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OP-ED

Turnstiles and Trust

By DAVID BOGNER

When a journal of philosophic thought attempts to address an issue over which the more pragmatic sectors of the world hold sway, there will always arise heated discussions about what is and is not appropriate. Nevertheless, a situation exists at Yeshiva University which, along with its secular implications, has a serious effect on the Jewish fabric of our day to day life.

Not long ago two turnstiles appeared in the Furman Dining Hall, one at the entrance and another beyond the cashier. At first people treated them as oddities to be joked about and vaulted. As with many new institutions at Y.U., no explanation was sought or given and the turnstiles quickly became a non-issue and then a norm. But acceptance does not exempt something from scrutiny on moral/religious grounds.

On the surface, the turnstiles seem to represent a classic example of putting a stumbling block before the blind. But on closer inspection (of the issue not the turnstiles) it becomes clear that the criteria for this prohibition are not even remotely involved. No one will be led unknowingly astray by these turnstiles, and certainly no transgression should result from their existence. Granted, a person in a wheelchair would suffer a setback in self-sufficiency, being forced to ask a friend or stranger to purchase and deliver his meals. But even the serious matter of accessibility is not what really intrudes on the desired Jewish environment. The root of the problem lies buried in the reason for the introduction of the turnstiles.

According to cafeteria officials, the unchecked flow of student traffic in both directions was causing a serious incidence of theft. When I was informed of this by one of the senior staff, I felt myself redden with embarrassment — not from guilt of course, but at the thought of the predominantly non-Jewish cafeteria staff working to prevent the Yeshiva students from stealing food.

How could such a *chilul Hashem* be allowed to exist in our midst? What led these

staff members to the conclusion that students were committing *geneivah*? The first question is of course rhetorical. The second requires an answer, yet must be left to speculation. Presumably, no one has been caught red-handed, or at least not in numbers large enough to warrant such drastic preventive measures. Perhaps large discrepancies appeared between the food inventory and the cash register receipts on a regular basis. The cashiers are trusted employees of many years' service, so the problem logically rests with the students.

I would like to belatedly suggest that the students are indeed responsible for the above-mentioned discrepancy between the inventory and cash, but not in the way originally suggested. I would even go so far as to partially endorse the appearance of the turnstiles if the rationale were the following:

Admittedly, the students who use the dining facilities lack some of the finer points of social behavior. More to the point, they run in and out for silverware and condiments, hurry the cashiers to cash checks, and show a general lack of concern for the chaos left in the wake of their line-cutting and roughhousing. I can think of many times when the kind but harried cashiers have had to re-total an order two or three times in the confusion.

Isn't it just possible that this kind of chaos at the height of every meal could be at the heart of the inventory problem? I don't think the turnstiles have helped the problem much, but given the scenario I have just described, their introduction is a marginally positive step.

I am dismayed that the University administration has allowed this equally plausible explanation to go unexplored while allowing the non-Jews who work in the cafeteria to view us as unworthy of trust. Of course the point is moot and the damage done, so it makes little sense to belabor the issue. I only hope that, in the future, this institution will not erect stumbling blocks such as the turnstiles in our on-going relationship with the non-Jews in our midst.

The governing board of Hamevaser wishes Rabbi Moshe and Judy Bernstein a hearty mazel tov on the birth of a son.

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LETTERS

"Dead Pieces Of Bark"

To the Editor:

Alan Stadtmuer's article, "Open the Boxes (Hamevaser, Oct. 1986)," clearly presents the growing dangers of our stereotyping of all non-halakhic Jews and movements. He calls for "Developing sensitivity and understanding of our fellow Jews" through "readings, classes and personal contact." These sentences should become the motto of all who are concerned with the growing chasm within the Jewish people. Unfortunately, this spirit is lacking in much of our community as evidenced by Stadtmuer's tragic anecdote. However, beyond stories and personal views expressed in private, such attitudes have crept into the public arena where they are having, and potentially will have, long-range ramifications.

An example of such attitudes is the recently published comments of a well-known Torah personality in a symposium on the state of Klal Yisrael (*Jewish Action*, Sept. 1986). I quote: "If we want to bring other Jews who belong to the other 'branches' we are not beholden to give these dead pieces of bark credence and status." I was taken aback. What, I wondered, does Orthodoxy have to gain by referring to the Conservative and Reform movements as "dead pieces of bark" in a published forum? Many spiritually seeking and genuinely good people call these "dead pieces of bark" their home. Where is the "sensitivity and understanding" we so desperately need to reach such people?

In fact, these and other comments in this and other articles emanating from some quarters of the Torah world seem to clearly oppose the thrust of the rhetoric condemning dialogue with Reform and Conservative which one finds in those very circles! The argument often advanced is that dialogue implies recognition and legitimization. In any case we are not concerned that Torah-

committed Jews will be swayed. Rather, we worry about those "marginal" Jews, the unaffiliated Jews and the "simple" Jews who comprise the bulk of the Reform and Conservative movements. These Jews will receive the impression that there are three legitimate forms of Judaism. Dialogue will, some argue, open a Pandora's box, allowing more Jews to join or solidify their identification with their movements, thus strengthening their standing as legitimate interpretations of Judaism. At this stage we must ask, if we refer to Reform and Conservative as "dead pieces of bark," will marginal and non-observant Jews come running to Orthodoxy? Is this really an effective and responsible strategy for winning the hearts and minds of the Jewish public at large? In Israel a commercial in a campaign to prevent auto accidents advises: "Al tihey zodek, tihey chakham — Don't be right, be smart!" America, 1986 is not the Chatam Sofer's Hungary, 1836. Each situation requires different methods and approaches. We should relate realistically and sensitively to the honest questions of non-halakhic Jews without viewing all of them as Abraham Geiger incarnate. This does not mean we must not be ready to respond forcefully and unyieldingly if the circumstances warrant it. However, there is a way and a method of expressing such feelings without engendering possible counter-productive results. There is the method of public discourse in the "way of peace." The *Rav shlit'a's* letter published in *Conservative Judaism* in 1956 is one classic example of such an approach: "Be of the disciples of Aaron — love peace, pursue peace, love your fellows and bring them close to Torah." As Rabbeinu Yonah points out, one cannot simply love peace in the abstract, but must put these ideals into practice — pursue peace in all one's endeavors. Thus we may truly be able to bring all close to Torah.

Nathaniel Helfgot
YC '85, RIETS '88

The Greatest Love Of All

A Zionist Manifesto

By DAVID LEVINSON

In reading the past issue of *Hamevaser*, I sensed a deeply disturbing current of thought flowing from two essays: Adam Ferziger on Gush Emunim and Robert Klapper on the American Jews' loyalty dilemma. Though very different in focus, both articles basically question the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael* and the nature of *Am Yisrael's* relationship to it. Their question reflects the Jewish community's recent struggle to define the role of *Eretz Yisrael* within its value system. Therefore, this issue must be addressed.

Mr. Ferziger quotes Y. Yuval saying the idea of the territorial integrity of *Eretz Yisrael* is "hazy, pseudo-historical and sentimental." Let me remind him that, at first, some of the most outspoken opponents of the "Palestine" Partition Plan were certain leaders of the Israeli Labor party (whose heirs today dare not let the words *Eretz Yisrael* escape their lips lest they be called fascists). Even those who accepted partition saw the 1948 borders as a temporary compromise. Complacency with pre-1967 borders is a recent phenomenon in Jewish history. Certainly our historical claim to the land stands on far firmer grounds in Hebron that it does in Savyon. *Eretz Yisrael* should serve as a rallying point for unity not divisiveness, for all Jews, religious and non-religious as it always has (the Techiya party is a noble exception).

At the risk of entering explosive halakhic grounds, I would just comment that Y. Yuval's charge that Gush Emunim "has transformed Halakha's humane and morally sensitive principles" by demanding that Jews sacrifice their lives for *Eretz Yisrael* must be reevaluated in light of the fact that the mitzvah of settling the land of Israel may very well have been one of *kibush* through war. Though the applicability today of war as a practical vehicle for accomplishing that mitzvah must be questioned, we should realize that the Torah did sanction *mesirut nefesh* for the conquering of *Eretz Yisrael*. Is Gush Emunim then, really distorting Halakha's humane morality? (Note: Gush Emunim only supports holding onto what is now securely in Jewish hands — not going out *militarily* to conquer more.)

Certainly, the Torah is humane and moral, but its absolute morality cannot always be fully comprehended by human minds. Yet, we must try to understand it. If we begin to understand and feel that the Torah sees *Am Yisrael*, the Torah and the land as inextricably bound, then we begin to appreciate that every piece of *Eretz Yisrael* which we relinquish causes a terrible wound in the Jewish people. Conversely, as *Am Yisrael* gains more of its lost land, it slowly heals and becomes rejuvenated. Perhaps, this is what led the Ramban (*Sefer Hamitzvot* No. 227) to compare the mitzvah of *Pidyon Avadim* — redeeming an enslaved Jew — to the liberation of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Concern was also expressed over the idea that the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* is seen by some as superseding the law of *Medinat Yisrael*, that "Zionism wins over democracy." Nevertheless, every Western society values conscientious objection and civil disobedience: the state is not always supreme, and at times natural and moral law may have to supersede the man-made law. Even the radical leftists in Israel implicitly embraced this concept when they recently announced their intention to violate Israeli law by meeting with P.L.O. leaders in Europe.



Fortunately, Jewish political philosophy has a clear view of "natural law" — it is found in the Torah. The question of whether *mitzvat yishuv Eretz Yisrael* would supercede a contrary injunction by the Israeli government, should be dealt with seriously by Halakhists. The answer may not be as absurd or dangerous as Mr. Ferziger would have it.

Finally, Mr. Ferziger would have us ask simplistically: Do we vote for *Eretz Yisrael* Peace? If we "humanely" cast our vote for "peace" then we are anti-Gush Emunim. But it is not so simple. Again, if we look to the Torah, it strongly believes in peace.

pletteness — *shleimut*, whether it be the people, the Torah or . . . the land. Yes, Gush Emunim is for peace — but its vision of true peace entails holding onto the geographical soul of *Am Yisrael*, not by surrendering it.

Many of my comments on Adam Ferziger's article serve as a basis for a response to Robert Klapper's piece, in that they recenter the focus on *Eretz Yisrael*. Mr. Klapper speaks of the conflicting loyalties a Jew faces in his love for America and Israel, and the impact this has on one's decision to make *aliyah*. I must seriously question what are those moral and ethical ideals which

no conflict need exist for the American Jew seeking to bring the *Mashiach* through the moral improvement of the world. Even if America contributes to that process, Judaism posits that the central role of the Jew in realizing the messianic ideal requires joining his nation in his land (Israel — for those who may be confused). There, as an organic national entity, the Jewish people must live a national life which sanctifies God's name through the light of the Torah. That pyramid built of the People, the Torah, and the land of Israel will form a brilliant prism through which God's light will shine unto the nations of the world. As God says to Abraham: "*Lekh lekha*" — go unto the land of Israel "*Venivrekhu bekha kol mishpechoi haadama*." Only in the land of Israel can the Jew effectuate that eschatological perfection of the world which Mr. Klapper and all other faithful Jews seek to achieve. The role of the Jew is not as an individual missionary in the exile but as a national example in his land.

Finally, I must vigorously contest Mr. Klapper's final conclusion. Reflecting his confusion of allegiances, he neutralizes the force of the famous midrash (*Eicha* 1:29) which speaks to the Jewish heart: "You shall find no comfort outside of *Eretz Yisrael*." While Mr. Klapper concedes this point, he justifies staying in the exile by claiming that Jews will feel uncomfortable in *Eretz Yisrael* as well, so long as injustice exists in this world. Yes, we must feel for justice, but how can we ever compare the discomfort one should feel in the Exile with that in *Eretz Yisrael*!! The sensitive committed Jew must qualitatively distinguish between these two feelings.

In the Exile he is rootless and helpless as he weeps for the injustice in the world; in *Eretz Yisrael* he is at home. And though he may have occasion to weep, he is neither helpless nor rootless as he builds towards that perfection of the world — *tikun haolam*.

That pyramid built of the People, the Torah, and the Land of Israel will form a brilliant prism through which God's light will shine unto the nations of the world

However, the Torah's concept of peace — *shalom* — derives from wholeness — *shleimut*. Would we give away half our Torah for "peace"? Why half of *Eretz Yisrael*? If we did, the Torah assumes that the peace would be merely an illusory.

Chazal in *Kiddushin* 66b explain why the letter *vav* in the word *shalom* is cut in half in the verse, "*Hineninoten lo et beriti shalom*." The cut letter teaches us that a *Kohen* who is a *baal mum* — incomplete physically — cannot perform the Temple service. The *Berit Shalom* comes through com-

America gallantly spreads at home and abroad? There is democracy and freedom, but these are not lacking in Israel. Furthermore, America does not spend most of its time idealistically engaging in the moral perfection of the world. Certainly, the sexual morality of American society is not something we or our children should "pledge allegiance to." While we owe a measure of loyalty and appreciation to America as long as we choose to live here, America's influence on our value system should not be nearly as strong as Klapper suggests.

Yet, even if Klapper's arguments are true,

PREJUDICES

Issues and Answers

Dealing With Questions From the Right

By ROBERT KLAPPER

Some time ago, I attended a *bar mitzva* at a *shiteble* in Boro Park. The day was stormy, and as I walked into *shul* my hatlessness was accentuated by the water pouring from my hair. At a back table, some men were discussing the incompatibility of religion and modern science; I found a seat in their midst and began listening and participating. Someone mentioned evolution, and another quickly denounced the theory; apparently, its description of our ancestors as short primates with rotten posture contradicted the *Midrash's* assertion that Og of Bashan's ankle was some forty-five feet above ground. My earlier comments had already combined with my anomalous lack of headgear to establish me as both the most scientifically knowledgeable and most religiously left-wing participant in the conversation, and at this juncture my tablemates paused for my reaction. Waiting with particular interest was a Hasidic boy in his early teens whose earlier comments had betrayed a deep *hashkafic* curiosity and an even deeper naivete in that area.

Rabbi Blau once commented to me that children often ask better questions in Talmudics than adults, and the same phenomenon occurs in the realm of theology; unlimited by the plethora of assumptions their elders accumulate under the guise of experience, they are frequently more able to penetrate to the essence of belief. But unfortunately the ability to ask a question does not guarantee the presence of an equal capacity to comprehend its answers, and those involved in *chinukh* and *kiruv* have long recognized and bemoaned the difficulties involved in responding to a child's query. Yet their problem is one only of method and not of philosophy, for the ultimate goal they aspire to and message they wish to convey is in their eyes unimpeachable; the Modern Orthodox Jew confronted by a youthful fundamentalist questioner has no such clearcut background against which to evaluate his options. His belief in the value of independent thought forces him to respond, but is he to be intolerant of intolerance?

My recent Boro Park experience was by no means the first time I had faced such a situation, nor do I expect it to be the last; my summer job, my *shul* and even the Y. U. cafeteria are breeding grounds for such encounters. The following analysis is intended to provide categories of thought as aids for people confronted by such scenarios. But it also serves another function; it challenges those who avoid such situations to reexamine their level of commitment, to ask themselves why they are afraid. (Whatever recommendations appear represent the author's feelings and should in no way be regarded as *halakhic* statements.)

The most frequent response to youthful theological questioning is the brush-off, either in the guise of discreet circumlocution or as some variant of "When you get older you'll understand." While this seems an easy escape route, it is by no means a safe one. The child who does not receive a satisfying answer often begins either to doubt its existence or to formulate his own on the basis of severely limited information. And too often we underestimate the intellectual capabilities of our youth; not infrequently our inability or even unwillingness to explain is the sole source of their failure to comprehend.

A second popular answering technique is oversimplification, an extremely safe

response from one point of view in that contentedly used it will satisfy the questioner and deter him from pursuing "dangerous" trains of thought. But it risks the querier's future theological development; my Hasidic teen believed that the builders of the Babel Tower had failed solely because Heaven was so far away as to be unreachable, perhaps, he said "even ten billion miles up." (That is, somewhere between ourselves and Alpha

Guidelines for the Modern Orthodox Jew confronted by the youthful fundamentalist questioner

Centauri.) Judaism is a complex creed, and failure to recognize that is in itself a rather dangerous train of thought.

A third method of response is obscurantism, i.e. talking over the questioner's head. This avoids the primary dangers of brushing-off and oversimplification by declaring the existence of a sufficient answer while not providing a false one. It is, indeed, an idyllic route — for those who would rather dodge problems than deal with them. But all Jews are responsible for one another, and we have no right to declare any aspect of anyone's spiritual development "someone else's problem."

Finally, a question can be responded to via a real response, of which there are four types. Either the point of view of the child's religious milieu can be presented exclusively, or one's own views can be, or the two can be presented together, and lastly one can present all views. The first of these methods involves some measure of moral and spiritual hypocrisy; how can one help promote the growth of a religious position one is oppos-

ed to? The second, ironically, is problematic on the same general grounds, for by brainwashing with regard to one position, the Modern Orthodox Jew undermines all else that he holds dear.

The third and fourth methods, then, seem the best available, but they are far from panaceas. In certain cases they may be impracticable, and they demand a degree of faith in one's position and occasionally also in one's listener that is hard to attain and even harder to justify. Furthermore, the mere presentation of a contrasting point of view might forever destroy the theological innocence a child's parents may believe a virtue and have worked unceasingly to maintain. It is one thing to accept responsibility for one's own *hashkafic* decisions, another thing entirely to make a child bear that load. And yet, inaction also has repercussions, and the Torah enjoins us not to pass correctable error in silence. The proper method of reply, then, may depend on another factor — the question.

There are four basic categories of significant difficult questions: general metaphysical, *halakhic* with broad *hashkafic* ramifications, and in regard to the inviolability, reliability and authority of both sacred texts and codified *halakhah*. Technical *halakhic* questions as well as yes-or-no type queries about the basic premises of our faith are of course not at issue here.

In the first category are questions of the "Why do bad things happen to good people?" and "Can God make a stone . . ." variety. A factor aiding those faced by such queries is the general lack of any fully satisfactory answers; at best, one could present a collection of partial responses. In fact, this is probably the easiest case in which to defend brushing-off; it is difficult to criticize someone for not answering when there is no answer to give. There would seem to be no obligation to further confuse, and prevention of a potential future mistake seems at best a tenuous ground for action. The only solid justifications for answering would be the questioner's obvious refusal to accept less or

the otherwise inevitable acceptance of a simplistic viewpoint.

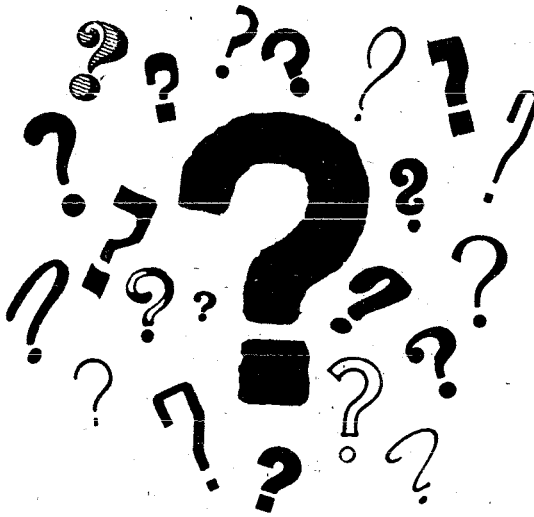
But there are other queries in this category, such as those concerning the purpose of Judaism and *Medinat Yisrael*, which do have complete answers, albeit widely diverging ones. In the first of these and others like it, which touch the core of our religion, there is no justification for not offering one's own point of view; it is to promote that view and its ends that one exists. The *Medina* issue has its own special difficulties; the type of answer given must depend on the centrality of the state in one's thinking.

The second category contains questions dealing with such issues as the permissibility of secular literature, philosophy and rock music dedicated to non-sexual themes. While ostensibly *halakhic*, these queries obviously are dependent on a theological issue, the intrinsic value assigned to knowledge. They are unique in that they cannot be avoided, for they require immediate practical decisions. Answering "forbidden" in contradiction of one's own beliefs and actions is obviously dishonest and as such easily discardable as a response, but the reply to "should I?" raises graver difficulties. If the work in question is insignificant by any standard, then a noncommittal answer is probably in order. But if asked whether or not to read or listen to something one considers valuable, one has no right to deny to others his own gains. Indeed, if one assigns religious value to all learning, such denial would be *halakhically* indefensible! (I am not discussing books containing descriptions of sexual incidents, for they pose special legal difficulties. Other technicalities, such as the question's previously having been asked personally to a recognized *posek*, may also affect the case.)

The final category is that dealing with recognized sacred texts. With regard to Talmud the problems are not too severe, as emendations and factual disagreements have occurred continually through the centuries. The historicity of the canon is the most difficult issue, however, for one is often trapped between the Scylla of an almost indefensible position and the Charybdis of heresy. I cannot suggest any course of action here as the issue is far from settled within my own mind. The mutability of *halakhah* is an issue which creates a similar dilemma. Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, though, has dealt with it well by pointing out that *halakhah* has ample mechanisms for change; any problems lie not in the system but rather in our failure to adequately use it.

All the above cases deal with children from fundamentalist homes; when one deals with adults or with children having no previous indoctrination, the obstacles to a full presentation generally disappear. Furthermore, if a person represents the only chance someone will ever have to consider opinions other than those in which he has been indoctrinated, let him not be afraid ever to speak. Our theology is fear of God, not of ideas.

I gave as complete a reply as I was capable of to the silence around me. Realizing that this would probably be the only chance that boy and those men would ever have to hear a point of view resembling mine, I covered everything connected with the topic, ranging from midrashic hyperbole to the diverse methods of interpreting Genesis to the varying theories of evolution. The Torah is described as an *etz chayim*, and knowledge and debate are what keep it alive. I planted some seeds that *Shabbat*; perhaps someday a tree will grow in Brooklyn.



Innovative Exegesis

The Rabbinic Art Of Biblical Narrative

By DANIEL FEIT

The overwhelming popularity of an intellectual idea seems, according to common perception, to indicate its innovative nature and inherent truth. The grassroots, almost fanatical, fervor which greeted Marxism demonstrates this phenomenon. In truth however, such wide acceptance often hides a theory's inadequacies. For example, Marxism's popular mandate concealed the difficulties in translating the intellectual idea into practical reality.

Presently, the theory of biblical literary criticism enjoys wide support and intellectual popularity. Numerous books and articles appear, consistently extolling the idea's profundity and besieging the reader with numerous examples of the technique's application. Names like Alter, Fokkelman, and Sternberg evoke feelings approaching reverence among many devotees. Yet the solid wall of support shields two serious difficulties from view.

The first difficulty inheres in the application of literary techniques to a divine book. When one analyzes an "ordinary" work using any critical theory, one attains two distinct objectives: understanding the work and judging it. By applying a consistent theory to a literary piece, one gains greater insight. However, perhaps more importantly, one develops a methodology for judging the merits of the work. Employing a critical

seeming redundancy, of proposing the question of what place it was and what, if anything, was the matter with it.

Fokkelman argues that the anonymity of the word *makom* lends greater significance to the revelation in verse sixteen, where the word appears again, that this nameless *makom* actually represents *shaar hashamayim* — the gate of heaven. Upon looking at Rashi's commentary on verse eleven, one notices an analogous interpretation. Rashi, realizing the ambiguity of the key-word *makom*, solves the problem of anonymity by equating the word here with the same term used in the story of the *Akedah*: "*Vayar et hamakom merachok*." By connecting these two literary key-words, Rashi argues that Jacob has arrived at *Har Hamoriah*, just as Abraham did. While the two explanations lack total coincidence, the methodological links are obviously strong.

Robert Alter's analysis of the Judah-Tamar story also exposes the methodological connection between the Midrash, classical commentators, and many modern critics. Alter attempts to demonstrate parallels between the Joseph story and the Judah-Tamar story. The tale of Judah and Tamar begins with the statement: "*Vayered Yehuda me'et echav*" — and Judah went down from his brothers. Alter thematically joins the ideas of Judah separating from his brothers with Joseph's

talent — as she unmasks Judah, with the terminology used by Judah — *haker na* (Genesis 37:32) — as he deceives Jacob regarding Joseph's true fate. Similarly, Judah's unsuccessful attempt to pay Tamar with a *gedi izim* corresponds eerily with the brother's use of the blood of a *se'ir izim* to misrepresent the circumstances of Joseph's disappearance. The Midrash also connects the Judah-Tamar and sale of Joseph tales by comparing the terminology common to both

Judah's ignorance looms as the ultimate expression of dramatic irony — "the spectator knows something the protagonist doesn't, and should, know." With these two objections, Alter dismisses any clam equating the Midrash with his own literary approach.

Close examination, however, invalidates both of Alter's distinctions. First, as demonstrated by Rashi's interpretation of the word *makom* (as discussed earlier), classical commentaries view the text as one con-

The Midrash employed a style strikingly similar to literary analysis

tinuous narrative. By connecting the *Akedah* and Jacob's ladder-dream, Rashi deepens our understanding of the nature of *Har Hamoriah*. We realize that the place is inherently holy and not simply a mountain randomly selected as the locale for the *Akedah*. Rashi does not simply explain the specific phrase in Genesis 28; he thematically connects two different stories to underscore a basic truth about a specific place. The Midrash often adopts an identical approach. When discussing God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the verse relates that the screams from the city were many — *rabah*. The Midrash immediately comments that God destroyed the *Dor Hamabul* with water and Sodom and Gomorrah with fire. We know that we can equate the two stories because the verse by Sodom and Gomorrah says *rabah* as does the verse by *Dor Hamabul* (Genesis 6:5: "and God saw that the evil of man was *rabah* in the land. . ."). By connecting the two stories, the Midrash calls upon the reader to draw parallels and distinctions between the episodes. In addition, such a connection necessarily implies the continuous nature of the narrative. The Midrash, not simply explicating one verse, uses the tales to shed light on each other. It becomes obvious that Alter's first distinction between his literary approach and midrashic technique is not valid.

Interestingly enough, Alter himself discusses the Midrash, yet still claims originality. He attempts to draw two distinctions between the midrashic technique and his own literary approach. First, the authors of the Midrash did not conceive of the Torah as one long narrative; they did not conceptualize the text "as a coherent unfolding story in which the meaning of earlier data is progressively, even systematically, revealed or enriched by the addition of subsequent data." Alter argues that the Midrash explicates specific phrases without establishing the continuous nature of the text. Second, Alter questions the Midrash's dedication to preserving the "literary integrity" of the text due to its didactic nature. He points out that in the Midrash relating to the Judah-Tamar story, God Himself speaks directly to Judah: God rebukes Judah for his actions, and, consequently the parallels must be explicitly pointed out to Judah so that he can recognize his wrongs. In a purely literary analysis,

Alter's second distinction rests upon an assumption regarding midrashic technique. Alter claims that the midrashic statement that God talked to Judah implies an actual dialogue. But, at what point in the story would such a conversation have occurred? Would God have made Judah aware of the ironic parallels during the unfolding drama with Tamar? Alter, with his literal reading of the Midrash, must confront these questions. By reading the Midrash allegorically, however, one avoids these questions. The Midrash constructs an imaginary dialogue between God and Judah to underscore a didactic point. This didactic message in no way violates the "literary integrity" of the text, since, in all actuality, the parallels were never explicitly pointed out to Judah. By connecting the two episodes through a literary analysis, the Midrash grants the reader an understanding denied to the main protagonist. Thus, Alter's second distinction lacks validity. Certainly, Alter and other modern scholars should be acclaimed for reinvigorating the technique, but the Rabbis of the Midrash were the true originators of literary analysis of the Bible.

How can one critically evaluate the work of a divine Author?

theory enables the reader to determine if the author remains consistent in theme or imagery, if the analogy used breaks down, or if the characters are believable. The reader evaluates the work based on his critical analysis. With a divine book such an evaluation becomes inappropriate: a divine Author must necessarily be a perfect author, thereby invalidating any denigrating evaluation. A reader can criticize Shakespeare's sloppy characterization, a charge that cannot be levied against a divine Author. Once we limit application of a critical theory to the realm of understanding, as opposed to evaluation, the approach becomes biased in favor of the author and loses some of its vibrancy and force.

The second difficulty undercuts the presupposed vibrant originality that both adherents and detractors grant the theory. In reality, the Midrash and classical commentators employed a style strikingly similar to literary analysis in many of their own interpretations. Although the Midrash does not exhaust the analytical possibilities of the text, the basic midrashic technique is literary. A number of examples aptly proves this contention. In his analysis of Genesis 28 (Jacob's ladder dream), J. P. Fokkelman discusses the repetition of the word *makom* in verse eleven: "*Vayifga hamakom vayalen sham ki va hashemesh, vayikach meavnei hamakom vayasem merashotav vayishkav bamakom hahu.*" He writes that since the word appears three times, it must be

a key-word, which here would have to serve the purpose, precisely by its

forced separation. Rashi associated the two as well, but in a causal relationship; due to Judah's role in the sale of Joseph, the brothers separated from Judah and made him into a pariah. Alter continues connecting the two stories by contrasting Jacob's inconsolable grief at Joseph's supposed death with Judah's pragmatic reaction to the actual death of his two sons and his wife. The tale proceeds with Tamar's deception and the ultimate denouement. Alter concludes his analysis by comparing Tamar's statement —



Second Generation Survival

The Children of Holocaust Survivors

By ARIELLA SCHREIBER

The recent Nobel laureate, Elie Weisel, has often said, "The term Holocaust was given in order to give man a means in which to grapple intellectually with an event which is philosophically 'inexplicable'."

Silence has become the optimum because of a fear that words may be misused. Yet, despite the difficulties of expression, forty years have passed and the Holocaust has not become a dormant issue. Within the last two years repercussions have been felt in the political sphere with the election of Kurt Waldheim as president of Austria and President Reagan's visit to Bitburg. As time progresses, pushing the Holocaust into the past, an active movement has developed to both deny and forget its existence. Judith Miller, in a recent article (*New York Times Magazine* November 18, 1986) entitled "Erasing the Past," claims that the paradox of remembering and forgetting derives from a single source, namely amnesia, "a willed phenomenon coming from [events] remembered all too well."

The dialectic between remembering and forgetting applies to the realm of the individual sinner. Survivors fall into two categories: those who testify and those who remain silent. Testifiers feel the need to articulate their past, either to remember, remind, or prevent. The silent witnesses suppress the past, feeling that it is either too painful to remember or an unfair burden to place on others. For the most part the form of expression (or inexpression) has been the relationship between the survivor and his children. The recent burgeoning of second generation Holocaust children support groups illustrates that the Holocaust remains for some a living experience. Understanding the complex relationship between these children and their parents requires analysis of the survivor, the child, and the parent/child relationship.

The Survivor

Dr. William G. Niederthal, a psychologist who composed one of the first psychological portraits of survivors, describes a "survivor syndrome." Symptoms include nightmares, a sense of guilt, anxiety and an uneasiness with coming to terms with survival. In addition to the psychological bond which creates a survivor community, there are common feelings experienced by all survivors. For example, there was a tendency to marry and have children almost immediately after the Holocaust. This was a compulsion to externally prove survival by the perpetuation of families and the Jewish race. The children represented both the future and a replacement of the past.

The child was the survivor's mission, his responsibility and his liaison between the old world and the new. Raising a child forced the survivor to decide how to relate to his past by forcing him to choose how to impart his attitude to the child. The testifier saw the child as the appendage of the past and exposed the child to it as its messenger. The silent survivor saw children as new creations and shielded them from the burden of his memories. However, the parents' silence was, in the words of one child, "frustrating, a silence constantly spoken but never expressed."

Children of survivors describe common characteristics in their upbringing. Many grew up with an emphasis on the "good life," i.e. dressing well even when they could not afford it. Many parents tended to

be overprotective; others, especially the silent ones, made an issue of the Holocaust when they became frustrated. Often, seemingly trivial matters, like "throwing out a potato peel," gained significance.

The Children

Much as the parents belonged to a psychological community, a similar bond grew between their children. The first studies of children of survivors were published in 1966 by Dr. V. Lachoff; Lachoff cites a direct correlation between the characteristics of the survivors and their children: "It was

on them, yet they feel a compulsive need to fulfill that responsibility.

The Family of Survivors

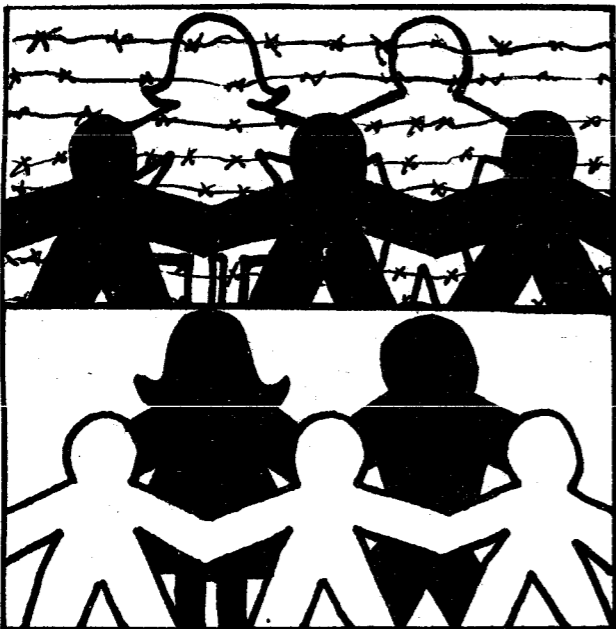
The complexities of the parent-child roles and the lack of extended family cause an intensely bonded relationship amongst the survivor family. As a result, the parent transmits the message of a mission to the child: remembering the past and making it a living part of the future. The children feel both a need and responsibility to know their parents' past in order to express the magnitude of man's potential evil and to prevent it from

port group for the children. This has created a means by which the testimonial of the parents may become an objective issue of world responsibility instead of a child's personal quest for self-knowledge. In addition, silent parents have an outlet with which they feel comfortable for their testimony. Through their testimony, the children fulfill a twofold need: the transmitting of the general history and the knowledge of an individual past.

Survival and its testimony is more than a syndrome; it is a way of life. A living phenomenon defining the relationship between parents and children, it links generations past, present and future.

Elie Weisel's latest work, *The Fifth Son*, epitomizes the experience of the child of the survivor in 1986:

I have been waiting for years, for centuries, waiting to rediscover my father. . . . I have attempted to live their lives by assuming them as my own. Now my love for my father is whole. . . . I have interrogated the memory of the living and the dead. . . . [Now I can] finally begin to live my life — my own.



almost as if the children had survived the war themselves."

Commonly, children of survivors experienced both reaction and counterreaction to the Holocaust in its interplay with their relationship with their parents. Many of the children felt lonely and deprived because they lacked an extended family. "We were different," one child observed. "We had been exposed to war, theological questions, evil and suffering before our friends had even heard of these concepts." Many felt stifled by their parents' overprotectiveness and "by the biased social beliefs of [their] parents" regarding Germany and many issues only distantly related to the war.

The children of silent survivors experienced additional inner conflicts. Curious about their parents' past, yet unable to question, they tended to vivid imaginings. As they grew older, many felt a need to speak out for causes (both Jewish and non-Jewish) in order to counteract their parents' silence. An extreme case was Frank Collins, a Jew who converted to Christianity and orchestrated the Nazi march on Skokie.

The portrait of a child of survivors is a compendium of conflicting emotions; the conflict stems not from their parents but the situation in which they find themselves. They are angry at their parents for causing them to feel different, but this anger inspires guilt. There is rebellion and resentment towards the inherent responsibility that has been placed

recurring.

A problem arises for the child if he lacks the tools with which to testify. Helen Epstein describes the problem as the "iron box," whose weight increases as the realization of responsibility grows, while the means become less and less accessible. The children of silent parents seem particularly prone to the "iron box" syndrome. Love for their parents compels them to testify, while fear of hurting the parents prevents them from probing too deeply into their parents' past.

As the Holocaust recedes into the past, the need for testimony becomes more pressing while the witnesses grow progressively older. But the issue of survival is not uniquely characteristic of the Holocaust; it is concomitant with Jewish history. The question is, rather, why has a forty year old issue suddenly become revitalized?

The renewed stress on the Holocaust is a publicizing of intensely personal issues. As children of survivors begin to raise their own families, they realize the impact their parents had on their development. They also recognize their membership in a community whose members share a common responsibility to their parents. As the parents grow older, the "iron box" syndrome becomes more pronounced. The children seek to learn the past so that they might transmit it.

The various second generation organizations perform two functions; they serve as a forum for survivor testimony and as a sup-

Where Honor Is Due

The Rebbe/Talmid Relationship At Yeshiva

By ELI CLARK

Aristotle wrote: "Teachers who educate children deserve more honor than parents . . . for the latter provide mere life while the former ensure a good life." Honor for one's teacher (in Hebrew, *kevod rav*) assumes a prominent position in Jewish law as well. In his *Code* (Chap. 5 of *Hilkhot Talmud Torah*), Rambam sets down the laws governing the student/teacher relationship. He begins:

"Just as a person is commanded to honor and revere his father, so he is required to honor and revere his teacher (*rav*), for his father gave him life in this world, while his *rav* who instructs him in wisdom, secures for him life in the world to come . . . There is no honor higher than honor due to the *rav* and no reverence [greater] than reverence for the *rav*. Our Sages said, Reverence for your *rav* shall be like the fear of God (*Ethics of the Fathers* 4:15)."

Rambam's preface elevates the concept of *kevod rav* to astounding heights. After comparing *kevod rav* to honoring one's parents, Rambam adopts rhetorical superlatives, finally likening the teacher/student relationship to the Jew's relationship to God. Indeed, this comparison recalls the statement of R.

Akiva (*Bava Kama* 41b): "Thou shalt fear *et* the Lord your God (Deut. 6:13) [the auxiliary term *et*] implies that the learned man is also to be feared."

The Tosafot commentary (*ibid.*) points out that R. Akiva's lesson appears superfluous because the acknowledged biblical source for *kevod rav* is the verse in Leviticus (19:32): "Give honor to the presence of one mature in wisdom." The Tosafot therefore concludes that R. Akiva intended to derive an altogether different law, that which governs the specific case of *rebbe muvhak* (primary teacher).

Rambam also makes this particular distinction. After detailing laws governing a student's deferral to his *rav*'s judgment and halakhic decisions, Rambam clarifies (5:9): "When do these rules apply? With a *rebbe muvhak*, [a *rav*] from whom one has learned the majority of his knowledge. But if one did not learn most of his knowledge from a *rav*, the relationship is that of a junior to a senior scholar, and one is not required to honor him in all the [forementioned] ways."

In the following chapter Rambam proceeds to detail the laws governing honor due all Torah scholars (*talmidei chachkhamim*): "For every *talmid chacham*, it is a mitzvah to treat him with honor, as it says, 'Before a man gray with age shalt thou rise up and give

honor to the presence of a man mature in wisdom."

Rambam's choice of proof-text is consonant with the explanation of the Tosafot in *Bava Kama*. Both attribute the laws governing all *talmidei chachkhamim* to the verse in Leviticus; the laws of *rebbe muvhak*, on the other hand, would derive from R. Akiva's explanation of "Thou shalt fear *et* the Lord your God."

Rabbi Isaac Zeev Soloveitchik, in his monograph on Rambam's *Code*, elaborates upon the distinction between these two commandments. The staggering scale of *kevod rav* inherent in the beginning of Chapter Five refers only to the *rebbe muvhak*. Rambam's comparison to honor due one's parents implies that the *rebbe muvhak* assumes the religious role of surrogate father. All other scholars command honor as well, but only in recognition of their scholarship not in gratitude for influence on one's life.

An etymological proof may be summoned in support of R. Soloveitchik's explanation. The fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and mother," utilizes the Hebrew word *kabad*. R. S. R. Hirsch suggests that this word shares the root (k.b.d) with the Hebrew word meaning heavy. He concludes that honor in this sense includes an acknowledgement of value and worth (qualitative "weight"). However, the verse

in Leviticus, "give honor to the presence of one mature in wisdom," employs the term *hadar* to mean honor. In other contexts (Lev. 23:40, for example) *hadar* denotes physical beauty. The connotation of appearance indicates that only an outward display of respect is commanded.

Is there a difference between treating a man with dignity and acknowledging a man's personal worth? This question exposes an essential aspect of the *rebbe/talmid* relationship at Yeshiva University.

I have heard it said that there is no *kevod rav* at YU. In my opinion this critique is both imprecise and inaccurate. I would generalize that most students honor their *rebbe*. They recognize their *rebbe*'s scholarship and his dedication to living a Torah life. Call this respect as admiration. The typical YU student seems long on this type of *kevod rav*. In shorter supply is the *kevod rav* associated with the *rebbe muvhak*. Honoring one's parents includes an obedience, the subsuming of one's will under that of another. This is respect as emulation. Noting the exceptions, one nevertheless perceives the difficulty experienced by many YU students in translating admiration into emulation.

Many reasons for this phenomenon suggest themselves. If this problem is endemic (qualitative "weight"). However, the verse

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The Young and The Restless

The Halakhot Of Postponing Marriage

By DAVID HERTZBERG

Immediately after God created man, He enjoined him to be fruitful and multiply and thus inhabit the earth (*Bereishit* 1:28). This imperative was originally directed to all of mankind, however, when the Torah was given at Sinai, the obligation was restricted exclusively to *Benei Yisrael* (*Mishneh Lamelekh, Hilkhot Melakhim* 10:7). In fact this rule maintains that any mitzvah commanded prior to *Matan Torah* and not repeated afterward became the sole responsibility and right of *Benei Yisrael*. The change in scope of the mitzvah of procreation may reflect a change in purpose; before

Matan Torah the commandment enjoined the perpetuation of mankind in general, while the post-*Matan Torah* purpose was (and still is) the perpetuation of the Jewish people.

This mitzvah, the first commanded to Adam, assumes aposition of great importance in Halakha. For example the *gemara* (*Megillah* 27a) states that the prohibition to sell a *sefer Torah* sbides if the sale will facilitate marriage or learning Torah. Similarly, according to the *gemara* (*Ketubot* 72a) a man may divorce his wife without paying her *ketubah* if she refuses to have children. Such an attitude does much to explain the statement in *Kiddushin* 29b that one

who delays marriage beyond the age of twenty is guilty of a grave sin and will be duly punished (see Maharsha ad. loc. who explains how the prescribed punishment is commensurate with the sin committed).

The *Gemara*'s severity sparks an obvious question: by what right do so many today postpone marriage beyond the age of twenty? Twenty years is clearly the upper limit. The preferred age at which to marry according to the *mishna* in *Avot* (5:24) is eighteen. In *Kiddushin* (loc. cit.) the *gemara* goes further, advising the person to try to marry when he turns thirteen. The *gemara*'s opinion is based upon the manifold halakhic difficulties with postponing marriage.

The first problem is a biblical concept described in *Pesachim* 4a, *zerizim makdimim lemizvot* viz. performing a mitzvah at the earliest possible opportunity. For example, the *brit milah* is customarily performed in the morning to fulfill this concept of *zerizut*. However, *zerizut* is waived for reasons of convenience; circumcisions are often done in the afternoon to accommodate guests. So too, one could justify postponing marriage or the begetting of children for reasons of convenience if *zerizut* were the only problem.

However, the Chazon Ish's interpretation of *Moed Katan* 7b which discusses the time for *reytaz negaim* (as quoted by R. Herschel Schachter in "Family Planning," *Journal of Halakha and Contemporary Society*, IV, p. 12) may imply that *zerizim makdimim lemizvot* is not the only problem in delaying marriage; such delay constitutes *bitul hamitzvah*, defaulting on the commandment. The Chazon Ish distinguishes between two categories of mitzvot: those of higher intensity and those of lesser intensity. Mitzvot belonging to the former category that have no prescribed time for performance must be fulfilled at the earliest possible moment. The

mitzvah of procreation, a mitzvah of great intensity lacking an explicit time for performance, must therefore be performed as early as possible. Any delay would constitute more than a lack of *zerizut* (the circumcising at three p.m. instead of at eight a.m.); it would be performing a mitzvah after its prescribed time (circumcising the child on the ninth instead of the eighth day).

The Maharam Schick (responsa *Even Haezer* no. 1) suggests another difficulty with postponing marriage. He was asked if one may delay marrying in the hope of finding a better spouse. The Maharam Schick responded that there is a rabbinic principle of "*chayshinan lemiah lezeman merubah*," one may not postpone fulfilling a mitzvah for a lengthy period of time for fear that he may die. (This rule applies only to mitzvot which need not be performed in a short time interval, e.g. *tefillin* which must be worn daily.) In that responsum, the Maharam Schick also addresses the question of delaying marriage to learn Torah. He answers by quoting the Rambam (loc. cit.) who permits such delay if marriage will adversely affect one's learning. Based on this, many *benei yeshiva* postpone marriage beyond the prescribed age.

R. Herschel Schachter explains this ruling in his aforementioned article (footnote no. 36). He writes:

Perhaps the idea behind this is, that since the whole mitzvah of *piryah verivyah* is for the purpose of perpetuating *Klal Yisrael*, the ultimate purpose of which is *mesorat haTorah*, passing Torah from one generation to the next, and a person's learning is also for the purpose of perpetuating Torah for *Klal Yisrael*, it may be permissible to delay marriage on that ground. Indeed, the *Gemara* tells us

in *Sanhedrin* 19b that one who teaches someone else's child Torah is considered as if he fathered him.

It should also be noted that the Maharam Schick quotes the Rambam (*Ishur* 15:3) who states that even if marriage will adversely affect a person's learning, if that person's sexual desire has reached dangerous heights, he must get married anyway.

From the above sources it seems evident that the postponement of marriage for mere convenience is prohibited and very negatively viewed by the *Gemara*. However, if the reason for postponement is the desire to further one's Torah knowledge, then the Rambam (loc. cit.) and the Mechaber (*Even Haezer* 1:3) permit it.

Unfortunately, in contemporary society it is often financially impossible to marry at age eighteen or even twenty. Most people at that age are unable to provide even minimally for a wife, let alone a family. This may indeed be an overriding consideration. The *Gemara* (*Sotah* 44a) discusses the order in the Torah of those people who are exempt from going to war. The reason the one who has built a new house and the one who has planted a vineyard precede the newlywed (the newlywed ostensibly should have been listed first for he would suffer the most anguish) is to teach us the proper way to lead our lives. First a person should put his life in order and attain financial security, and only then should he marry. However, once a person reaches the age when he and his wife would be able to survive financially, albeit with difficulty, they are obligated to marry. The only exception (and even this is only temporary according to the overwhelming majority of *posekim*) is with respect to someone who is learning Torah.



And He Hath Put a New

Exploring Hebrew Poetry

By WENDY ZIERLER

We sit behind long, white-robed tables that stretch across the room like open arms to welcome our adopted master-teacher for the day, Yehuda Amichai. Approximately thirty people have gathered in a synagogue auditorium saddled with blank paper and ready pens to embark on a full day's journey into the world of Hebrew poetry.

Presently one of Israel's most celebrated Hebrew poets, whose widely translated poems have won him international recognition unprecedented for one writing in that language, Amichai proves well-suited to guide the expedition. To some, Judaism and poetry remain words that are rarely sounded in the same breath. Before the end of the seminar, however, Amichai will illustrate, in his characteristically soft-spoken manner, that they are old friends.

Judaism has been described as the religion of history, and its God, the God of historical events — Creation, Covenant, Exodus, Sinaitic Revelation. Note that when God revealed Himself to Abraham, He said, "I am the God who took you out of *Ur Kasdim*." Again, at Mount Sinai, God identifies Himself not as the Creator of the universe, but, in very immediate terms, as the God who liberated the Jews from bondage. To the Jew, historical memory is essential to belief. He draws from the past as a source of hope for future redemption.

Amichai identifies this duality as the essential thrust of Jewish writing throughout the ages: the traditional yearning for past glories, and the hope to renew Zion through messianic redemption. Romanticization of the past provides the life force of Biblical prophecy as well as the thematic backbone of the liturgy. Thus, a Jew doesn't live in an isolated present, but answers to the call to imagine his ancestors' experiences as if they were his own.

"As if," "as though," "like"; these are the buzzwords of metaphor, the most essential tool in the making of poetry. Poetry too, Amichai argues, either looks back in longing, or forward in hope. All of Judaism, he dares us to consider — its literature, liturgy, mitzvot and halacha — is rich with romantic, poetic yearning and hope. To Amichai, this message, delivered in dazzling metaphorical vessels, is the stuff of Hebrew poetry.

But, this elemental trait shared by Judaism and poetry poses a serious question. As one member of the audience puts it, "As long as we live for promise of deliverance and perfection in a Messianic age, there will be Jewish poetry. But when Messiah arrives, when perfection is realized and our prayers all answered, Jewish poetry — indeed Judaism as we know it — will end!"

Amichai answers: "We Jews will fix it that there will be no such Messiah."

Reading through Amichai's enormous treasure of highly autobiographical verse, one begins to unfold the tale of a life shaped by the beauty of idealized Judaism and the harsh realities of modern Israel. Born in Wurzburg, Germany in 1924, Amichai was raised in an Orthodox home steeped in ritual. As a result, he remains intimately acquainted with the breadth of traditional custom and observance, but stands apart in his ability to personalize them, as in the poem, "A Letter of Recommendation,"

*I remember my father walking me
for early prayers.
He would do it gently by stroking my*

*forehead, not
by tearing away the blanket.*

*Since then I love him even more.
And as his reward, may he be
wakened
gently and with love
On the Day of Resurrection.**

Amichai emigrated to Palestine with his family in 1935 and became involved in the Zionist-Socialist youth movement. The new environment seemed to pull him away from

*ed like eggs
on the rim of the bowl, to make the
city
puff up rich and fat.**

Today, as Amichai traces the development of Hebrew poetry from the Bible to the present, he instructs us in his art — seeing historical relationships between Israel's everyday reality and its written and oral traditions. Although Amichai begins his discussion with the Paytanim, the Medieval poets, intending a chronologically linear

would like tongs . . .

For about two hundred years after the medieval period, the voice of Hebrew poetry fell virtually silent. The early years of the *Haskalah* saw the revival of Jewish national consciousness, and the advent of Y. L. Gordon and M. Y. Levensohn, who wrote epic poetry in Hebrew. But it wasn't until a hundred years ago that luminescent modern Hebrew poets began to appear out of their eclipsed tradition.

Hayim Nachman Bialik, the central force in the birth of modern Hebrew poetry, attempted to build a new poetic style on the foundations of the past. In his youth, he studied at the Volozhin yeshiva and later wrote romantic reflections on his experiences there such as, "The Talmud student" and "On the thresholds of the House of Prayer." As the poet, T. Carmi, observes, his poetry, laden with biblical references, "recapitulates successive stages of history." Once again, we discover the romantic-historical quality of Hebrew poetry. Like Halevi, Bialik harbored a great passion for Zion, and dedicated his life to the revival of Hebrew language and culture. Yet, when he immigrated to Palestine in 1922, he ceased to write poetry. This oddity epitomizes the phenomenon of Hebrew poetry: always expressing longing while simultaneously resisting fulfillment. Thus, once beyond the confines of the yeshiva, Bialik wrote fondly of that experience; and once he heard Hebrew being spoken as a living language, he ceased to write poems.

For younger immigrant poets, this era resembled the first critical hours after birth, during which a baby acclimates to the shockingly wondrous reality of being alive. After two thousand years of linguistic exile, ancient Hebrew returned home and confronted the modern idiom. Young poets like Avraham Shlonsky, a Russian-born kibbutznik, envisioned a natural transition from diaspora Judaism to modern Judaism in Palestine, from serving God through prayer and study to serving God by working the land. In his poem, "Toil," he imagines how physical avodah will replace the avodah of prayer:

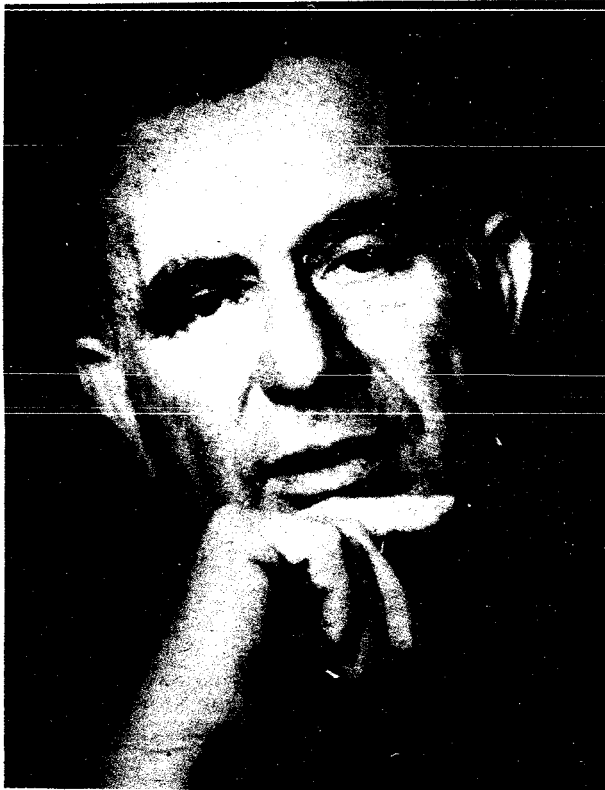
*Dress me, good mother, in a glorious
robe of many colours,
and at dawn, lead me to my toil,
My land is wrapped in white, as in
a prayer shawl.*

*The houses stand forth like frontlets;
and the roads paved by hand, stream
down like phylactery straps.*

Poetry attempts, through the careful application of a few words, to paint pictures of a thousand or more. The biblical origin of contemporary Hebrew vocabulary grants Hebrew poets a certain advantage over others in that individual words and names are already equipped whole chapters of meaning. "Scrawled in Pencil in the Sealed Car," by the modern Hebrew poet and scholar, Dan Pagis, depicts human tragedy in twenty four words:

*Here in the transport
I, Eve
And Abel, my son
If you should see my elder son
Cain, Adam's son
Tell him that I*

The names Eve, Abel, Cain, immediately recall the Genesis story. We think of



Yehuda Amichai

his traditional childhood. As an Israeli, Amichai experienced the pressing realities of the tiny Jewish State. He confides to his small audience: "I know what war is, and I belong on the peace side of things. But so many wars have been waged for peace, as if to say, 'Please mankind, let's have this tiny little war, and then peace.' Embraces can always turn into stabbings. Therefore, the slogan of no war is better than the slogan for peace."

For over fifty years, Amichai has lived in the city where history and modernity reside side-by-side. Modern-day Jerusalem, with its past-present-future juxtapositions, seems to be where Yehuda Amichai's poetry, built essentially on the principles of tradition and innovation, is most at home. He writes:

*Jerusalem is full of used Jews, worn
out by history,
Jews secondhand, slightly damaged,
at bargain prices.*

*And the eye yearns toward Zion, all
the time. And all the eyes
of the living and the dead are crack-*

ling, he frequently spirals forward and jumps back again, as poetic themes repeatedly refer to the past and recur in the present. Amichai begins with Shmuel Ha-Nagid, the tenth century master poet and warrior. A devout Jew, Ha-Nagid expressed his aesthetic/poetic urges in both sacred and secular poems. His war poetry in particular strikes the reader with its vivid imagery.

Rabbi Yehuda Halevi, the next medieval figure, was an outstanding scholar and philosopher, as well as a poet of distinction. Recognized mostly for his poems of yearning for Zion (*Zion Halo Tishali*, *Yefe Nof Mesos Tevel*), Halevi also wrote romantic love lyrics, infused with biblical language and metaphor:

*I rake the fire of your cheeks,
to put out fire with fire: When I am
thirsty, it is there that I look for
water.*

*Oh that I would suck your red lips
that
flame like glowing coals, and my jaws*

Song in My Mouth Through the Eyes Of Yehuda Amichai

man kind's initial awareness of evil, the first exile, and the bold-crying horror of the first murder. These paradigmatic incidents reappear throughout human history. The title, "Scrawled in Pencil in the Sealed Car," jars us with visions of our century's worst Genesis experience — sealed train cars crammed with human cargo. This poem has no end, but leads back cyclically to the beginning ("Tell him the I-Eve/ And Abel my son . . .") repeating like a broken record the ever-unfolding tragedy of the human condition.

Similarly, in his "Poem Without End," Amichai selects a few potent words and joins them in a continual circle.

*Inside the brand-new museum
there's an old synagogue.
Inside the synagogue is me.
Inside me
my heart.
Inside my heart
a museum.
Inside the museum
a synagogue,
inside it
me,
inside me
my heart,
inside my heart
a museum.*

Unlike their predecessors, Hebrew poets growing up in Israel and younger, Sabra poets, approached Hebrew as their native tongue; Biblical times, Hebrew letters were again used to spell out the sacred and the profane; to speak of prophecy and harlotry. With this in mind, one may appreciate Amichai's special *She'hecheyanu* (blessing for renewal) for the first Hebrew speaking prostitute in Tel Aviv. In a more sobered tone, Amichai expands upon this phenomenon in his poem, "National Thoughts":

*People caught in a homeland trap:
to speak now in this weary language,
a language that was torn from its*

Even in Talmudic and halakhic literature, Amichai perceives a certain poetic sensibility

*sleep in the Bible: dazzled,
it wobbles from mouth to mouth. In
a language that once described
miracles and God, to say car, bomb,
God.*

In joining meanings and concepts from distant ages, modern Hebrew poetry inherits a distinct metaphorical quality. Metaphor juxtaposes disparate experiences, composing meanings far greater than the sum of the individual parts — more specific, yet open to endless interpretation. For example, when Amichai begins a poem, "God's hand in the world/ like my mother's hand in the guts of the slaughtered chicken/ on Sabbath eve," we squirm at the violence of this image, and at the same time find solace in its nostalgic visions of Shabbat.

When he asks, "What does God see through the window/ While his hands reach into the world?/ What does my mother see?"

we must wonder if God's role in our world is as random and mechanical as his mother's. Or perhaps, raw acts must deliberately be performed in order to realize some pleasant and presentable end, such as the family's Shabbat meal.

Jewish literature has always built upon metaphorical relationships. In the Bible, Joseph compares Jacob, Leah and his brothers to the sun, moon and eleven stars. The modern Hebrew poets show particular sensitivity to the importance of metaphor in the Jewish literary tradition.

Indeed, much of their poetry reads like commentary, in the spirit of Midrash and Aggadah.

Even in Talmudic and halakhic literature, Amichai sees a certain poetic sensibility. One may argue whether the laws surrounding *kashrut*, or the commandments to take a *lutav*, build a *succah* and eat *matzah* offer much in the way of practical value, but they embody undeniably poignant symbolism. Amichai considers Rashi's "poetic commentary"; not in his language, but in his ability to "speak dialectically about what is not a reality in order to live that reality." Rashi often explains the text with a midrashic parable, drawing parallels between the familiar scenarios of the parable and the biblical situation from which we are temporally and emotionally distanced. The Talmud often resorts to parable as a method of explanation, and parables are no more than metaphors in narrative dress.

Another prominent modern, Nathan Zach, in his poem, "As Sand," struggles with the meaning of God's metaphorical promise to Abraham that his descendants will be as numerous "as the sand on the beach and the stars in the heavens." This appears to be an exaggeration. Perhaps, Abraham's descendants are destined to be as scattered, as weathered, as trod upon "as sand."

Similarly, three modern poets revisit and reinterpret the *Akedah*, the binding of Isaac. In Amir Gilboa's poem, "Yitzchak," the son, representative of the Jews in Palestine, recounts in horror the sacrifice of his father,

Abraham, who represents European Jew perishing in the Holocaust, and despairs at his failure to save his father. Hayim Gouri's "Heritage" laments the tragic legacy passed down by Isaac to his descendants. Isaac, as the story goes, was not sacrificed. . . . But, "bequeathed that hour to his offspring. They are born with a knife in their hearts." Rather than treating the *Akedah* as merely an historical event, they renew its meaning for each generation.

The poetic interpretations offered by Gilboa and Gouri are particularly important because they represent a shift in the treatment of Biblical subject matter. Whereas the earlier moderns use biblical imagery and narrative to charge their nationalistic poems, these younger poets graft their own experiences onto the narrative. Amichai's version of this biblical episode takes a huge imaginative leap and announces, "The real hero of the Isaac story was the ram/who didn't

know about the conspiracy between the others."

Much of the humor we witness in Amichai's recollections results from his juxtaposition of revered traditional images and sleek modern ones, such as Isaac as a "young man tanned and manicured in his jazzy suit." No doubt, most examples stem from a fondness for Jewish lore and practice. Yet, the distance Amichai puts between himself and his tradition conveys not only a sense of humor, but a certain discomfort with orthodox beliefs. In "A Song of Lies on the Sabbath," Amichai recounts how, as a child, he would lie to his father, "I went to another synagogue," he further admits, "Since then,

spiritual perfection. Thus, Amichai's retort: "We Jews will fix it that there will be no such Messiah."

Amichai may well characterize the quintessential Hebrew poet, himself trapped between the two worlds of the ideal and the real. In an early poem, "Of Three or Four in a Room," he presents his image of the poet:

*Of three or four in a room
there is always one who stands beside
the window.
He must see the evil among thorns
and the fires on the hill
and how people who went out of their*

In joining meanings and concepts from distant ages, modern Hebrew poetry inherits a distinct metaphorical quality

lying has always tasted very sweet to me." But only in the last two lines do we feel the full import of simple lies and the irony they hold for one disbelieving of tradition's sweet promises: "And my father returned the lie when he died: 'I've gone to another life.'"

Like Shlonsky, Amichai suggests an alternative to the ritualistic traditions of past generations. The poet improves his capacity for making metaphorical relationships when one of the things compared remains distant enough to be held as an "other": a thing that once was, but no longer is, a complete reality. Standing on the periphery of tradition, Amichai is able to see a *sefer Torah* like a beautiful woman. After the reading she is wrapped in a belt, draped in a velvet gown and adorned with silver crown and dangling jewels. He lives on this side of the metaphor, tradition on the "other."

Immediately, the medieval poets — as well as later aspirants, such as Malbin and Rav Kook — come to mind, suggesting that poetic distance belongs more to the realm of the imagination and doesn't demand that the poet actually step outside the life of strict observance. A modern poet, Zelda, lived her entire life in the ultra-Orthodox enclave of Mea Shearim, and remained devoutly religious throughout her life. Yet, even she recognized, in her poem, "Each Man has a Name," the necessity for each person to establish his own identity before God:

*Each man has a name
given him by his sins
and given him by his longings . . .
Each man has a name
given him by his feast days
and given him by his craft*

In any case, the idea of metaphorical distance does not state a rule so much as present a disturbing tension between religious observance and creative expression. Indeed, the special predicament of Hebrew poetry bears direct relation to our initial dilemma: What will happen to Hebrew poetry, and Judaism as a whole, with the realization of messianic redemption? Just as poetic endeavour thrives only in the gulf between the imagined and the real, all of the poetry embodied in Judaism will only survive in the chasm between longing and the realization of longing. Poetry gestures toward reality; Judaism strives for, but never realizes,

*houses whole
are given back in the evening like
small change.*

*Of three or four in a room
there is always one who stands beside
the window,
his dark hair above his thoughts.
Behind him, words.
And in front of him, voices wander-
ing without a knapsack,
hearts without provisions, prophecies
without water,
large stones that have been returned
and stay sealed, like letters that have
no address
and no one to receive them.*

Robert Friend, in *The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself*, explains that the room represents our protective world of every day existence, and the place seen through the window, filled with injustice and unfulfilled longing. In his visions, he sees how men begin their lives whole, but are literally broken into small change by both real wars and embattled lives. The poet longs to venture out into the wilderness like a prophet, gather the wandering voices, and, as Friend states, "return with God's word, for He is the source of the living waters (Jeremiah)."

Perhaps, after all, the prophet is the quintessential poet, for the metaphorical relationships he establishes derive from this divine source. Jeremiah discovers his prophetic identity when he correctly sees these relationships:

God asks him, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

"I see the branch of an almond (shaked) tree."

"You have seen well." God responds, "for I will hasten (shoked) my word to perform it."

God asks again "What do you see?"

"I see a sifting pot, and its face is from the north."

And God responds, "Out of the north the evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants." You have correctly represented the fate of your people in a metaphor.

Special thanks (and apologies) to Rabbi J. Blau, Rabbi Shalom Carmy, Mrs. Esther Roshwail, and Yehuda Amichai.

ETHICS

Being "Frum" and Being Good

The Relationship Between Religion and Morality

By **RABBI AHARON LICHTENSTEIN**

The following is a synopsis by Nachum Spirn of a lecture by Rav Lichtenstein delivered on Nov. 6, 1986 to the Educational Council of America at its convention at the Homawack Hotel in Spring Glen, N.Y.

What does it mean to be "frum"? Put simply, it means to have an existential and experiential relationship with the *Ribono Shel Olam*. *Emanah, devekut, ahavah*, and *yir'ah* are all components of that relationship. In halakha, this must translate into obedience to God's normative demands. This is what the Torah means when it says (*Devarim* 10:12-13): "And now, O Israel, what does God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God..." The *pasuk* then continues: "to walk in His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God . . . to keep the mitzvot of God and His statutes." Fear of God must lead to the living of a halakic life. And the essence of halakic life is to make the move from a homocentric to a theocentric existence.

But being "frum" does not solely mean obeying God in the realm of mitzvot; the Divine command has implications in the realm of *devar reshut* as well. In the beginning of *Bereishit* (2:16-17) we find: "And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden shalt thou indeed eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." We understand God's command not to eat of the *Eitz HaDaar*; it is the first mitzvah given to man. But what is God saying in the first part of the *pasuk* — must Adam eat from all the trees in the Garden of Eden? He cannot choose instead to eat vegetables or to fast altogether? Rather we see that once the category of Divine command appears as an essential component of human existence, it has implications for *devar reshut* as much as for *devar mitzvah*; every action a person does must be examined in light of what God says about it. "*Bekhol drakhekha da'aitu* — In all thy ways acknowledge Him (*Mishlei* 3:6)."

Frumkeit vs. Goodness

This does not tell us, however, what is the relationship between "frumkeit" and goodness or, if you will, between religion and morality. The two basic historical approaches to this question can be summarized as follows: The first, or "voluntarist" position, is that of moral relativism. Nothing is inherently good or bad but [God's] wishing makes it so. God is thus viewed as a God of power (*Kol Hashem BeKoach*), and that power is most keenly felt precisely when arbitrarily exercised. Indeed, this approach, adopted by William of Occam in the Middle Ages, posits that something is defined as "good" only because God so decreed — and the decree is an arbitrary one at that.

The second approach, that of Thomas Aquinas and more recently of C.S. Lewis, insists that actions are intrinsically good or bad; there are antecedent reasons inherent in a particular phenomenon which, as it were, "compelled" God to deem certain actions good and others evil. This second approach, though recognizing that God is indeed all-powerful, relates to Him more as a God of Values (in the sense of *Kol Hashem BeHadar*), by which He represents the beauty of rationality and goodness. And though the sense of God's absolute Power is somewhat diminished according to this approach, this does not pose a theological dif-

ficulty, because it is God who thus restricts Himself; there is no external restraint.

Of these two positions, Judaism clearly accepts the second. God is rational, and things which are evil cannot be willed by Him. Chabakuk (1:13) says: "Thou art of eyes too pure to behold evil, canst not look on without iniquity." Moshe said it earlier: "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He (*Devarim* 32:4)." And Avraham still earlier: "Will the judge of the whole world not do justice (*Bereishit* 18:25)?" We see that God can be held accountable to standards of morality!

But does this presumption of the rationality of mitzvot carry over into all areas of Torah or is it limited only to those dealing with moral issues? This question is the subject of some controversy among *Rishonim*. Rashi (*Vayikra* 19:19) writes that *chukim* are "decrees of the King which have no reason." The Rambam (*ibid.*) responds as follows: "The intention of the rabbis [in defining *chukim* as the laws of the King for which there is no reason] was not that these are decrees of the King of Kings for which there are no reasons whatever, 'for every word of God is tried'. [They meant] only that . . . the *chukim* are God's secrets in the Torah which the people, by means of their thinking, do not grasp as they do in the case of *mishpatim* [laws which conform to the human conception of justice], but yet they all have a proper reason and perfect benefit." The Rambam, in *Moreh Nevukhim* (III, 26) suggests that even though any given mitzvah taken as a whole has meaning and purpose, it is entirely possible that the details and minutiae of halakhot are not inherently significant.

I believe it is further possible to go beyond the Rambam and to suggest that perhaps the content of a particular mitzvah (even taken in its entirety) inherently has no reason. Yet, this itself comprises a reason. Some mitzvot may have been commanded despite — or even because of — the fact they have no reason. Their purpose — to accustom us to obedience. For it is intrinsically good to obey God; it is good that rational creatures should readily submit themselves to their Creator. It should be emphasized however that to say this is not to adopt the voluntarist position; it is simply to extend somewhat the notion and the concept of what is intrinsically valuable and desirable.

Frumkeit Without Goodness

If we are to understand that God's will — His mitzvot — are grounded in goodness, morality and rationality, then goodness is certainly an integral component of that will, and if so, then ideal, comprehensive "frumkeit" obviously includes goodness. But "frumkeit" is, in actuality, rarely ideal and comprehensive. We must therefore ask ourselves, how do we relate to "frumkeit" without goodness?

The humanist/moralist within us hastens to reply, "*Gornisht!* 'Frumkeit' without goodness means nothing." But we must curb our haste.

The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 40a) quotes *Yeshayahu* (3:10-11): "*Imru tzaddik ki tov. Oy l'rasha ra* — Say ye of the righteous that he is good. . . . Woe to the wicked man [that is] evil," and asks: Is there, then, such a thing as a *tzaddik* who is not good or a *rasha* who is not bad? The *gemara* answers that a *tzaddik* who is only good towards Heaven but is bad towards his fellow man is a "tzaddik

who is not good." A *rasha* who is bad towards Heaven but is good to his fellow man is a "rasha who is not bad." It appears from the *gemara* that indeed one who is "frum" but not good can still be called a *tzaddik!*

Nevertheless, I do not think that our instincts are all that wrong. From where would Western culture inherit the idea that "frumkeit" without goodness is meaningless if not from Judaism? "For what do I need your multitude of sacrifices to me? . . . I cannot bear iniquity along with solemn meeting. . . . Even when you make many prayers I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. . . . Cease to do evil; learn to do well. . . . Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow (*Yeshayahu* 1)." And further: "You fast for strife and debate. . . . Is such the fast that I have chosen? . . . Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen — to loose the chains of wickedness. . . . to share thy bread with the hungry. . . . when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him. . . . (*ibid.* 49)." It is clearly inconceivable to refer to one who harms others as a "bad *tzaddik*." When the *gemara* in *Kiddushin* says one who is "bad" to his fellow man can be called a "tzaddik who is not good," it must mean that one who is oblivious to the needs of his fellow man, with no social conscience, may be referred to that

dent of a religious outlook, in practice a society will not be a moral one without religion. Religion must therefore be sold to the masses on the basis of its contribution to morality. (It should be noted, as Newman pointed out in the nineteenth century, that this approach may well constitute a debasing of religion in that it bases the legitimacy of religion purely on its moral significance.) In *Eretz Yisrael*, whenever a new study indicating a high degree of sexual licentiousness, drug abuse, or stealing in secular schools is released, certain circles of religious educators respond with joy and exultation. "See how your secular education doesn't work!" they exclaim. "Bring your children to us and we'll make 'menschen' out of them!" This attitude is one which we ought to reject categorically. Who are these delinquents? Our brothers! We should weep.

We should be glad to see moral idealism wherever it expresses itself, and it should not be dismissed and denigrated simply because motivated by secular sources. There are moral, good people in the secular community. And to needlessly sharpen the divisions that separate *Klal Yisrael* from each other, to increase *sinat chinam* — that too is an ethical problem.

"Immoral" Religion?

We come now to those areas where a conflict may appear to exist between "frumkeit" and goodness. Examples include God's command to destroy Amalek and His command to Avraham to slaughter Yitzchak. The problem is real. It should be noted however that it affects only those people whom we have been successful in imbuing with moral and spiritual sensitivity; those who are relatively "gross" are not concerned about Amalek. Does this mean we should encourage a more "gross" perspective, and thus avoid the conflict?

Resolving this dilemma is perhaps practically difficult, but conceptually it is clear and unequivocal. This question, after all, is central to the *Akedah*. The message of the *Akedah* is clear: The Divine command takes precedence in every respect to our moral sensibilities and our conscientious objections. With *yir'at shamayim*, we obey. But this is not to say there is no room for moral sensibility. There is a role for conscience and for goodness, particularly in an interpretative capacity. The Midrash relates that Avraham struggled for three days to understand God's command. Grappling with Divine commands is legitimate. We need not dismiss the ambivalence, the difficulties, the contradiction: we need not wish away Avraham's days of spiritual wrestling. The goodness which is the source of the struggles and the tension is itself a part of *yir'at shamayim* — a legitimate part. But the grappling must all be done within the parameters of the understanding that, however much I wrestle, I do not question the authenticity of the command nor do I sit in Judgement of the *Ribono Shel Olam*. I assume *a priori* that God is a "God of truth and without iniquity (*Devarim* 32:4)." But in the context of *a priori* obedience and submission, I may try to understand, I may grope, I may ask and I may ultimately seek resolution.

In a recent article of mine which dealt with the use of force and violence and the motivation behind it, I discussed Shaul, who was punished because he didn't kill Amalek (I *Shemuel* 15). I suggested that he was punished

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Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein

way. One who actively hurts his fellow man certainly cannot be considered any kind of *tzaddik*. And even for the "frum" personality who is simply egocentric (without actively harming others), there comes a point where his level of concern and involvement solely with himself, where his obliviousness to others becomes so complete that his passive insensitivity translates into a kind of active "ra." (Cf. "Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor [*Vayikra* 19:16].")

Thus, we must strive for "frumkeit" in its totality, a totality that certainly includes goodness.

Goodness Without Frumkeit

How do we relate to the opposite phenomenon, that of goodness devoid of "frumkeit", of secular moral idealism? Some thinkers have questioned whether such a thing can exist and have claimed that morality without religion is inconceivable. Together with Dostoevsky's Karamazov, they claim that "without God, everything is lawful."

Our experience seems to be otherwise. We all know atheists who view themselves — and we view them — as good people. Though they may be philosophically inconsistent, they are ethical people.

Other thinkers have claimed that though it is possible for goodness to exist indepen-

Follow the Leader

The Rabbi In the Roles of Posek and Counselor

By SHAI SHMELTZER

On Thursday Sept. 25, 1986 RIETS sponsored a Yom Iyun on the topic; "Developing as a Rav in the Roles of Posek and Counselor." The following is a synopsis of the address by Rabbi Norman Lamm.

At the Yom Iyun presentation, Rabbi Lamm spoke of the rabbi's dual role as *posek* and *madrikh* — as halakhic arbiter and community counselor. He analyzed the methodologies of the two functions and distinguished them on the ground that *pesak* involves discrete and quantitative measures while counseling requires qualitative ones; a *teshuva* is arrived at via the application of general and concrete halakhic principles but counsel must be tailored in relation to the specific needs of the questioner. Rabbi Lamm referred to the relative and specific type of response as "metahalakhic", or above strict halakhic interpretation. He added that both rabbinic functions require a great deal of experience.

Rabbi Lamm clarified the concept of

"metahalakhics" by introducing several issues to which it applied, among them Bar Kochba's putative messianism and Torah education for women. He mentioned the former as a classic instance in which a matter of national and historical importance cannot be resolved through the usual halakhic process but must instead be dealt with metahalakhically. Moving closer to our time, he mentioned that the Chofetz Chayim permitted the study of Torah for women after considering not only the relevant halakhic principles, but also the general condition and circumstances of the women of his time. He also referred to the introduction of a *Beit Midrash* at Stern College, saying that in the face of vehement opposition from other rabbis the Rav and he had supported it after considering the interests of *Klal Yisrael*.

Rabbi Lamm next mentioned another area in which metahalakhics must be enlisted, the differing application of moral principles to the general public as opposed to individuals. He gave revenge as an example; whereas it

is clearly prohibited in the individual sphere on the basis of *lo titokm v'lo titor*, the community of *Benei Yisrael* is urged by the verse *nekem nikmat dam avadekha* to take revenge on those who spill its blood. Clearly, he concluded, the community must conform to different standards of appropriate behavior than the individual.

Rabbi Lamm mentioned that another example of the distinction between *horaah* and *hadrakha* is found in a *teshuva* of the Telzer Rosh Yeshiva, R. Avraham Yitzchak Block. R. Block wrote that the application of R.S.R. Hirsch's concept of *Torah im Derekh Eretz* depends on the conditions of a community's environment.

Rabbi Lamm also referred to a major question facing the Orthodox rabbinate today: collaboration with the non-Orthodox. He advised against extremism in either direction, arguing that an Orthodox Rabbi's decision should be based on the specific circumstances

of a situation.

Near the end of the lecture, Rabbi Lamm placed his conception of the rabbinate in a broader philosophical perspective. He stated that *halakha* can be approached in one of two ways, either monistically or dualistically. Monists, he said, believe that a halakhic decision is absolute truth and the only possible response to the situation it deals with, while dualists contend that a halakhic question can be answered differently in different circumstances. He pointed out that this dispute exists within the *Rishonim* and argued for acceptance of the dualist approach.

Rabbi Lamm concluded by listing the goals for which a *madrikh* should strive. A rabbi's advice, he said, should increase *kibud shamayim*, be *magdil Torah*, and take into account the needs of all *Klal Yisrael*. He conceded the difficulty of what he was demanding, but argued that rather than paralyzing it should make the rabbi more aware of his responsibilities and their importance.

Kavod

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to YU, the source of our difficulty may lie in the institution. The YU *rebbe* shares his platform, indeed competes, with secular professors. Such a situation is conducive to the misrepresentation of the *rebbe* as merely a lecturer in Talmud. This explanation might be corroborated by the fact that many students who study in Israel grow intimate with their Israeli *rebbe*. In Israel, a *rebbe* has a complete monopoly on his students' time and attention. At YU, on the other hand, the *rebbe* might be prevented from profoundly influencing his students on a grand scale. Dual curriculum spells divided attention.

Or perhaps, the fault lies less with YU than with the students themselves. There are certainly students apathetic to learning and indifferent to their *rebbe*. Even among those who are not apathetic, however, many students fail to develop a serious relationship with their *rebbe*. Perhaps they have been infected with the contagion of modern liberal individualism. According to this scenario, the devotee of liberal arts, suffused with the glow of intellectual autonomy, finds himself unwilling to make the sacrifice of independence demanded by a *rebbe* of his disciple. For a genuine *rebbe/talmid* relationship must impose restriction on the student; his mode of thought and behavior are prescribed from above. Rejecting this, the student rejects his *rebbe*.

A third explanation might find the *rebbe* at fault. Perhaps the *rebbe* may be accused of not trying to influence his students. If this seems unlikely or unfair, one may suggest that even the *rebbe* who dedicates himself to drawing his students close may not succeed. One way or the other, when a *rebbe* teaches students without inspiring them, everyone loses.

What about the charismatic *rav* and the student who loves learning? In this case too *kevod rav* may be absent. Why?

Perhaps some students find themselves distanced philosophically from their *rebbe*. As a result the *rebbe* — no matter how inspiring — can be no more than a Talmud professor, demonstrating the techniques and skills of learning; the student can draw no closer. For when the topic changes from Talmud to *hashkafa*, the student changes

from disciple to defendant. A yawning philosophical chasm separates the student from his *rebbe*; worse, it casts the *rebbe* in the role of *hashkafic* antagonist. This forces his students into a defensive stance and traumatizes the nascent relationship between the *rebbe* and his *talmidim*.

To restore a personal and intimate *kevod rav* to Yeshiva University, something must be changed. Can we ask YU to change its character? Can we demand that the student adjust to his *rav* or vice versa? Or dare we resign ourselves to our present weak and pathetic situation? I pray not. We must strive to change that status quo. If such a process must be gradual, let us hope its effect will be profounder still.

Frum

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ed not for sparing the last Amalekite, but rather because his refusal to kill Agag placed the killing of all the other Amalekites in a different light. Slaughtering a whole people — morally, a frightful thing — is only justifiable as a response to the unequivocal command of the *Ribono Shel Olam*. Sparing Agag demonstrated that Shaul's motivation was not God's command, but some baser impulse of instinctive violence. If that guided him, then he was punished not for sparing Agag, but for killing the rest of the Amalekite nation; Shaul killed them not purely out of obedience to the Divine command, but rather out of some type of military, diplomatic, or political consideration.

There were those in Israel who felt that, educationally speaking, one should not present the Divine command as conflicting with usual moral norms — even if we agree that in the specific context of a Divine command, an otherwise immoral action partakes of the goodness and morality of God and thus cannot be labeled "immoral." And there is something to his view.

Nonetheless, I think we have no choice. Moral sensibility as guide to moral action is crucial. The solution is not to teach morally less, but *yir'at shamayim* more. R. Chaim Brisker, as described in R. Zevin's *Ishim VeShitot*, was a man of extreme moral sensibility, with great concern for human beings, for human suffering . . . Yet he lived with the totality of halakha, including

Amalek and the *Shiv'at Amamim*. Why? Clearly not because his moral sensibility was less, but rather that his *emunah* and *yir'at shamayim* were so much more.

This, then, must be our solution: to strengthen and intensify our *dvikut*, *yir'at shamayim* and *emunah*, while simultaneously developing our moral consciousness and sensitivities — to their maximum.

Hirsch

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To recapitulate Hirsch's arguments for an ideal *Galut* (i.e., the Emancipation) the concept of the Jewish people living again in Israel contradicts his view of the Jewish mission in the world as well as the *Mensch-Yisrael* concept because it totally separates the Jews from the greater world. Furthermore, return to the land before messianic times will reinsert "material" as important to Judaism, thus de-emphasizing the "spiritual" which Hirsch idealized. His interpretation of sources from the bible which show the significance of *Galut* are left with no basis if the Jews return to Israel. Essentially, if Israel returns to their ancient land they will re-enter history, losing their unique spiritual quality and becoming just like all the nations.

Rosenbloom, who seeks to show the high degree of Hegelian influence on Hirsch's writings, asks: "Is there a synthesis in Hirsch's thought?" He answers that in the messianic era, the state and the exile which are presently antithetical will unite into a state led by the Torah which is "an exemplar of the meaning of divine revelation and the mis-

sion of humanity." We see here a degree of continuity in Hirsch's thinking. In the messianic era, rather than individual Jews living with people of other faiths, Judaism as a nation will live as neighbors with other nations of the world continuing to shine its unique light, albeit on a grander scale. Yet, despite the pleasant, appealing sound of these words, they are merely intangible clouds in contrast to his specific plan of the Jewish program in Exile. Obviously, no one knows as much about the messianic age as he does about this world, but the scarcity of references to an issue which other great Jewish thinkers spent chapters and books on, seems a result of the low, almost inconceivable place that this ideal plays in Hirsch's philosophy.

And seek the peace of the city whither I have exiled you, and pray for it to be the Lord, for in its peace there will be unto you peace.

Certainly, the Jews must seek peace in whatever land they inhabit; being a light unto the nations is not a commandment dependent upon living in the land. Yet, Hirsch's conclusion from Jeremiah that the ideal place for the Jews was in exile seems short-sighted in view of traditional Bible commentaries. The *Metsudat David* interprets this passage as pragmatic instruction for an interim period before the Jews return to their permanent home. Twentieth century history has borne this out. One is left with the impression that Hirsch was a great leader, whose vision did not span beyond the immediate future, while Jeremiah had the "vision" to speak with confidence of a scenario which took over two thousand years to come to fruition.

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Where Does the Light Shine

Exile In the Thought of R. S. R. Hirsch

By ADAM S. FERZIGER

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch believed that a place and a positive function exists for the Jewish people in the *Galut* (Diaspora). As a leader of German Orthodoxy in the nineteenth century, he strove to practice the goal of full emancipation for the Jews. This effort is reflected in his more popularly known position as Rabbi of *Kehal Adass Yeshurun* in Frankfurt-Am-Main. A prolific writer, Hirsch devoted significant portions of his literary output, particularly in his *Nineteen Letters* to discussion of the philosophical role of the Jewish people in this world and specifically why its goals could best be accomplished in the *Galut* under the terms of the Emancipation.

Another movement, the seeds of which were planted in Hirsch's day, but only truly began to take root after his death, was Zionism. Though the term had not yet been coined, contemporaries of Hirsch such as Kalischer and Hess had already begun to express strong views on the Jewish return to Zion and possible ways to hasten this "physical" redemption. Hirsch clearly opposed these views. In referring to the "gathering of exiles" promised to us by the prophets he proclaimed: "For this future . . . we hope and pray, but actively to accelerate its coming is prohibited to us." Though it is possible that Hirsch's "anti-Zionism" is based solely on a halachic decision — similar to that of the present-day Satmar Hasidim — more likely his dedication to the emancipation contributed greatly to his opposition to contemporary proto-Zionistic aspirations. In order to gain a stronger grasp of his position, it is necessary to formulate precisely his view of the role of the Jews in the world and why the *Galut* is the most fertile ground for the bearing of its fruit.

Hirsch believed that Judaism was founded to solve a specific problem. "men had eliminated God from life." The only means for solution was to create a nation whose purpose was to be an *or lagoyim*, a "light onto the nations." This nation must show the world that God is its sole Creator and that the function of human life is not to attain possessions and seek enjoyment, but rather, to fulfill the will of God. Dr. Mordechai Breuer points out that the concept of *or lagoyim* did not originate in the nineteenth century; actually, "its existence dates to the existence of Judaism itself." Hirsch's contribution was first, in highlighting it for the first time since the days of Judah Ha-Levi, and second, in his ability to understand the unique application of this concept to his own generation.

A nation with such high aspirations required nurturing under those conditions which would inculcate the values necessary to perform their mission. Only after it had completed its personal development could it be placed in an environment which was wont for its influence. Thus, the exiled Jews from Egypt, equipped with the spirituality which had been bestowed upon them through the recently received Torah, entered their own land. The Jewish stay in Israel accomplished two pragmatic goals towards becoming a light onto the nations: it separated the nation from the other peoples of the world so that it could grow, unadulterated by the influences of foreign cultures. Furthermore, the physical land established them as a "people in the midst of people," a nation with the status and respect of all other nations.

Though the land played a positive role in Israel's development, eventually, it became

clear that the Jews had been enriched as much as was necessary and the land had begun to be a negative force. Instead of gaining in spirituality the Jews only saw "the abundance of earthly goods, the wealth . . . which had led Israel to stray from its mission." Therefore, it was time for Israel to realize that, as a nation with a mission, it lived according to higher standards and it had done wrong. In addition, it must move out into the world so that it could perform its divinely appointed task. The destruction served both purposes. It physically dispersed the people, while simultaneously



Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

expressing God's unhappiness with Israel's actions. Dr. Noah H. Rosenbloom, in *Tradition in the Age of Reform*, points out that Hirsch's explanation of the destruction as an essential ingredient in Jewish development is consistent with its acceptance of the Hegelian concept of "destructive effects involved in the historical process."

There is no doubt that Hirsch saw *Galut* as the ideal place for performance of Israel's mission. He points to the greater degree of influence Israel has living among the nations, "if in the midst of a world which worships wealth and lust. Israel were to live a tranquil life of righteousness and love . . . what a powerful instrument for good could Israel be." Yet, he also felt that *Galut* added to Israel's own spirituality; for as Israel lives through history and sees all the powers of the world destroyed, it gains greater faith in God.

The key to this conception of the diaspora is the notion that living in the land of Israel is not always ideal and thus, the current dispersion of the Jews does not represent a de facto situation. To fortify this position, we are presented with a number of incidents in the Bible which show that our God and forefathers felt that, at certain times, a higher level of spirituality can be gained outside the land of Israel. Abraham and Jacob both left the land of Israel to go to Egypt for ostensibly practical reasons, yet the results were concrete gains in their personal development and as such, the entire nation. Moreover, arguably the most climactic event in Jewish history, the revelation and reception of the Torah on Sinai occurred outside the borders of our land. Finally, during the return of the exiles from Babylon led by Ezra and Nehemiah, it was the leaders, men of spirituality and wisdom, who chose to stay in *Galut* and eventually created the Babylonian Talmud.

Rosenbloom points out that Hirsch sought to maintain some sense of Jewish nationhood even in the *Galut* in order to fit his theories

neatly within the Hegelian concept of historical development of nations. Hirsch's dilemma was the same as Krochmal's. The Jews were different from all nations. They had already developed a high level of spirituality at an early stage in history. Thus, Hirsch accepted the two-tiered view of Jewish history, at one level a dynamic nation like all others, while concurrently a permanently spiritual people. Although this is the case, we see that Hirschian philosophy clearly seeks to emphasize the spiritual rather than the national aspects of Judaism. This position has been taken to its extreme in the philosophy of Hirsch's grandson, Rabbi Isaac Breuer who, in Rosenbloom's words, "resolved the inner contradiction by removing the Jewish people entirely from the realm of history and placing them exclusively in the realm of the spiritual."

As in all of Hirsch's ideas, the Emancipation is presented both in terms of its pragmatic advantages and its philosophical basis. The main practical arguments for Emancipation is that if the Jews are equal in status to those of their fellow countrymen they will be able to better accomplish their mission. There are four main reasons for this. First, living amongst general society and being accepted as equals certainly allows for more opportunities to influence the greater world. Second, if Jews and gentiles are neighbors who interact on an every-day basis, the non-Jews will cease to perceive the Jews as strange, foreign creatures. Third, instead of being forced to concentrate their energies on mere survival, Jews will be able to focus on their ultimate task. Finally, he felt that many of the Jews of his day would not be forced "upon paths they were too weak to refuse," if being Jewish was not made so difficult by the "excess of oppression."

In the "Nineteenth Letter," Hirsch

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presents a biblical passage as evidence to the deep philosophical roots of "emancipation" within Judaism. When the Jews were exiled to Babylon after the destruction of the first Temple, the prophet Jeremiah proclaimed:

And seek the peace of the city whither I have exiled you, and pray for it to the Lord, for in its peace there will be unto you peace.

Hirsch clearly saw this as a positive directive; not just a practical guide to survival in exile. "Peace," here, does not mean merely physical well-being, it means bringing an air of peace to the entire world. Thus, if emancipation will promote these goals, then the Jews must join "as closely as possible to the state which receives us."

Besides the practical value of helping to accomplish their mission, emancipation illustrates two main ideals within Judaism. Though the general *Galut* in whatever form

it takes displays Israel's viability as spiritual messengers of God outside the concept of a nation and a land, emancipation solidifies this point and develops it further. Once the Jews have become fully integrated into general society, there will be no question that spirituality is the essence of Judaism and that "the independent national life of Israel was never the purpose of our existence . . ." for national life will more or less cease to exist. Furthermore, both Rosenbloom and Ze'ev Levi, point out that emancipation is fulfillment of Hirsch's concept of *Mensch-Yisrael* (Jew-Israel). This is the belief that although Judaism has a "spiritual metahistorical quality" which makes it uniquely "Israel" as opposed to just another nation, coinciding with this, is the "common external aspect" which historically unites the Jew with all others. Since Jews share the quality of *mensch* they are entitled to live among "men." Emancipation is an actualization of this ideal because it enables Jewish spirituality to blossom inside a common man.

It must be noted, that Hirsch never considered Emancipation a goal unto itself, rather, "a new condition for its mission." In this light, he did not omit the fears which he had of a condition in many ways "much severer than the trial of oppression." In this statement he alludes to the fact that the Emancipation can easily be misconstrued as an end, not just a means. Contrary to gaining new resources of strength for their mission, the Jews could be dragged by their new found comforts into seeing emancipation as the "end of *Galut*." Additionally, living closer to the non-Jews means having more opportunity to affect them positively, but no doubt the negative influences of outside society are more readily available. Despite these hesitations, Hirsch had faith that emancipation will awaken "the true spirit which strives to fulfill the mission of Israel."

As stated previously, it is possible that Hirsch's negative attitude towards the Jew's physical return to Zion was based strictly on his understanding of certain Halachic issues; specifically the three oaths which Israel became obligated to when it went into exile, as mentioned in Tractate *Keubot* 113A. However, he never mentions such argumentation, and thus, we are left to make conclusions based on his stated beliefs.

Dr. Ze'ev Levi, in an article dealing with the attitudes of nineteenth century German Jewish thinkers towards Israel, argues that this group's characteristically negative attitude towards return to Zion stems from their fear for their status in their country of residence. He considers this viewpoint prevalent among all German Jewish leaders of that time from the most liberal to the most Orthodox. Along this line of thinking, one would conclude in regard to Hirsch, if not for the issue of dual loyalty, he might not have relegated return to Zion to some intangible messianic ideal. Possibly, deep down Hirsch really hoped that these "Zionists" would succeed; but he did not see this as attainable and therefore decided to concentrate his own energies on what seemed to be reachable.

I suggest that Hirsch had more than pragmatic reasons for his position. He saw the *Galut* as the ideal place for the Jews for as long as he could imagine, and only included smatterings of messianic rhetoric because Jewish literature, tradition and Halakha are so rich in pointing to "the return" that he could not completely ignore such a concept.

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