of Palestine.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, was the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine and founder of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva; Gush Emunim consider him the father of their version of Zionism. Clearly he was unique among the rabbinical leaders of the early twentieth century. Whereas most rabbis saw in secular Zionism a threat to Jewish tradition, Rav Kook saw God's hand guiding the movement towards a role in bringing about the redemption. Rav Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, said in 1979: "The Jewish return to *Eretz Yisrael* and the flowering of the land signify the beginning of the Messianic Age. . . . Thus, for followers of Rav Kook, the State of Israel has tremendous religious significance; it is a giant leap towards the gathering of the exiled Jews and the Redemption. In this light, the glorious victory of 1967 with its redemption of Jewish land was considered another important step. This also explains the depression which overcame these people after the Yom Kippur War, viewing it as a regression in the messianic process. Some went far as to describe that war as God's punishment for not acting quickly enough to secure the newly acquired land after 1967. They cite the words of the older Rav Kook as a basis for this point of view:

Any observer of the rise and subsequent growth of the *yishuv*, will realize that hitherto every regression suffered by us has been followed by greater gains. . . . Indeed, we have seen with our own eyes that out of the darkness there issued forth for us a great light.

Dr. Ehud Sprinzak sums up this attitude toward the State of Israel: "Gush Emunim people thus do not live in the grayness of the day to day, but in the glow of history at large."

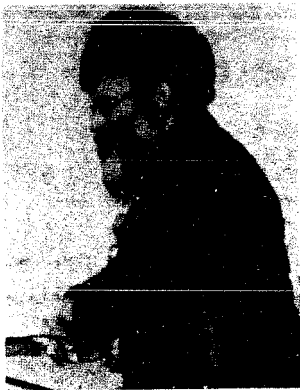
Regarding the land of Israel, they believe that there is a mystical relationship between the land and the people which make the two inseparable. The source for this view is God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15. Thus, it is inconceivable to relinquish Jewish control over any part of biblical Israel. Rav Moshe Levinger, a founder of Gush Emunim and one of the leaders of the Jewish settlers in Hebron, expresses this point:

Zionism is mysticism. . . . Zionism is a movement which does not think in rational terms — in terms of practical politics, international relations, world opinion, demography, social dynamics — but in terms of divine commandments. What matters only is God's promise to Abraham as recorded in the book of Genesis.

For some, the concept of the land and people as inseparable has led to an inability to conceive of the Nation of Israel merely as

a people. Michael Tzvi Nehorai writes in *Nekuda*, the Hebrew monthly published by the Council of Settlements in Judea and Samaria, that the "nation of Israel is no longer the goal, it's just a means — this is the revolutionary concept of redemptive Zionism."

Though Gush Emunim is a relatively new movement, many of its ideological roots form the basis for Zionism itself. In fact, its leaders are more than willing to be seen as the heirs to the legacy of the original Zionist



pioneers, albeit with some major improvements. One of the few official statements published by Gush Emunim stated the following:

Our aim is to bring about a large movement of reawakening among the Jewish people for the fulfillment of the Zionist vision in its full scope, with the recognition that the source of the vision is Jewish tradition and roots. . . .

In an interview in 1976 with Levinger, Haran Porat, a Knesset member and Gush Emunim supporter, and Yochanan Fried, a founder of the movement, they remarked that although the religious fervor of the group is a very significant factor in their ability to succeed, "only the pioneering spirit can lead to a national rejuvenation that will set hearts afire." Clearly this purely political side of the "Gush" ideology has played a major part in its success.

In his article on extreme politics in Israel, Dr. Sprinzak suggests that the apparent reluctance on the part of the government in the seventies to react harshly to the illegal settlement activities of Gush Emunim stemmed from their roots in traditional Zionism. Everyone knows that illegal pioneering played a major role in the *yishuv*; from the very beginning, it was the only way to acquire land. Today's settlers are only following the lead of their forefathers; the only difference being that then the authorities were Turkish or British and today a Jewish government is in power. In the words of Dr. Sprinzak, ". . . the Gush is as Israeli as apple pie is American."

What accounts for the seemingly rapid growth and inculcation of Gush Emunim into Israeli society? Two distinct views on this issue have been suggested. Gideon Aran, in *From Religious Zionism to Zionist Religion*, examines the seeds of Gush Emunim. He points to an exclusive youth group called *Gahelet* which was started by a few very committed students at Kfar Haroeh Yeshiva High School (the first of such schools sponsored by Bnei Akiva, the

religious Zionist youth group), in the early fifties.

What began as a club for ten intimate friends became a radical wing of Bnei Akiva with over one hundred members. They stressed utmost commitment to the land of Israel and the strict obedience to Halakha. In their first newsletter they declared as their goal "...to look forward to the day on which every man in Israel will sit under his vine and fig tree in full observance of the Torah of Israel." After graduation, almost all the leaders of *Gahelet* went to study with Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook; until this point Merkaz Harav Yeshiva was a tiny institution barely surviving on the reputation of its namesake. These young idealistic students, who clearly were attracted by the Rabbi and his mystical interpretation of Zionism, soon transformed this mediocre institution into a hotbed for radical religious Zionist thought.

The former *Gahelet* members, among them Rav Chaim Druckman (presently a right wing religious Zionist Knesset member) and Tzapharia Drori, were the founders and are still found among the leaders of Gush Emunim. Aran suggests that "*Gahelet* represents the trend towards radicalization among national religious youth in Israel." Thus, radical religious Zionism has always been an open and accepted part of the religious political spectrum. The events of '67 and '73 did not give impetus for the creation of a wholly new movement, they just "lent stature and recognition to an already existing mood and a previously articulated set of ideas."

Dr. Sprinzak agrees that Gush Emunim did not suddenly spring up without any roots in society. He suggests that its source is mainstream religious Zionism, and it took the events of 1967 and 1973 to effect a radicalization. Gush Emunim is not a fanatical group "smitten by a messianic vision and parachuted out of the blue into a stunned Israeli society," rather it is the "tip of a serious cultural and social iceberg which grew quietly over many years until circumstances shaped its extremist tip."

The leaders of the "Gush," according to Sprinzak, were educated in a society shaped by a strong religious educational system, the so-called "knitted skull caps." They were taught in their Bnei Akiva yeshivot to be strongly Zionist and religiously committed. Yet, the mysticism behind the state only started when they began studying with Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook. If not for one fateful event, very possibly nothing substantial would have come of these teachings. On Israeli Independence Day 1967, Rav Zvi Yehuda gave a speech to his yeshiva "bewailing the partition of Israel." Three weeks later the Six Day War was fought and won; the students saw the words of Rav Kook as "genuine spirit of prophecy."

At one stroke a flame was lit and the conditions were ripe for imparting to the entire subculture of the knitted skullcaps — the submerged part of the iceberg — the new political ideology of a greater Eretz Israel.

Essentially, the debate between Aran and Sprinzak can be formulated as such: Is Gush Emunim a wholly new concept in religious Zionism with an all-encompassing philosophy or is it essentially part of the mainstream religious Zionist camp with one extreme issue, i.e. settling the land.

Criticism levied against Gush Emunim has centered around three main issues: Mes-

sianism, lack of reality in their plans (an offshoot of the first), and mistaken priorities. The messianic air of Gush Emunim is quite evident; the question is where does the danger lie? Yeshayahu Leibowitz, a leading Israeli philosopher and a vociferous opponent of Gush Emunim, fears that it will go the way of all false messianic movements in history, leaving behind a wounded and scared people. He suggests that if the "messianic bubble" were to burst:

we will have to continue struggling for the survival of Judaism within a secular reality; those Emunim (faithful) people will, like Sabbatai Zvi and his followers, discover that they no longer have any interest in the continuation of the Israeli and Jewish reality. I suspect that when that happens, they will be the first to leave

Binyamin Walfish counters that for any religious Jew, "the messianic hope lies at the core of the Jewish people; without it we are just a nation."

The question of realism focuses on what Gush Emunim envisions for the future of Judea and Samaria. Dr. Shimon Glick, in an article for Tradition called "The Tragedy of Gush Emunim," points out that if one were to ask the average settler what will happen to the majority of Palestinian Arabs who presently reside on the West Bank, he would answer that "we are in the midst of an inexorable process of *geula* (redemption), and that if we but persist a solution will emerge." The priority of Gush Emunim is clearly settling the land of Israel. Many people who consider this an important task are still dubious about these goals in view of some

Could the messianic spirit of Gush Emunim lead to disillusionment and despair?

of Israel's other problems — such as education, Ashkenazi/Sephardi relationships and the religious/non-religious conflict. Furthermore, others worry quite simply about the danger inherent in the total unwillingness to negotiate over land, even if a real possibility for peace does arise. This opinion has been expressed in what Dr. Glick considers a dangerously "arrogant" manner, namely, Gush Emunim's belief that they articulate the Torah's view, when in actuality there exist many varying opinions on this issue. Yisroel Yaakov Yuval claims that Gush Emunim has transformed:

. . . halakha's humane and morally sensitive principle placing the preservation of human lives above the commandments of the Torah . . . into the demand that Jews sacrifice their lives for such hazy, pseudo-historical and sentimental concepts as the ter-

continued on p.11

What Goes Up . . .

The Halakhot of Immigrating to Israel

By NAPHTALI HARCSTARK

What are the mitzvot most essential to Jewish existence? If a survey of the Orthodox community were held today, the leading answers would probably be learning Torah and building a Jewish home. The future of the Jews, by its very nature, rests in the latter. The former, according to Halakha, encompasses one's religious experience; one must involve oneself in Torah study every spare moment. Viewed in this context, the gemara (Avoda Zara 13a) permitting one to leave Eretz Yisrael only to learn Torah and find a wife places the commandment to live in Israel extremely high on the list of priorities.

One might instinctively identify learning Torah and marriage as lying at the core of one's halakhic being, and thus occupying a different plane of importance. This is, in fact, the view of Tosafot (*ibid.*). According to this opinion, no mitzvot parallels living in Israel in importance — with the exception of the aforementioned pair.

Tosafot also posits another view in the name of R. Ahai (*Parashat Emor*, Chapter 103, Section 14), who argues that marriage and Torah are such basic elements of Jewish life that proper women to marry and yeshivot in which to learn would certainly be available in Israel. If, then, Halakha permits one to leave Israel for these mitzvot, all other mitzvot must also be considered legitimate reasons for departing the country.

The Rambam's view is more difficult to clarify. In *Hilkhot Melakhim* (Chapter 5, No. 9) he quotes the gemara permitting departure only for the two abovementioned reasons. However, in *Hilkhot Avel* (Chap. 3, No. 14) he permits a Kohen to leave Israel "for the sake of a mitzvah where there exists no other method through which to accomplish it, for example, learning Torah and finding a wife." *Torat Chayim* (Avoda Zara 13a) comments that the Rambam suggested

that the Tosafot, Shittot, and Rambam agree that one can leave Israel only for the fulfillment of some mitzvah. Therefore, to go abroad for a pleasure tour would not be permissible (although the *Mishnah Berura* does state in *Hilkhot Chol Hamoed* that visiting a friend can be considered a mitzvah).

Other commentators claim that one can leave Israel simply for pleasure, a view dependent on the interpretation of the *mishna* in *Moed Katan* 14b (see Ritva quoting Raavad). The *Shittet Giborim* (*Shavot*,

human hands, but can be sensed in spirit. Or he can build a physical model for a god with which he may establish an immediate relationship. In his quest for certainty, the idol worshipper chooses the latter. He does not worship idols because he lacks belief in God, for he does believe; he simply does not believe enough. His insecurity overwhelms him.

When one wishes to depart from Israel, he is faced with a similar test. He knows that Eretz Yisrael is unique. "Ein Torah k'Torat

son. It indicates that he desires the rebuilding of an ideal Zion.)

Moreover, a person must always have the intention of returning to Israel. Thus, even one who is delayed for economic reasons or for mitzvot must always have intent to return.

Yet, there has been no indication of any right to remain outside of Israel for an extended period of time. One must establish whether there is a responsibility to fulfill toward *Klal Yisrael* which can only be accomplished outside of Israel, and if that is indeed sufficient reason to remain outside Israel according to the *Halakha*. In reference to this, it is worth noting the Rambam (*Parashat Aharei*, Chapter 18, Verse 25) quoting the *Sifrei*: "Although I expel you from the land, always be excellent [observers] of the mitzvot so that they should not be new to you." There is a responsibility to assure that the people in the *Galut* are well-versed in the mitzvot. If one feels that he is indispensable in this matter, this might be sufficient reason for remaining. (Higher authorities should be approached on this matter.)

But once again, even if one chooses to stay to fulfill this responsibility, as soon as he is no longer capable or indispensable, it would appear that the responsibility of immigrating to Israel would again set in.

Eretz Yisrael" is a phrase which he cannot explain but has experienced intimately. He is well aware that this country has a spirituality found nowhere else. Yet, when one must make a decision involving sacrifices, skepticism sets in. The outside world appears so luxurious and comfortable compared to the difficulties in Israel. The person is suddenly plagued with feelings of doubt about the divine influence resting in Israel. When one leaves Israel, as when one worships idols, one displays a flaw in his belief in the ultimate destiny of the world to reach an ideal state.

The Rambam considered the comparison essential enough to write it explicitly. Many commentators take note of a divergence in the words of the Rambam from his presumed source in *Ketuvot* 110b. In *Ketuvot* the idolatry comparison is made to any person who lives outside of Israel while the Rambam applies this only to one who emigrates from Israel (see *Pe'at Hashulchan*). The Rambam's source has been traced to *Torat Kohanim* (*Parashat Behar*, Chapter 5, see *Mishpat HaMelucha*). Did the Rambam intentionally avoid the gemara's version and choose the Midrash? One might suggest that the Rambam wished to indicate that living outside of Israel is less harsh than emigrating. Thus where one would be permitted to leave Israel for certain mitzvot, one should also be permitted to remain outside of Israel for these reasons.

Clearly, it is difficult to find halakhic loopholes permitting extended stay outside of Israel. One must infer that it would be halakhically permissible, if at all, to remain outside of Israel only for the sake of a mitzvah performable in that country, or possibly for economic reasons. (In reference to the latter, it is important to note *Nishmat Kol Chai*, Nos. 49-50, where he discusses losses in wealth which a person should be willing to sacrifice for this mitzvah. In addition, *Chatham Sofer Orach Hayim* No. 203 avidly encourages those who are not able to rejoin in Israel to be in constant support of those who are struggling to maintain our homeland. This is a reflection of the importance that the holy places have for the per-

. . . Must Come Down ?

Yerida: The Emigration Phenomenon

By YEHUDA SUSMAN

I am a *Yored*, which is, of course, to say that I am nothing of the sort. A real *Yored* would never call himself that — it would be admitting to a desertion of the homeland. Even in Israel, few call Israelis residing outside the country by what has become a derogatory epithet. The state has accepted the fact that seven percent of her populace lives outside her borders and now spends her energy trying to cajole some of them to return. The "American Israeli" is no longer viewed with contempt; the individual envies his success, while society as a whole worries about the phenomenon he represents. But the term "Yored" — and its connotations — has been banished from the vernacular.

Semantics, however, do not refute facts. The *Yored* has not disappeared. Depending on whom you ask, there are between 150,000 and 300,000 Israelis living around the world — at least half of them here in the United States. They have their own press in New York and Los Angeles, and Israel's leading papers, *Maariv* and *Yediot* have international editions published primarily for their benefit. The mark of the transplanted Israeli is felt in both legitimate and irreputable areas of the business community. In his success, the *Yored* represents perhaps the greatest challenge the Zionist movement has faced — both in Israel and abroad.

Why do Israelis leave? Growing up in a society that has recently been bombarded with American pop culture, but not the American work ethic, the U.S. is a tempting destination for many a young Israeli. Why live in an imitative miniature, they reason, when the real thing, with its unending vistas and limitless opportunities, beckons? Add to this the tensions of living in a country perpetually in a state of siege, where four wars have been fought in the last twenty years, where the defense burden requires a seventy percent tax bite and where forty days per year of reserve duty is considered the

norm. You begin to wonder why the emigration rate is as small as it is. All things being equal, what should inspire Israelis to stay?

The *Yored* stands at odds with the raison d'être of the remaining Israelis' existence. He has not only abandoned the homeland, he has seemingly turned his back to the Zionist ideal that brought him there in the first place. Zionism is obviously still a potent force in the hearts and minds of many Israelis. In so young a state, with much of the founding generation still alive, it is difficult to escape the recent past.

ingly bears quantitative statistical fruit as well; there are comparatively fewer religious *Yordim* than secular, and religious Jews now make up some 75-80 percent of North American *Aliya*.

Statistics are frequently misleading. Even if the statistics can be trusted — and it is not at all clear that they can be (the official Jewish Agency definition of an Israeli residing in the Diaspora includes those *Olim* who return to their countries of origin; currently 30-40 percent of all *Olim* — the religious *Olim* of North America included.

100,000 Jews should have far-reaching implications for our community. Questions should be raised, issues discussed. Yet there has been little real interaction with, much less lessons learned from, the Israeli emigres in our midst. They remain an autonomous subculture within the larger Jewish population.

Part of the explanation is attributable, no doubt, to the immigrants themselves. Not surprisingly, they have shown no real desire to assimilate into the community as a whole. The synagogue/Jewish Center axis of American Jewish life is foreign and uncomfortable to them. More importantly, involvement in the native community would be tacit admission to being part of it. Unlike previous waves of Jewish immigrants, *Yordim* do not see themselves as potential American Jews; to their own eyes, they are, and will always remain, Israeli.

For its part, American Jewry has given a lukewarm welcome to the Israeli newcomers. Unlike Soviet or Iranian immigrants, the Israeli emigres make us feel uneasy. Zionism does not shape our identity, as it does for the secular Israeli. As a religious imperative, it is (if *Aliya* statistics are used as a barometer) none too compelling. Yet we still sense that the *Yored* has no legitimate place here, that Brooklyn can never replace Ramat Gan. Israel is a powerful symbol for us. It is a unifying force in our divided community, it is a security blanket in a post-Holocaust world. The *Yored* takes away the luster from our heretofore relatively untarnished symbol. He makes us look critically at a state we would rather unquestioningly admire, and we resent him for it.

Even worse, the *Yored's* existence quietly demands that we take stock of ourselves. We forcefully deny his decision, but we sense the hypocrisy inherent in our condemnation. Does lack of *Aliya* differ significantly from *Yerida*? Is it worse? We have not sent our sons to Lebanon, we have not held our army buddies as they lay dying in our arms. His background is not the same as ours, but spiritually the *Yored* is our mirror image.

To the best of my knowledge, there has been no statistical study on the religious orientation of *Yordim*. The common perception seems to be based on a wishful assumption, not facts), they have become an excuse for a smugness in the religious community that is as dangerous as it is unwarranted. *Yerida*, the argument goes, is a problem that faces the secular Zionist movement alone and not *Knesset Yisrael* as a whole. Moreover, the theory continues, the phenomenon reveals the inherent flaws in the secular movement and the bankruptcy of the purely nationalistic principles that guide it. Add to this notion the new, undisputed self-confidence of the Orthodox community has discovered of late. An attitude of "we've" certainly put "them" on the run. results.

This kind of sentiment is destructive. It on-

But to the secular Israeli, the nationalism embodied in Zionism is not merely the leg on which his claim to his home stands. It defines his Judaism as well. In that regard, Zionism might be described as "pragmatic idealism." Questioning the notion of a living and vibrant Jewish national presence is tantamount to an attack on the Israeli's own personal identity. And it is this same Zionism that the *Yored*, by his very being, attacks. It is not surprising that few *Yordim* think of their absence as permanent. To consciously accept the possibility would require a radical shift in thought, a rejection not only of a lifestyle to which they've grown accustomed to, but of an entire ontological perspective. Similarly, the Israeli back home may rationally understand his compatriots' reasons for leaving. Psychologically, though, he can never sanction their actions.

The religious Zionist, on the other hand, when faced with the phenomenon of *Yerida* does not grapple with the ontological dilemma. Like his secular counterpart, he sees a Judaism that is nationalistic in character (one need not be a Zionist to see that), but it is a nationalism that can be viewed only within the wider Halakhic framework. Zionism loses the preeminence assigned it by the secularist and takes on a subsidiary nature: it is but another facet of his religiosity. Therein lies the paradox. For with loss of primacy, the political theory of Zionism becomes the religious imperative of Judaism — and is immeasurably strengthened as a result. The qualitative dogmatic edge seem-

As an ideal, Zionism has rarely proved a powerful magnet for great masses of Jews

Yet, this line of reasoning only goes so far. As an ideal, Zionism has rarely acted as a magnet for masses of Jews. The survivors of the Holocaust and the waves of Sephardic immigrants went to Israel not out of a sense of idealism, but because there was nowhere else to turn. Only 50,000 American Jews have emigrated to Israel — hardly the sign of a strong, attracting Zionist "force". It is a rare ideal that is powerful enough to capture the imaginations of more than a dihard few for very long. It is hardly reasonable to expect that Zionism — an ideal that was adopted by the majority of the citizenry only upon their arrival to the state — should stand up under the pressures that the populace has had to endure.

In his success, the Yored represents perhaps the greatest challenge the Zionist movement has ever faced

ly serves to further fan the flames of religious tensions when they are most in need of being extinguished. Are the religious so strong that they can disregard eighty percent of the *Zibur*? If the answer is yes, then there is something fundamentally askew in the religious perspective. The problem is national in scope, and a solution demands national — even global — introspection.

Emigration, unlike most issues in Israeli society, has a direct effect on the world Jewish community, particularly here in the United States. An influx of more than

Serious interaction with him is painful: it is easier to condemn from afar.

This past summer in Israel I struck up a conversation with a cab driver who excitedly told me of his impending "business trip" to America. Initially taken aback by my lack of enthusiasm for his plans, he quickly recovered and asked me why a "Zionist" like myself was not living in the Holy Land. My reasons, I assured him, were sound. But as I enumerated them, I realized that they could not compellingly answer his implicit rebuke. For I am a *Yored*. Aren't we all.

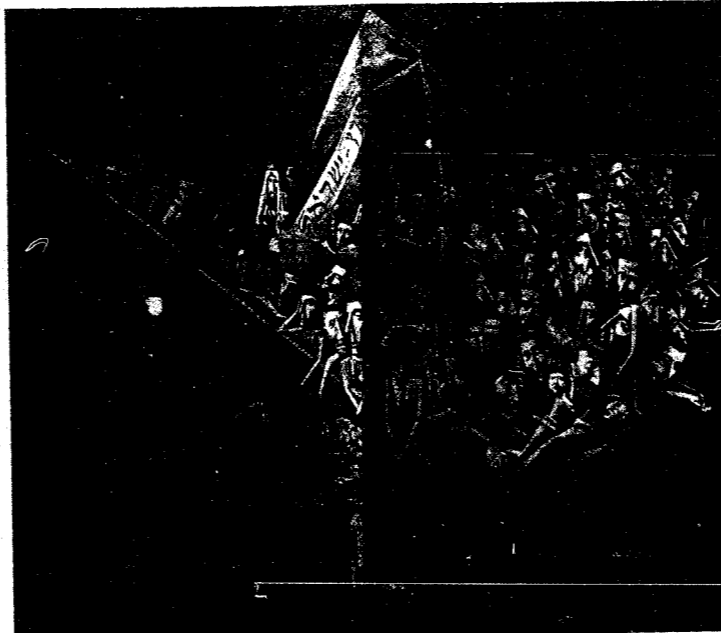
Why does the Rambam compare one who emigrates from Israel to an idol worshipper?

these two cases as examples, implying that one can leave Israel for any other mitzvah as well. One might suggest that the Rambam's allowance for leaving Israel applies to any mitzvah if no other method exists for its fulfillment, while for Torah and marriage, one could leave, even assuming availability in Israel, if he thinks the quality in *Chutz Laaretz* supercedes that of Israel. (For a discussion of whether departure is permissible for qualitative reasons alone, see *Sedei Chemed*.)

Regardless of the correctness of the *Torat Chayim's* interpretation, we can conclude

Hilkhot Melakhim states, "one who emigrates from Eretz Yisrael is as one who commits idol worship."

The nature of this comparison seems rather harsh. Yet, psychologically, similar factors influence the emigrant and the idol worshipper. The idol worshipper relinquishes a spiritual relationship with God in exchange for prayers to a product of man's handicraft because of insecurity. Lacking an actual divine revelation to assure him of God's caring and watchful eye, the person has two choices before him. He can pursue a relationship with God, who cannot be felt with



Endless Voyage by Mitchell Siporin

I Pledge Allegiance Two . . .

The Loyalty Dilemma of the American Jew

Should a non-Jew feel as strongly about his land, state, or people as we do about ours, watch that man carefully

By ROBERT KLAPPER

Earlier this year, a United States citizen by the name of Jonathan Pollard was found guilty of passing government secrets to a foreign power. Jonathan Pollard is Jewish. That fact would draw little attention on its own, but the foreign power Pollard spied for was Israel. His conviction was the cue for a torrent of letters and statements from Jewish leaders aimed at assuring the American public that our solidarity with Israel will never damage U.S. interests. Most rested their case on the idea of an eternal commonality of purpose between the U.S. and Israel. Some went further, asking in an aggrieved tone why Jews should be suspected of disloyalty more than other ethnic groups, such as Irish-Americans.

Actually, there was no evidence that we were at all distrusted; the letters probably stirred more trouble in that regard than had existed previously, for the tenuousness of their arguments served as evidence of the American Jew's divided loyalties. It is clear that the United States and Israel share cer-

tain general goals, e.g. a lasting Middle East peace, but it is no less evident that they frequently disagree on specific questions of strategy and ideology. And Israel is not the most important element of America's universe; the U.S., no doubt regretfully, must at times sacrifice the aims she shares with Israel for the sake of a greater national interest. As the Pollard case itself demonstrated, to view U.S. and Israeli interests as identical is terribly naive. That a need was felt for statements espousing such a view reveals not the uncertainty of America's attitude toward the role of Jews in its society but rather our own uncertainty about that role.

The problem under discussion is often categorized as one of dual loyalties, but in fact American Jews possess three at times conflicting allegiances; we are not only citizens of the United States and supporters of Israel, but also members of *Am Yisrael*, and that imposes certain halakhic responsibilities. To those who ask why we should be more suspect than other ethnic groups, I

reply that I hope our bonds are stronger than mere cultural affinity, and even than nationalism. And should a non-Jew feel as strongly about his land, state, or people as we do about ours, watch that man carefully.

Of course, the internal conflict varies in degree from person to person; lukewarm Zionists and assimilated Jews, for example, will have one or more of the allegiances mentioned above only in extremely diluted form. I write, though, as an Orthodox Jew and as one for whom *Medinat Yisrael* occupies a place in the religious sphere as well as the pragmatic. As such, I must ask myself why I am still here in America; what right do I have to leave myself in this ethical tangle when a solution is readily available in the form of *aliyah*? (It should be noted here that according to many authorities there is an obligation to live in *Eretz Yisrael*, namely *mitzvat yishuv haaretz*, regardless of the answer to the question I have raised. A

that mitzvah.)

Some argue that American Jews must stay here, ironically, for the sake of Israel. They point out that Israel's survival is predicated to no small extent on a constant flow of military and economic aid from the U.S., and that aid is forthcoming only so long as we maintain significant political power here. This position is certainly tenable, though Israel itself denies its validity. Conceivably, one arguing such a position could evade the loyalty trilemma by deciding to press only for policies that would serve American interests. Along similar lines, it can be argued that we must stay here to ensure that the rescue of Iron Curtain Jews remains a U.S. foreign policy priority.

I think, though, that a stronger case can be made; we must realize that moving to Israel would not enable us to escape our tangle of loyalties. I am an American patriot not because I love the American soil, but

We must realize that moving to Israel would not enable us to escape our tangle of loyalties

discussion of that issue may be found on page six, "What Goes Up" by Naphtali Harsztark; let us assume, however, that the people under discussion herein have valid halakhic excuses for being here in terms of

because I love American ideals and admire my native land's accomplishments in the ethical realm. I am not at all convinced that the Israeli government matches the American in that regard. At the very least, it must be conceded that simply because of its superior power America has more to do with the implementation of Jewish ideals in the world. Yes, perhaps the *Medinah* is indeed the *atchalta degeulta* but *Mashiach* is certainly brought as near by worldwide moral improvement as by an increase in Israel's strength. Israel is not a panacea for the American Jew beset by a conflict of allegiances; there too his heart would be divided.

What then are we to do when our loyalties pull in opposite directions? Some instances are susceptible to halakhic analysis in terms of *kiddush Hashem*; *chillul Hashem*; and *pikuach nefesh* but most must be dealt with on a more abstract plane. Spying, it seems clear, is rather too risky to be useful, but lobbying is almost risk-free. Before making any decisions in this area, let us remind ourselves why we love America and what the purpose of the Jewish state is and choose the option most likely to advance society in the direction of the Jewish ideal. None of these choices will be easy and making them is a heavy burden to place on every Jew; but the load is a pleasant one. After so many centuries in which not one country was worthy of our allegiance, we can count our blessings in that we have two. The *Midrash* characterizes the Jews as a people unable to find true comfort outside *Eretz Yisrael*; actually no truly committed Jew is comfortable anywhere while there is injustice in the world. Let us do our utmost to earn our comfort.



Do these loyalties conflict?

Reflections of an American Zionist

Transplanting American Values to Israeli Soil

By ADAM FERZIGER

Four years ago, I arrived in *Eretz Yisrael*, an American yeshiva high school graduate, looking forward to experiencing what others had described as "the greatest year of their lives." Two years later, I entered Yeshiva University fully convinced that all my expectations and more had been fulfilled during my time spent learning in yeshiva in Israel. As I commemorate the fourth anniversary of my arrival in Israel, I take this opportunity to reflect on the disparate environments in which I have found myself over this period.

In terms of passage of time, my tenure in Israel went by exceedingly quickly — almost like one, continuous, happy dream. Since then, however, my days have returned to a certain volatile reality. Furthermore, I relate my stay in yeshiva in Israel to a unique spiritual high which I personally have found impossible to achieve in my present environment. Nevertheless, I am sincerely pleased with my current situation. In fact I believe that many experiences and personalities, as well as American society in general, have positively affected my growth as an individual and as a *ben Torah*. Unfortunately, my impression is that these influences are sorely lacking in Israeli society; my experiences within the religious community particularly have borne this out.

I take one example which I see as most seriously expressing the aforementioned juxtaposition. Although people both in Israel and abroad grieve over Israel's lack of money and resources, I have little doubt that these problems could be solved if only a supply could be found of the element most blatantly lacking in Israel — tolerance. The dearth of this most valuable commodity is demonstrated by the prevalent attitude (which seems to be implanted through the educational system) that there can be only one opinion on every issue. Any position which contradicts or in any way strays from one's own inspires animosity and rebuke.

This intolerance is most clearly visible across the religious and political spectrum. Currently the relationship between the religious and non-religious has reached an



towards slowing the proliferation of settlements in Judea and Samaria with placing a roadblock in front of the redemption. Do these people possess the only direct line to the Almighty?

Rev Yehuda Amital, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Har Etzion and a leading figure in

tions that people have of us? Furthermore it seems quite sad that to the outside observer the most significant common denominator among religious Jews is their ability to castigate others.

At this point, the reader might conclude that I have renounced my connection to the state of Israel and am committed to living a Torah life in the more tolerant society of America. This is far from the truth. My criticism grows out of sincere loyalty, concern and most of all faith in Israel as the future of the Jewish people. Rather than sit-

ting back and deciding that Israel is not good enough, I believe that formulating the problems which exist must be the impetus for instituting change. We who feel a strong bond to Israel must educate and develop ourselves in ways that will enable us to go to Israel and make concrete contributions to society. Our interest is not in creating an America in the Middle East; however, we ought to bring the virtues which we have learned in America and work towards inculcating these values into our true homeland.

Many of Israel's problems could be solved if a supply could be found of the resource most blatantly lacking in Israel, tolerance

all-time nadir. American newspapers have trumpeted the recent burnings of bus shelters by the Ultra-Orthodox and, in response, the burning and desecration of a synagogue in Tel Aviv in June. More recently, we read of the desecration of the graves of Herzl, Jabotinsky and Golda Meir by self-proclaimed anti-Zionists. Political extremists can be found on both sides, yet I can only impart my personal experiences with the religious right. An air of haughtiness pervades the statements attributed to this group. I have heard statements denouncing those who advocate giving back land for peace as heretics, proclamations that leaving the land of Israel spells religious death for a Jew, and speeches equating a pragmatic position

the religious Zionist community in Israel, laments the current situation. He spoke to the students of his yeshiva a few days after the incidents at the bus shelters and the synagogues. Just a few weeks previously he had participated in a conference at the *Beit Hanasi*, the President's residence, where religious and secular leaders discussed ways to improve the relationship between their communities. Rev Amital felt that secular leaders have two pictures of religious Jews: there are those who throw stones at Sabbath desecrators as they drive in their cars, and there are others who prefer to throw their stones at Peace Now activists. Are we to have any chance at creating a united people in the land of Israel if these are the percep-

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TRENDS

Fighting for Acceptance

Resurgence of the Baal Teshuva

By ERICA SCHOONMAKER

On April 8, 1966, *Time* magazine asked on its cover "Is God Dead?" Today, only two decades later, society might answer with an emphatic, "No." God is alive and well and living on the Ivy league campus, in the office, and in the bookstore. Along with the revival of the theological questions that have plagued man throughout history, we take with us a new desire for morality. From rock and roll for charity to "Hands Across America," we seem to be on a global shift from the "me" generation to the "us" generation.

Fran Schumer, in her article "Return to Religion" in the April 15, 1984 *New York Times Magazine*, had this to say about the present concern with religion:

It is not that a rarified group — writers, artists, and professors — is flocking back to houses of worship and becoming true believers. What these intellectuals share is a revived interest in traditional religion and the questions it raises and seeks to answer. A century that has seen the Gulag, the Holocaust, Hiroshima, and the spread of nuclear arms has caused some who used to champion rationalism and science to humble themselves. Since their secular gods have failed, they are beginning to view more traditional gods with a new curiosity.

To localize this movement we look inward, to the *baal teshuva* movement, and the home of its greatest success stories, Israel. An unspecified Israeli press survey appearing in the *Jewish Week* of February 1, 1985 reported that there are 11,000 *baalei teshuva* living in Israel, more than 6000 of them new immigrants, primarily from the United States. With the number of "returnees" continually on the rise, we must question the potency and permanence of the movement and examine whether the *baal teshuva* movement is only a concentrated manifestation of a popular trend or if it is substantive enough to make a lasting impression on the annals of Jewish history. Our examination of the phenomenon must include the climate in which it started, its founders, its candidates, and present day reactions to it.

Although the Six Day War of 1967 was a pivotal point for Jewish awareness, the threads of a religious return were evident a decade before. In 1959, Zalman Aran, the Labor Minister of Education sponsored a bill in the Knesset to further "Jewish consciousness" in non-religious public schools. This was a stab at the Socialist Zionist movement that was capable of molding the government and the economy, but could not mold the hearts of so many African and Asian immigrants with a traditional past. As the country grew and became a crucible holding men of various nationalities, the common denominator amongst all "Israelis" remained their Judaism, as much or as little as they retained.

The Six Day War brought this reality to the forefront. No longer could people ignore their past; once again the antagonism of the non-Jewish world made Jews more cohesive. The military victories, the regained possession of sacred, historic sites, and the establishment of a Jewish state closer to its biblical borders paved the way for a national openness about religion.

At about the same time a few thousand miles away, two American rabbis were questioning the rebellious, anti-war, anti-materialism movement in America. The time seemed ripe for introducing Orthodox values. Rabbis Noah Weinberg and Mordechai Goldstein went to Jerusalem to investigate programs to educate Jews about their heritage. Most yeshivot in Israel had made very little accommodation for the newly observant, thus requiring a completely new system.

Out of this rose an entire new network of schools, starting with the Diaspora Yeshiva on Mount Zion in 1967. Started by Rabbi Goldstein, this yeshiva was geared to attract those long-haired remnants of the sixties generation who were roaming around Jerusalem's Old City. Soon after, a simple invitation for a Friday night dinner unlocked the key to the *beit midrash* of a number of *baal teshuva* yeshivot, including Mevasseret Yerushalayim, Magen Avraham Shma Yisrael, Ohr Sameach, and Aish HaTorah.

Originally, the clientele of these yeshivot were those who had tried it all and turned to Judasim as yet another option for the searching soul. Janet Aviad, author of *Return to Judaism* interviewed a prospective yeshiva student:

The choice seemed to be the drug scene in New York City or a Midwest commune...The spirituality which I had always seen as part of me needed to find a specific shape. Eastern religions seemed ridiculous. I couldn't go for Christianity. All my friends were lapsed Catholics and I couldn't stand Protestant Fundamentalists. I considered it somehow cosmically important to be Jewish. I had been part of a commune, but wasn't really into this organic culture stuff and the whole lifestyle to which I seemed to be heading...So I decided to go to Israel and see what would happen.

Although in some cases accurate, this portrait appears rather extreme. Today there is no typical student in the *baal teshuva* yeshiva. Many students come from observant homes and have a day school education. They opt for the *baal teshuva* yeshiva for a stronger philosophical outlook on Judaism.

Rabbi Andy Kaufman, the executive director in New York of Aish HaTorah, says that those without an observant background have to be talented, searching, and bright to keep up with the fast pace of the studies. Out of the two thousand people a year that walk

through their doors, Aish HaTorah manages to keep up a *beit midrash* of two hundred students. Along with this figure we can tack on EYET, the women's school, an Israeli *beit midrash* of 35 (80 percent are *baalei teshuva*), 45 students on the summer Jerusalem fellowship program, and 600 students who come on the Discovery program, a three day seminar for those completely unaffiliated.

Rabbi Kaufman attributes the growth and popularity of the yeshiva to Rabbi Noah Weinberg (his "48 Ways" class, based on the 48 ways to acquire Torah from the sixth chapter of *Avot*, has been running for twelve years), the longest running series in Jerusalem), the creative genius of the staff, a great deal of research and the desire of the students to find a more meaningful lifestyle. Rabbi Kaufman puts the process in simple terms: "They see a lifestyle that makes sense, that they will benefit from personally, and so they're intellectually honest and they change."

Israel seems like an ideal setting for these changes. The knowledge gained inside the walls of the yeshiva is brought to life with a step outside. The *baal teshuva* need not feel alienated. In Israel not only can one newly observant blend in with a religious community, he or she has the choice of a community that reflects his or her newly acquired values.

Rabbi Kaufman pointed out that students are encouraged to make *aliyah*. While some yeshivot are known for their anti-Israeli sentiments, Rabbi Kaufman said of Aish HaTorah, "We're madly in love with the land."

When questioned about encouraging students who do stay in Israel to join the army, Rabbi Kaufman replied, "We don't push the army. We have our own war. We're here to create a renaissance of Jewish history. Although we're not a *hesder* yeshiva, we do encourage guys to go into the army and not opt for the "patur" (exemption) — that is, after learning for a number of years."

It seems that with this attitude, *baalei teshuva* and Israel live in harmony. In November 1978, the Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research conducted a public opinion survey consisting of a short series of questions related to *baalei teshuva*. Five hundred and thirty two Israeli urban residents were asked to assess the religious values of Israeli society. Sixty-eight percent responded that Israel did need a strengthening of religious values and fifty-one percent felt that the *baal teshuva* method was the way to achieve this. Forty-six percent said the *teshuva* movement has a positive effect on Israeli society, while only four percent felt it to be negative.

This poll of 1978 echoes a general tolerance, if not a positive attitude, toward the movement. However, within the past two years, the movement has encountered some obstacles — the greatest being an attack from secular Israeli parents. These parents have

turned to the Knesset and demanded a legislative investigation of these "Jewish missionary" activities and proposed a public campaign against the trend. The May 11, 1984 edition of the *Jewish Week* quoted a number of responses from these parents:

— I've lost a son. It's as if he's fallen in the war.

— They've made a parasite out of him. Instead of working, he sits in a yeshiva and learns all day.

— They brainwashed my daughter and she is now estranged from the family.

The trend to leave the yeshiva is also growing and cannot be ignored. Rabbi Kaufman feels that many who leave have not had enough exposure to want to stay. Family pressure contributes to a number of "drop-outs." Some students who cannot live in Israel find that, once in America, they have no one to talk or relate to. Perhaps the temptation of one's past is too overwhelming when confronted with it.

Micha'el Levin, author of the book *Journey to Tradition*, which traces his foray into the *baal teshuva* yeshiva accounts for his leaving in a quote from his diary:

I have taken giant steps away from Orthodoxy and I feel a bit odd about the whole thing. Part of the problem is Orthodox Jewish culture. There is a bias against *baalei teshuva* and I can't seem to get around it... I'm tired of being an outsider among my own people. I'm lost to Judaism, Orthodox people believe. Regardless of all I've done over the past five years. I've spent more of the past five years perfecting my Judaism than 95 percent of Jews. And what does it matter? "Well it's very nice. But would you want your daughter to marry one?"

Levin's contention — although perhaps a little drastic — is one that the Orthodox community must confront. Is "kiruv *rechokim*" (bringing close the distant) effective without "chizuk *havrovim*" (strengthening those who are close), here denoting not just a pep-talk to keep the *baal teshuva* distant from past temptations, but also the complete acceptance of this emerging community. Without the support of the entire Orthodox community, the *baal teshuva* remains on the periphery, a strange mutation of an old Orthodox tradition that is soon to disappear.

The goal of the *baal teshuva* yeshiva is to prepare a young adult with the necessary knowledge and commitment to enter the Jewish community. From that point he must develop his spiritual and intellectual ties to religion with the rest of the nation. It is too soon to tell if the "return back" will be a permanent one. However, those committed to the *baal teshuva* movement continue to use their creative resources to lead students into the yeshiva. The Orthodox community must meet the challenge of leading them out.

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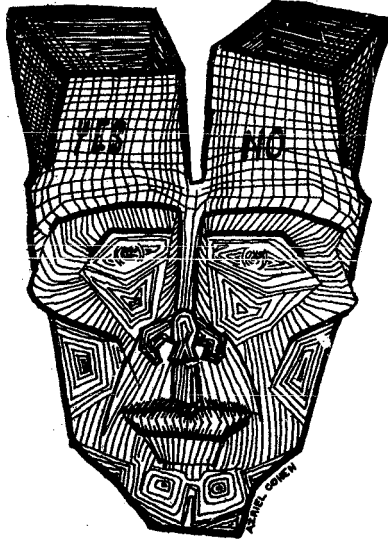
Divergent Definitions of Halakha

By ALAN STADTMAUER

Editors' Note: In the final issue of last year we printed "Open the Boxes" by Alan Stadtmauer. Unfortunately, we accidentally omitted the section in which the author deals with non-Orthodox views of Halakha. Since the section forms an independent unit, we are printing it here with slight additions and changes so that it may better stand on its own. We invite our readers to submit Letters to the Editor dealing with the original piece as well.

Generally, or at least publicly, the Orthodox community responds to the Conservative and Reform movements' views and suggestions by shouting about heresy and denouncing their position as anti-Halakhic. At times the insults result in angry retorts, on other occasions we are met by blank, uncomprehending stares. "Who's non-Halakhic?" asks the Reform rabbinic student; "The Halakha has room for change," writes the Conservative rabbi, both unable to see what all the yelling and screaming is about.

Unfortunately, the fault often lies with us. We banter about a term whose meaning appears so clear to us but which, frustratingly, has taken on multiple meanings. We tend to forget that the very religious strivings of many Conservative and Reform Jews, especially among their rabbis, manifests themselves as a commitment to Halakha. Of course their definitions seem somewhat bizarre, at one extreme bearing absolutely no relationship to our vision of Law, and the other producing a gross parody of *she'eit u'teshuvot*. We reject the possibility of multiple kinds of Halakha, but to them the legitimacy of a pluralistic Halakha is a given. Many claim that Halakha has within it certain power to effect change — and learn this from the appropriate *gemarot*, while others suggest that *Chazal* were more philosophy-oriented, and the entire Talmud should be read as one long Midrash. Still others believe that it was the Rabbis who removed the spirituality which the prophets had infused into Judaism and to which we, living in a post-Halakha age, must now return. The variety of views exceeds even the number of *piskei Halakha* regarding shaving during *sefirat*. The notion that Orthodoxy is the original, valid Judaism, but now it is time for a change, may have been the founding principle of Conservative and Reform, yet



virtually no one preaches that gospel today. Everyone purports to be "Torah-true."

Given the Conservative and Reform conviction that they legitimately interpret Halakha, our attempt to refuse granting them legitimacy by categorically denying their views becomes absurd. Naturally, under such circumstances, when we try to respond to non-Orthodox concerns by lumping them all together and claiming to be the bearers of an uncompromisable Covenant from Sinai we find ourselves met by stares of disbelief, accusations of intransigency and demands for pluralism. After all, they believe, we are all upholding the Halakha, and it is only the Orthodox who are too stubborn to live it as it was originally meant to be.

On the other hand, I have found that precise and intelligent explanations, which carefully delineate the difference in our definitions, help non-Orthodox Jews immensely to grasp why Orthodoxy places their views outside the pale of Halakha and refuses to legitimize their movements. As one Jewish

Week reader complained, "Just once I would like to hear or read of an Orthodox rabbi who doesn't negatively or emotionally react to the ideas or approach to Jewish law of the Conservative movement but intellectually responds." Again and again I hear that demand being made — especially among the college and rabbinic students with whom I have contact. As I lack a complete understanding of their position, however, I am at a loss to respond; I may be excused as a student, without full training and experience, yet a smug, self-righteous ignorance remains the hallmark of Orthodoxy's response to the majority of the Jewish world. So why do we act shocked when non-Orthodox Jews say they'd rather their children marry a Christian than an Orthodox Jew?

Fortunately, ignorance can be dispelled — all it takes is knowledge. After spending years training to learn, think and communicate, and many more acquiring a firm grasp of Torah, we require little to be able to respond to the challenges of Conservative and Reform. Spending time studying ~

through readings, classes and personal contact — the views of non-Orthodox movements provides a valuable supplement to the training of both Orthodox rabbis and laymen. Developing sensitivity and understanding of the mindset of our fellow Jews may be the most crucial contribution we can make toward mending the rift threatening our people.

In the period after I wrote the original article, I have had experiences which reinforce my belief in the need to attain a more realistic understanding of Reform and Conservative Jews. Though "horror stories" exist, no doubt, for all sides in the issue, I'd like to relate something that happened just as this issue was going to press. I believe it exemplifies the dangers of our stereotypes.

I was at the Hillel office of a college in Connecticut recently when a young man dropped in, apologizing for his lateness (it was an hour after our program was scheduled to begin) and explaining that he had just gotten out of rehearsal for a show he is in. While we were chatting, he told us that he grew up going to a Conservative synagogue every *Shabbat*, and in addition to keeping kosher and observing *Shabbat*, he was very active in *shul* life. His excellent voice and love of the *tefilah* led him to want to become a *chazan*. He applied to Y.U.'s Cantorial Training Institute, but when he came, the rabbi whom he met was hesitant to teach him because he was Conservative. "All Conservative kids are drug addicts," he was told.

He left Yeshiva and began to study theater, participating in show after show. Needless to say, the actor's life often conflicts with his Judaism. While he refuses to act in any show which would require performing on *Yom Tov*, his demanding schedule has led him to practically give up *Shabbat* and *kashrut*. He would still like to marry a Jew, but for the last two years he's been seeing a Christian woman. It may seem to us that the cantor's statement was rather absurd, but we must remember that the reasonableness of an insult matters little to the one being insulted. As a result of one flippant, stereotyping remark, a young man who had planned a life of singing from the *bimah* now dreams of singing from a Broadway stage.

PIONEERS

continued from p.5

ritorial integrity of Eretz Yisrael.

Dr. Janet O'Dea, a scholar at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, sums up this contention as follows: "It's not the messianic interpretation of the Jewish State which is new or dangerous, but rather the radical insistence that the borders are the key to the drama." I would like to suggest a fourth line of criticism against Gush Emunim. While believing in the messianic role of secular Zionism in the Kookist tradition, they break the law whenever they see it as conflicting the "right path" towards redemption. Sprinkz points out this position — when Zionism always wins over democracy — "government actions which prevent settlement may be legal but they are illegitimate... and place it in the same category as the British mandatory government."

In 1977 and 1979 both Drs. O'Dea and Sprinkz pointed out the potential for violence inherent in such a policy of active

disobedience: "Messianic self-certainty and self-righteousness... can historically lead to the worst of crimes." Little did they know that just a few years later an organization of settlers would be exposed which had dedicated itself to revenge against the Arabs through violent shootings and bombings. Eventually, twenty-six settlers were arrested, among them sons of the leaders of Gush Emunim, while others were implicated. As Jerold Auerbach put it so eloquently, most religious Zionism "... inevitably deteriorate into destructive zeal and irrational violence. Or... provide the spiritual ingredient missing from secular Zionism?"

On the subject of the *machteret* (Gush Emunim terrorist group), the leadership has been split on ideological terms between those who see absolutely no justification in these terrorist activities and those who openly do not approve, but are willing to say that they appreciate the motivation of these settlers in view of the lack of protection given by the government against the local Arabs. Presently, there are "Gush" leaders affiliated with

the right wing religious *Morasha* party (a break-away from the N.R.P. led by Rav Druckman), the right wing ultra-nationalist *Techiya* party and some still affiliated with the N.R.P. This situation in itself points to a decline in the power and energy of the movement. Without the unity which once existed, it becomes quite difficult to create any consensus for action.

Additionally, the current unity government's policy of freeze on settlements has curtailed much of Gush Emunim's legal activities. Dr. Menachem Friedman, an expert on Israeli religious society at Bar Ilan University, claims that it is not the government which curtailed settlement, it is a stall in the ideology itself. "There just aren't any more people around who are sufficiently motivated to pick up and settle a deserted hill in the middle of the Hebron hills." Consequently, he believes that Gush Emunim will remain a voice in Israeli politics, but will never regain the vibrancy that it once had, and will continue to grow more and more radical as it loses touch with mainstream

Israeli society.

Though currently settlements are frozen, Yitzchak Shamir's becoming Prime Minister this month may usher in a change. Furthermore, I am in agreement with Dr. O'Dea's statement that it is Gush Emunim's insistence on the "territorial integrity" of the land, not the messianic aspect, which is especially dangerous. As pointed out earlier, Zionism itself has its roots in the historical messianic yearnings for return to Zion. Though the mystical element of Gush Emunim is more extreme, only when combined with the land issue do attitudes become radical. I envision a scenario in which the country is divided by a sincere attempt at peace with her neighbors. The events in Yamit, during the fulfillment of the Camp David accords was a small hint of what might transpire. The possibility of Jewish blood being shed is real, this time by Jewish guns. The members in Gush Emunim, who have contributed greatly to the revival of the pioneering spirit of Zionism, must ask themselves whether *Eretz Yisrael* is more important than peace.

Disputation DeRav Kahane

Anti-Christian Homiletics in the Midrash

By JOSHUA SHOSHAN

Did the Rabbis of the early post-temple period use the *Midrash* as a forum to defend traditional Judaism against the attacks of early Christian scholars? An analysis of the *Pesikta DeRav Kahane*, one of the oldest homiletic Midrashim, sheds light on this controversial question.

William G. Braude and Israel J. Kapstein write in the introduction to their English translation of the *Pesikta*:

It is to be wondered naturally whether the *Pesikta* argues against Christianity, but nowhere in the work is there any direct allusion to Christian doctrines. It is barely possible that in two places in the text there are oblique allusions to such doctrines, but if they are such, they are not argumentative, and the greater likelihood by far is that they are meant to do no more than stress Jewish doctrines.

Much evidence, however, supports the contrary view. On the general level, at least one Midrashic scholar disagrees with their notion. N.R.M. DeLange writes in *Origins and the Jews*, "The late third century rabbis of Caesarea may have been influenced by Origen and his school, and in any case the debate between Church and Synagogue continued to play a part in moulding rabbinic thought." Specifically, four examples in the text of the *Pesikta DeRav Kahane* clearly defend Jewish tradition from Christian attack. Furthermore, *Pesikta DeRav Kahane* expert, Rabbi Joel Poupeo of Skokie, Illinois claims that there are many more such instances in the text.

N.R.M. DeLange writes:

It is Origen's contention, and he was neither the first nor the last to propound this view, that God's rejection of the Jewish people is manifest in its defeat, expulsion from Jerusalem and subsequent humiliation and persecution.

The argument that God abandoned the Jews, as demonstrated by the destruction of Jewish institutions, represented the most potent anti-Jewish propaganda confronting the beleaguered residents of Palestine during the third and fourth centuries of this era. In response to this fundamental Christian criticism, the *Pesikta* says in *Piska 5*:

I sleep; nevertheless, my heart waketh; Hark! My Beloved knocketh: "Open to Me, My sister, My delight, My dove, My undefiled." Yea, my head is filled with dew, etc. (Song of Songs 5:2). The congregation of Israel spoke up to the Holy One: Master of worlds, *I sleep* — in lack of the Temple I am numb [as though asleep]; *nevertheless, my heart waketh*, in houses of prayer and houses of study. *I sleep* — in lack of Temple sacrifices; *nevertheless, my heart waketh*, through acts of mercy and charity. *I sleep* — in lack of God's commandments; *nevertheless, my heart waketh*, ready to obey them. *I sleep* — in lack of redemption; *nevertheless, the heart of the Holy One waketh to redeem me.*

The Rabbis in the *Pesikta* tell the Jewish people that although the Christians may claim that God abandoned the Jewish people, they should know that this is not so. While we no longer have the Temple, sacrifices, and many other commandments, God never left the Jewish people and, ultimately, will redeem them.

Later, in the same *Piska*, an anonymous

Rabbi makes a succinct but monumentally important statement. The continuation of the verse, "I sleep; nevertheless, my heart waketh," is:

Hark, my beloved is knocking, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. (Song of Songs 5:2)

The *Pesikta* writes on the words "my sister":

we do not require Christian salvation.

Early Church fathers explained that Jewish sins compelled God's abandonment of them. Origen, the third century Church father, in his *Exhortation to Martyrdom* (section 6) specifically mentions the sin of the Golden Calf as a great example of the Jews' wrongdoings. In *Piska 2*, the Rabbis confront Origen's argument and defend the Jewish people. The verses being examined state:

Many there be who say of my soul,

Was the text of *Pesikta DeRav Kahane* used to defend Jewish tradition from Christian attacks?

By *My sister*, God was saying: Israel. My own, My kin — you who bound yourselves irrevocably to Me in Egypt by two covenants of blood, the blood of Passover and the blood of circumcision.

The *Pesikta* is saying: The Jewish people maintain a covenant of blood with God — the blood of the Paschal lamb and of circumcision not, Heaven forbid, the blood of Jesus. The Jewish people have no need for the later covenant. We have our salvation;

There is no help for him in God! (selah) But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory and the lifter up of my head. (Psalms; 3:3-4)

The *Pesikta* writes:

The Rabbis read the beginning of the verse *How many are they that say* (Ps. 3:3), etc., and identified the "they" as the nations of the earth. Why did David call them *many*? Because the nations are so designated in the verse "Ah, the uproar of many peoples"



(Isa. 17:12). *That say of my soul* (Ps. 3:3), that is, they say of Israel: A people who on Mount Sinai heard from its God "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exod. 20:4), and then, forty days later, said of a calf "This is thy God, O Israel" (Exod. 32:4) — can such a people expect God's help? *There is no help for it in God ever* (Ps. 3:3). (Note that heretofore is the Christian argument — J.S.) Israel replied: Though Thou, O Lord, dost agree with the nations — for in Thy Torah Thou didst write: "He that sacrificeth unto any god, save unto the Lord only, shall be utterly destroyed" (E. d. 22:19) — yet *Thou... art a shield about me* (Ps. 3:4): solely because of the merit of my Fathers Thou didst encompass us as with a shield. Nay more, *Thou art become glory* (*ibid.*), for Thou didst cause Thy presence to dwell amidst Israel: "Let them make Me the Sanctuary that I may dwell among them" (Exod. 25:8). *And the lifter up of my head* (Ps. 3:4): What we deserved from Thee was a removing of our heads rather than a lifting up of them, but through Moses to whom Thou didst say, *When thou liftest the head of the children of Israel* (Exod. 30:2), Thou didst give us the joy of lifting our heads high.

Thus, the Rabbis successfully deflect a famous Christian criticism. The Jewish people did in fact sin with the golden calf, but God forgave His people and never left them.

Finally, a portion in the *Pesikta* clearly challenges the Christian notion of the trinity, viz. that God exists in more than one form. On the famous verse, "I am the Lord thy God," the *Pesikta* in *Piska 12* writes:

Another comment on *I am the Lord thy God*. R. Hanina bar Papa said: The Holy One appeared to Israel with a stern face, with an equanimous face, with a friendly face, with a joyous face: with a severe face appropriate for the teaching of Scripture — when a man teaches Torah to his son, he must impress upon him his own awe of Torah; with an equanimous face appropriate for the teaching of Mishnah; with a friendly face appropriate for the teaching of Talmud; with a joyous face appropriate for the teaching of Agadah. Therefore the Holy One said to them: Though you see Me in all these guises, [I am still One] — *I am the Lord thy God*.

The Rabbis are saying that God appears in only one form and certainly not in three.

The four examples cited here point toward a Rabbinic sensitivity concerning the issue of Christian domination. But the opposing possibility — that the aforementioned textual samples are merely coincidental and do not refer to the Christian question — appears plausible as well. These references to Christianity, not being explicit, may merely deal with complex questions of Jewish faith. However, I believe this not to be the case. Our Palestinian sages wrote the Midrash at a time when Christianity had just achieved broad acceptance. The time, one of great sorrow for our people, included the Temple's destruction and our exile. The Rabbis of that era rose to the occasion and comforted their people in homily that has been recorded in our *Midrashim*.