HAMEVASER

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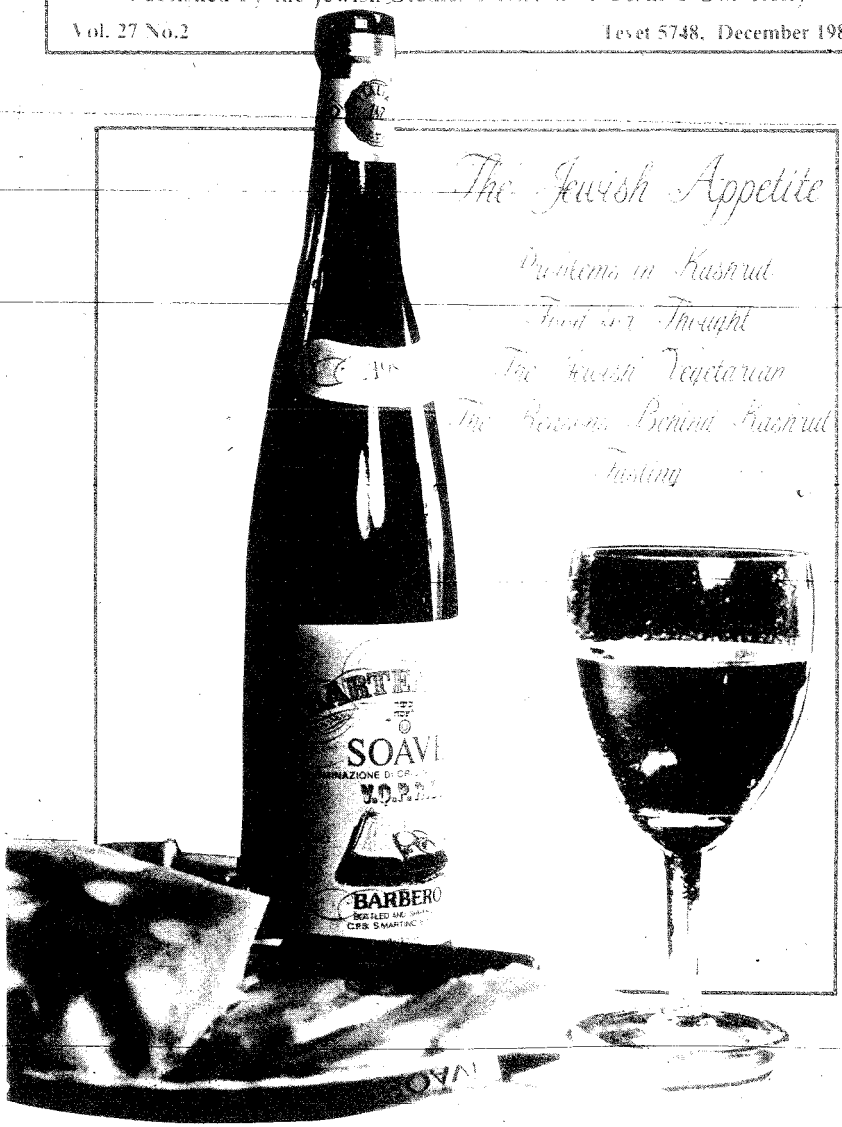

The Jewish Appetite

Problems in Kashrut

Food for Thought

The Jewish Vegetarian

The Passover Bonus Kashrut Tasting

An End to Slander!

For years, a man—who in his "attempts" at anonymity completely reveals his identity and his motives—has been circulating vicious letters to various professors, rabbeim, administrators, members of the board of directors, and alumni. The content of these letters is directed at many individuals in the YU community. To say these letters reflect no veracity and are entirely offensive is an understatement. They are malicious personal attacks.

For some mysterious reason his non-stop vendettas have been tolerated. And although these letters are known to contain only malicious lies and slander, this individual continues his behavior while learning in the YU *beis medrash*. Perhaps this conduct continues because his opinions are not taken seriously or because, for some reason, there are those in this yeshiva who find it in their own interest to protect him.

This problem has long deserved attention. Dr. Samuel Belkin was one of the first subjects of his vitriolic attacks, and today he continues, with the same tenacity, to slander many new victims. In fact, only last week he called a YU Rosh Yeshiva, to his face, a *shagetz* and accused him of not being shomer shabbos.

The administration must take severe action in removing this man entirely from the University. The fact that they have not as of yet, shows the corrosive effect of politics on the ideals of honesty and integrity. If his on-going slander is not enough impetus to throw this man out, then the administration must seriously examine their priorities. Every year that this continues the administration's irresponsibility compounds. It is not too late to take action. To use his 'own words' against him, *Ohavay Hashem, Sinu Ra.*

HAMEVASER

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Action Assured

To the Editor:
December 8, 1987

In April 1987, *Hamevaser* printed an article by Larry Yudelson, on the *Aguna* problem, which referred to the position of the Rabbinical Council of America on a prenuptial agreement.

As you may know the RCA was scheduled by September 1987 to act on the prenuptial agreement. Unfortunately, the untimely passing of the *Rosh Beth Din*, Rabbi Moses Steinberg of blessed memory, necessitated the postponement of the scheduled discussions. Be advised, however, that in searching for a new Rosh Beth Din, the issues of *Aguna* and a prenuptial agreement will be considered.

The readers of *Hamevaser* should not be left with the impression that the Rabbinical Council of America has let these issues die of inaction.

Rabbi Milton H. Polin,
President of the Rabbinical Council

Professor Responds

by Manfred Weidhorn

In one of the past *Hamevaser* issues, two YU rabbis dismissed secular literature as a waste of time, if not potentially harmful. One might be surprised at the lack of a reaction to this serious charge. Since no less than six credits in literature are required of all YC undergraduates, the legitimacy of at least a portion of the Liberal Arts curriculum is in doubt. Is there indeed a clash between "Yeshiva" and "College"? Increasingly, education in the Liberal Arts, specifically in the Humanities, has been coming under pressure from a society ever more predisposed to preprofessional and business training. Such courses are dismissed as nugatory because contributing nothing to the student's future money-making capacity. And now, on top of that, these courses are being challenged at Yeshiva from a different direction.

In essays published last year, Professors Fleisher and Lee have defended literature against the criticisms of the pragmatists, the bottom-liners, and the hard-nosed realists. But the objections raised by the rabbis remain unanswered. Perhaps one who is not a rabbi may venture a tentative reply, leaving it to those within the rabbinic tradition to provide a more comprehensive and definitive treatment later (through some steps in this direction were taken in the *Torah U'Mada Reader*).

The reply has to come from the Judaic tradition, of course, and one does find there three crucial texts — one Biblical, one Talmudic, and one Hasidic. The Biblical passage is 2 Samuel 12. When David sins and Nathan comes to reprove him, the prophet, instead of being direct and critical, tells a tale. Call it a parable, fable, analogue, hypothetical case, exemplum, historical incident, or what you will — it is a story, a brief vacation, apparently, from the day's business. In other words, Nathan has invented literature, and the Bible shows in this incident that story telling (not even of a morally uplifting kind) has a socially redeeming value. Given human defense mechanisms and man's reluctance to know himself, a story is a roundabout way to make one examine his own heart. What looks like an entertaining painting turns out to be a distressing mirror. One relevant tale may be more affecting than a thousand lofty moral exhortations. David eventually saw nothing "escapist" about — no *shtuss* in — that particular story.

How is all this relevant? Well, halakha would seem to proscribe cigarette smoking. Yet an occasional orthodox Jew, even a rabbi, has sometimes been seen smoking. Literature informs us that between the moral imperative and one's own actions lie struggles, frailty — and rationalizations. Read *Julius Ceaser, Othello* — or *Macbeth*, and you know your own weakness, not only the other fellow's, a little better. The Judaic tradition tells you what to do and what not to do; literature dramatizes some of the evasions and difficulties (and triumphs, too). Judaica tells what should be, and literature tells what is. Literature also tells of the herculean task involved in going from what is to what should be. That is not pessimism or defeatism, but realism, a sizing up of the challenges one faces.

The second text is a Hasidic tale. When Jews were overtaken by evil days, the Baal Shem Tov went to a certain part of the forest, to meditate, light a fire, and say a prayer in order to overcome the troubles. His disciple did not know how to light the fire but went to the same place and said the prayer. The disciple of the disciple did not know to light the fire or even the correct form of the prayer, but at least he knew the place. The next disciple did not even know the place. All he could do was tell the story.

This anecdote at once amusing and poignant suggests that story telling is a way of putting together the fragmented nature of human existence in a world which has degenerated. Either because of ejection from Paradise, or because of the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the people, or because of the advent of the cold, dark age of modern secularism and rationalism, the distance between G-d and man has grown. To keep the faith requires greater effort now than it once did.

Story telling may be a lesser version of the original bracing experience, but it represents a contact with that experience. It is emotion recollected in alienation, but it is also life-preserving memory of revelation. To paraphrase G.B. Shaw, those who can, do; those who can't, tell stories; those who can't tell stories, read them. In one sense, literature, even at its most profane and irreverent, is about man trying to retrace his steps to some original authentic experience or dispensation, behind which is hidden the face of the divine.

All men have been ejected from Paradise and lost the way to the sacred spot in the forest - the riddle at the heart of experience. All have to wrestle with suffering and obscurity in place of harmony, unity of being, and clarity. The *teiku* aspect of

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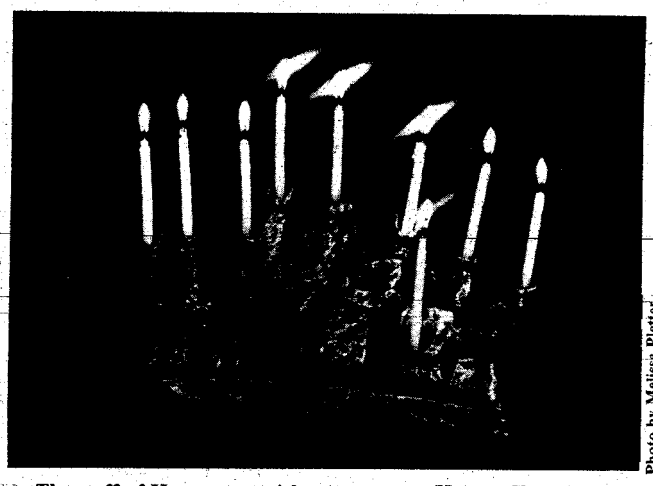

Photo by Melissa Pletter

The staff of Hamevaser wishes everyone a Happy Chanukah.

A Woman Speaks for Co-education

by Shoshana Jedwab

In "Gender Gap Or Trap" Asher Brander asks us to evaluate the religious value of coeducational yeshivot. He suggests that student academic performance as well as Jewish societal ideals suffer in educational institutions where men and women learn the same things together.

Brander concludes, albeit with reserve, that coeducational yeshivot are less religiously valuable than their single-sex counterparts for a variety of reasons. At the outset, he asks us to "leave aside" the array of authoritative halachic responses to religious coeducation so that we can understand that traditionally the "Jewish perspective" assigns different roles to men and women. Jewish schools, therefore, should, according to Mr. Brander, reflect in both their single-sex environment and curriculum orientation the mystical-functional gender differences which are the clear dictates of Judaism. He suggests for example, that future *n'shei chayil* learn practical halakha while Jewish men receive a Talmudic education. Mr. Brander also argues that the existence of greater gender-role diversity among students and student leaders in the coed schools leads to a loss of religious intensity in the students. Finally, he contends that although coed yeshivot can bolster the Jewish identity of students, they reflect the liberal standards of today's society; therefore, coed religious schools should not necessarily be perceived as the ideal avenue for student growth.

I have been spiritually nurtured in both coed and single sex religious schools and have adopted different opinions on the religious value of coeducation. My disagreement with Mr. Brander's conclusion that religious coeducation is spiritually unideal is rooted in my different assumptions about how traditional Judaism shapes Jewish education and societal ideals. My disagreement also flows from my belief in the existence of and personal advocacy of an alternative ideal mode for Jewish society that sees male-female interaction and diversity of gender role as essential to developing G-d's ideal human society. I also see the enormous practical benefits religious coeducation has bestowed to women. My disagreement with Mr. Brander's arguments and conclusions begins, however, with his monolithic and misleading method of religious inquiry.

Since when do we arrive at a Torah perspective by "leaving aside" an exploration of halalkhic response? The variety of halalchic opinion, which he mentions, may point us away from the notion that there

Students of co-ed Yesivot have been learning and yearning together for years

exists one *hashkafic* monopoly on a given issue. Mr. Brander, by "leaving aside" halakha and by employing the powerful and misleading word "the" in his phrase "the Jewish perspective" chooses to exhaust all the *hashkafic* possibilities regarding religious coeducation. From "a" Jewish perspective, the assignment of gender roles to men and women, just like the history of halakha, exegetical interpretation and philosophic speculation, is more open ended than Mr. Brander would have it. Rather than confront the possibility that several ideal models for gender orientation may be supported by our halachic and *hashkafic* traditions, Mr. Brander employs the potent term "traditionally" to argue for his *hashkafic* preference.

Like Mr. Brander I believe we are mandated to attach ourselves to our traditions and past norms in order to orient ourselves to our present and future. However, I think our tradition can and does support at least two, if not more ideal models for the Jewish community concerning gender orientation and education. Halakhic Judaism does set limits on male and female "togetherness" and does obligate men and women differently in the area of *mitzvot aseh*. In addition, rabbinic teachings reflect a more single-sex educational vision. But by no means does it follow naturally that single-sex education is ideal for all Jews everywhere in all ages.

Besides the one-sidedness of his argument, Mr. Brander's arguments from tradition and past norm also exhibit his lack of consideration of the new developments that line the seams of the issue of religious coeducation. The modern ideals, expressed in contemporary democratic, feminist, and pluralistic writings, granting equal opportunity and respect to males and females alike, and not adhering to rigid gender roles, should not be automatically dismissed by religious Jews. Some have dismissed the possibility of contributions to the religious community from these agendas merely because of their modern origins. We can make better religious judgement than that! For those of us, both men and women, who see in the above ideals areas of confluence with the ideals of our Jewish tradition, Mr. Brander's presentation of the issue is startling and frightening. I believe it is untrue and unwise to imply, as Mr. Brander does, that such modern developments are *b'dieved*, spiritually not ideal. Thus, while one conception of gender role may have been the traditional norm of the past, it is Jewishly possible and perhaps even preferable for some communities to allow that norm to undergo a transformation in the present.

Mr. Brander writes that coeducational schools impair the students' religious intensity. I do not understand Mr. Brander's definition of religious intensity. If he means males sitting with males in unblemished concentration (in part because of the absence of women) over a Gemara then he is correct. The inclusion of women in the coeducational *Beit Midrash* or classroom does transform the male religious experience. Judaism does not, however, view that transformation as a spiritual loss. The bringing of the whole of *Am Yisroel* to *Talmud Torah* at its highest levels and the sharing of religious ideas and experiences between men and women are, I believe, also valuable to G-d, and necessary for the spiritual improvement of the Jewish community.

I do not think that coeducational yeshivot are inherently either more or less spiritually legitimate than their single-sex counterparts. Each has its particular spiritual blessings and curses. Since Mr. Brander mentioned only what he felt to be spiritual deficiencies of coed yeshivot, we need to consider the significant spiritual benefits that coed schools offer.

Where men and women learn Torah together they can gain from their exposure to the intellectual and emotional tendencies of the opposite sex. They may also struggle against or integrate the biases evidenced to the other gender. Learning the same texts and ideas and grappling with the same religious challenges together can help nurture in the student a more complete understanding of *pshat* as well as provide a more authentic experience with *yiddishkeit*. It is in the coed yeshiva that both male and female elements are present in the *Talmud Torah* endeavour. In this way, coed schools can shape the Jewish community in light of the ideal in *parshat Bereshit* that societal wholeness is a combination of male and female. As a community institution religious coeducation can imbue the *Talmud Torah* program with nothing less than *Tzelem Elokim*.

The greater benefits of religious coeducation, I think do not merely lie with a student experience of an important theological world view. Students of coed yeshivot have, frankly, been "learning and yearning" together for years in a religious environment. As a result, on the whole they tend to develop deeply rooted ethical sensitivities toward the opposite sex as well as behavioral strategies for dealing with their powerful attraction and attractiveness to the opposite sex far before their marriage years. Though the coeducational experience for each individual is fraught with both religious success and failure, this experience should not be identified with the "evil liberal world outside the religious community." These students' struggle is part of G-d's divine plan. With a loving and healthy home life, wise religious counsel, and support and understanding from teachers, students of coed schools emerge the better for it. I say this because I have found that where gender separation is enforced in order to get firm limits on students *yetzer hara* there is a concomittant women who are better prepared to deal with sexual attraction along with their wholeness as individuals. They reflect the spiritual interdependency of men and women and have done much to improve the spiritual lot of women who might otherwise have been socialized and educated to serve the Jewish community as custodians of the mundane realm.

We have reached what I believe is the fundamental issue upon which the choice of single-sex or coed religious education rests. How do we ideally structure Jewish society with the potent and conflicting spiritual, psychological, and sensual equipment that G-d gave us as well as the differences between men and women? Two legitimate models emerge from our Jewish tradition.

Societal wholeness is a combination of male and female

The first model insures the purity and holiness of the community by thoroughly separating the sexes from each other until marriage. Proponents of this model view maleness and femaleness as equally precious to G-d. "His *talmud torah* is no greater than her practical decisions for the family." "Her *chesed* and practical wisdom are no more vital than his analytic decisions in the area of *lomdus*." This approach, so attractive to Mr. Brander, is only being successfully implemented today in the orthodox community in Israel. Perhaps the American culture which values commercial productivity, power, money and cognitive sophistication, seeping into the religious community, has resulted in a devaluation of women who fulfill the Jewish ideals of homebound subservience and practical piety? This environment is a formidable obstacle to the implementation of an educational program which separates the sexes but values the gender roles equally.

The second model supports religious coeducation and gender role diversity, but not because of either an underestimation of the *yetzer hara* or lack of appreciation of the distinctions between men and women. Rather, this model sees religious coeducation and diversity of gender role as better expressing Judaism's dialectical philosophy for human living. Holiness may be acquired through modesty and restriction as well as through sharing, involvement, and synthesis. A successful coed yeshiva implants in its students an appreciation and experience of both paths to spiritual completion.

It is true that coed schools do not always succeed in instilling the delicate balance Judaism advocates between modesty and involvement. However, it is equally clear to me that today's single sex schools do not necessarily have a better track record is not Judaism's goal. Sadly some single sex yeshivot have a knack for turning out such people.

Mr. Brander, you suggest that the curriculum for women should be limited to practical halakha while men should receive a Talmudic education. I have told you so far what I think. Now, it seems "spiritually ideal" for me to describe what I feel about your proposal.

Firstly, as a modern religious person who struggles with religious ideas and commitments, the ease with which you would narrow my religious educational field of vision is frightening and enraging. By limiting the scope of my curriculum to *halakha l'maaseh* and giving men the Talmud you would effectively deny me access to the substance of halakhic thought and decision. Access to the methodology and judgement process of our tradition is vital to my love of the law and ability to observe it. I need to understand the Rabbis' struggle to uncover and expound G-d's will, but could not without access to the Oral Law.

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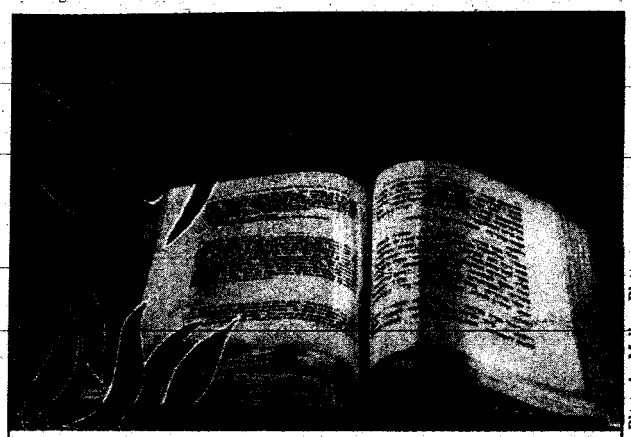

Photo by Melissa Pletter

A Man Speaks for Co-education

by Alan Stadtmauer

In the last issue of *Hamevaser*, Asher Brander builds his critique of co-education upon three pillars - educational theory, limited Talmud study for women, and the need to foster religious values. The material with which he constructs these pillars, however, seems to be plasterboard and Elmers glue and, not surprisingly, his theory crumbles around the heads of all who seek shelter from changes in traditional models for education. The examination of each of these pillars will naturally produce potentially stronger materials for building an argument against co-education, but that task will have to be left to another. Here I will deal, point by point, only with the issues raised by Brander.

I do not wish to defend co-ed yeshivot as the ideal model for all places, times and communities; I believe that the world of "closed Orthodoxy" has special needs and goals. Instead I will limit my discussion to the same reality which Brander claims to be addressing- the day school which serves the modern Orthodox community, a community which has accepted Modernity from a *hashkafic* point of view and, more importantly, interacts at the practical level with modern, secular society.

Educational Theory

Brander constructs his first pillar from the materials of educational theory. Co-ed schools, he argues, do not provide the best education for both boys and girls; everyone would profit from single-sex yeshivot. Just as studies dealing with general education have indicated that men excel in certain subjects and women in others, so too the same dichotomy would exist in Judaic studies. (Brander does not defend this extension, nor does he specify which Judaic subjects would be the forte of each; based upon the "older, more proven" model he defends, I assume he suggests that men excel in Talmud and women in Bible.)

In the crucial second step of his argument, Brander claims that "the gender that performs less well in a given course may be the victim of undue neglect, since the impressive performance of the superior gender in the class may mask the difficulties encountered by members of the opposite sex." Thus, girls will suffer in their study of Talmud and the boys' Bible skills will be stunted. In a single-sex environment, however, each gender would receive appropriate attention and assistance, leading everyone to a solid, well rounded education.

Assuming the reasoning here is sound, Brander's theory leads to an interesting conclusion - the current system in single-sex yeshivot must be modified. Brander calls for excellence in the training of boys to study Bible. Since the course of study they receive in the co-ed schools is insufficient, in order to bridge the gap between boy and girls, the boys must be in their own "remedial" Bible classes and, presumably they would also need to dedicate more time to the study of Chumash, their "weaker" subject.

Similarly, Brander implies, we must expand and enrich women's Talmud education. The most sensitive and qualified educators should be hired by girls' schools to insure that they can be given the attention they deserve and require. Needless to say, we should encourage more qualified women to continue their Talmud studies to the point where they can teach effectively, or at least train our *musmakhim* in the special educational needs of women. The gap caused by girls struggling with the *yam hatalmud* in the presence of the boys' superior analytic skills can be rectified in only one way- single-sex classrooms with fully developed Talmud programs for girls.

If this conclusion contradicts Brander's second argument - that women ought not study Talmud - we need not worry, because the reasoning employed is, in fact, not sound. The studies which suggest that boys excel in math do not imply that girls are inept, or even weaker, at logical reasoning. The statistics simply indicate that a greater percentage of boys perform extremely well in math than do girls. More men will choose engineering than women, but once they have chosen their respective fields, everyone stands the same chance of success. (Certainly my experiences in graduate courses in computer science, where about half the students were women, did not indicate a need for any additional attention. Similarly, the high percentage of girls on my high school math team, the top ranking team in New York City, does not bolster a call for special needs of "the weaker gender.")

A girl with a talent for Talmudic reasoning, can create, discuss, and challenge sevarot as well as any boy - and better than one whose skills lie in other areas. Rather than any particular gender suffering, the top students in a class may "mask the difficulties encountered by" the weaker students be they male or female. Thus, Brander's reasoning does not argue for single-sex yeshivot, but for tracking, that is, dividing classes according to academic abilities. It may happen that the top Talmud shiur will have 60% boys and only 40% girls, but so be it - in the end everyone will get an education suited to their level.

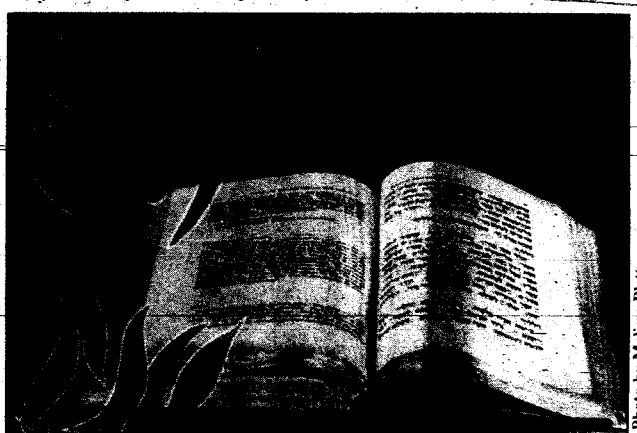

Photo by Melissa Pletter

Women and Talmud

Brander proceeds to build upon the premise that men and women should have different training with different curricula because they each play different roles in Jewish society. As Brander writes, "A woman's praise is her title of *'Ayshet Hayil'* and the 'mainstay of the house.' Although knowledge and scholarly erudition are admirable traits for individual women, what is critical for our determination is to search for the curriculum that would tailor to the needs of the masses."

We should encourage women to continue their Talmud studies.

Behind the offensiveness of this call to educate for mediocrity, we find the core of Brander's argument in the old adage, "a woman's place is in the home." Talmudic reasoning proves useless in raising children for lives imbued with Jewish values, so women need learn only practical halakha.

The argument expounded may prove adequate when discussing a Beis Yaakov school, but we have already limited our discussion to the Modern Orthodox community; we must, therefore, ground our reasoning in the actual goals of women in that community and the requirements of raising children in modern society. Furthermore, while much in Judaism implies disparate contributions to Jewish society by men and women, a notion echoed by many current feminist writings (with particular emphasis on the equal need for both types of experiences - a notion discussed by Shoshana Jedwab in this issue), this does not imply distinct curricula.

(Before I continue, I must confess that I am somewhat biased on this issue. Not teaching women Talmud ceased to be a realistic option for me long ago - the top student in my high school gemarah shiur was a girl. She later went on to make a siyum on *Masekhet Sanhedrin* long before I finished my first tractate of Talmud. She and her husband met learning together one summer; now they do *Daf Yomi* together and just made a siyum on *Baba Batra*. The fact that the second ranking spot also belonged to a girl, as did a number of other spots in the top 10, doesn't make objectivity any easier. Nevertheless, I will attempt to put forth a cogent argument on the subject.)

No longer do we live in a world where all Jews observe mitzvot and only intellectual curiosity leads one to wonder why. The decision to be observant is made and re-made each day by Jews participating in a society where many options remain forever open - including the possibility of forsaking Halakha. Today's Jew faces constant questions, whether from within or from without, whether from one's own prodding intellect, from a college professor or from a co-worker at the office. How often do Y.U. alumni find themselves the only observant Jew in the office and quickly become the foil for everyone's questions about the "whys" of Judaism? How often must we all defend our commitment to Halakha?

Does this imply a need to study philosophy? To some extent yes, but the most common questions do not demand a philosophic answer. The search tends to be not for the logical basis for Judaism, but for coherence in Judaism. When one challenges the prohibition against electricity on Shabbat the problem is that it seems more arbitrary than reasonable; in such a context, appeals to the derivation of the halakha usually prove far more successful than discussions about the nature of creative work. Understanding the "hows" of halakha claims the questioner much more than analyzing the "whys." In fact, this notion lies at the very core of the oft-stated argument that rabbis, teachers, and advisors should learn much more gemara than philosophy. Essentially, Talmudic thinking and discussion is the *lingua franca* of Judaism. Without grasping the process of halakha, one cannot understand the practice of halakha.

In the past, many Jews, particularly women, were comfortable practicing without understanding, but that hardly reflects the current reality. For most of us living in an open, modern society, blind practice no longer remains an option. Needless to say, the problems which plague men disturb women as well, and the solution which helps men must, therefore, be available to women too. Thus, women must be as familiar with the inner derivations of halakha as men.

In general, it is not necessary to know how every halakha is derived, but just to internalize a belief in the coherence and lack of arbitrariness in the system. After one learns how one decides *heter* and *issur* in Hilkhot Shabbat, it is easier to swallow the halakhot of *gittin* and *gerut*, or at least one has the first steps toward learning those areas on one's own. Nor everyone needs an advanced Talmud education, but everyone, men and women alike, ought to have some broad experience and basic skills in Talmud. (I am not advocating that men need not continue their training they have an additional requirement of Talmud Torah).

A woman must understand Talmud even if she chooses motherhood as a profession. Among other values, she must imbue in her children a commitment to halakhic practice and a desire to live a life subject to normative laws. Once it was enough to tell children that one should do mitzvot because they are commanded; though this remains true for young children, kids begin questioning at a very young age, and if the parents fail to communicate a notion of the coherence of halakha then the child will likely rebel against Law as a value. If indeed a woman's role is the transmission of values, then she must transmit the value of adherence to the halakhic system. And if communicating this value depends on internalizing a belief in the coherence of that system, then she must acquire that belief. And in order to do so, she must study the life force of Judaism - the Talmud.

A final, somewhat depressing, almost morbid consideration must also be presented. Living in an age of frequent divorce - even the divorce rate in the Orthodox community has reached alarming heights - we must all be prepared to raise our children alone. If we accept the tradition division of the roles of men and women in the family, then each must be prepared to take over the other's job, if *chas v'shalom* the need arise. Here, fathers should know how to teach their children to give *tzedakah*, and mothers must be able to help them with their gemara homework.

Religious Values

Brander concludes by constructing the third pillar of his argument upon the need to communicate religious values. Two stones form the foundation of the column: a call for proper role models and a critique of the social value of co-education.

Brander claims that students with strong

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"And let there not be light"

Electricity on Shabbat

by Moshe Rayman

Many discussions dealing with the use of electricity on Shabbat and Yom Tov have appeared in recent Halakhic literature. This article will examine the various halakhic considerations that pertain to this issue.

The first consideration is determining whether the use of electricity constitutes *Mav'ir* (igniting). R. Eliezer M'Metz (*Yeiim* Vilna ed., page 143) writes that the biblical prohibitions of igniting and extinguising apply only to those substances which actually burn, such as wood. One who merely heats metal until it glows only violates a rabbinic prohibition. Therefore, according to R. Eliezer M'Metz, one who turns on a light on Shabbat has violated a rabbinically prohibited form of igniting, since he causes the filament to glow.

The Rambam (*Mishneh Torah*, Shabbat 12:1) states that one who heats metal in order to temper it has violated the biblical prohibition of igniting. R. Shlomo Halma (*Mirkevet Hamishneh* on the *Mishneh Torah* ibid.) contends that the Rambam would agree that one who heats metal for a purpose other than tempering would not violate the biblical prohibition of igniting. According to R. Halma, the Rambam concurs in principle with R. Eliezer M'Metz. Thus, the general biblical prohibition of igniting only applies to objects which actually burn. However, since the act of tempering metal was one of the *M'lechet Hamishkan* (activities conducted in the construction of the Tabernacle), as the Rambam himself emphasizes (ibid, paragraph 2), and is similar to the act of igniting, it too is included in the general prohibition of igniting. However, heating metal for purposes other than tempering would not be biblically forbidden, since such actions do consititute burning and were not performed during the construction of the *Mishkan*.

R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Minhat Shlomo* c. 12), however, asserts that although the simple reading of the Rambam supports R. Helma's interpretation, the Rambam did not really mean to single out tempering. Rather, tempering is merely an example of a *tikun*, which is necessary component of any biblically prohibited action. According to R. Auerbach, the Rambam disagrees with R. Eliezer M'Metz in principle. The prohibition of igniting is not restricted to substances which 'burn.' Rather, any substance which releases light and heat when heated is included in the biblical prohibition.

It follows that according to R. Halma's interpretation of the Rambam, one who turns on an incandescent light on Shabbat has only violated the Rabbinic prohibition of igniting. Although he has heated the filament to the point of glowing, he has not violated the biblical prohibition, since he does not intend to temper it. By contrast, according to R. Auerbach's understanding, one who turns on a light has indeed violated the biblical prohibition since the prohibition applies even to substances which do not burn.

Another important consideration raised by the *poskim* is the possible violation of *molid*, a prohibition which forbids one from producing new entities, as well as from converting matter from one form to another.

The Mishna (*Betza* 33a) states that although the biblical prohibition of igniting is suspended on Yom Tov, one may still not create a new fire on Yom Tov. The Talmud explains that this is forbidden because of the general prohibition of molid. Similarly, when The Talmud (*Shabbat* 51b) rules that one may not crush snow on Shabbat for the purpose of melting it, Rashi explains that here too the prohibition of molid applies. The Talmud (Betza 23a) further asserts that one may not rub a scented object on a cloth in order to transfer the scent to the cloth because of the prohibition of *molid re'ach* (creating a new fragrance).

Rashi explains that the Rabbis forbade these actions because they resemble acts of creation, and since *Hashem* refrained from creating on Shabbat, we too should abstain from creative activity.

With regard to electricity, R. Isaac Schmelkish (addenda to *Bet Yitzchack, Yoreh Deah* v.2 c.31) ruled that one who produces an electric current on Shabbat has indeed violated the prohibition of molid. He considers the creation of electric current to be no different from the creation of fragrance. However, R. Auerbach (*Minhat Shlomo* c. 9) takes issue with this position. He proves from numerous talmudic sources that the prohibition of molid is not generally applicable. Rather, the only actions which are prohibited due to molid are those explicitly recorded in the Talmud. His most crushing argument is that one may reheat cooked food on Shabbat even though he is being 'molid' heat. There is not logical distinction between the *holada* of heat and the *holada* of fragrance. Therefore he concludes, that molid is restricted to those cases mentioned by the Talmud, and cannot be applied to electricity.

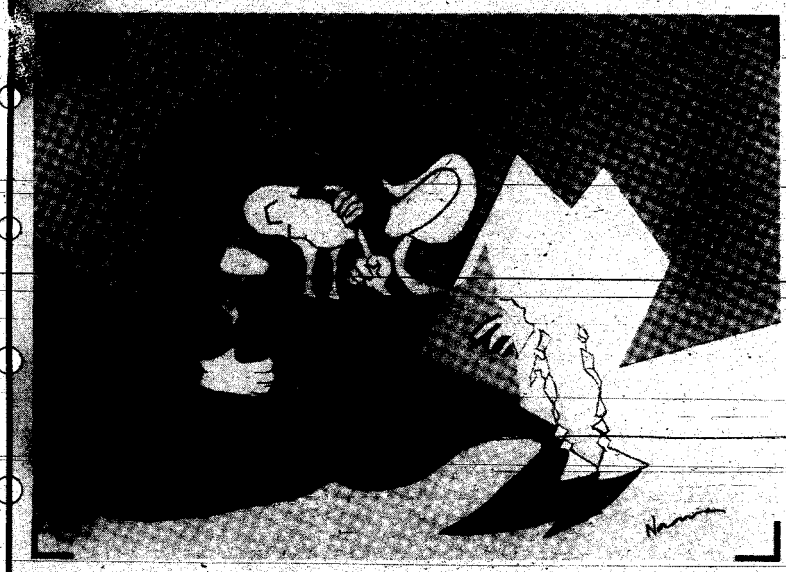
According to this line of reasoning, one would have expected R. Auerbach to permit the use of those electrical appliances which have no lightbulbs. This, however, is not the case. Due to the fact that R. Schmelkish's ruling has become the accepted practice, and due to the fear that people would not differentiate between appliances with lightbulbs and those without, R. Auerbach hesitated from permitting their use.

The final halakhic consideration to be taken into account, and the most controversial as well, is the possible violation of *Tikun Mana* (the construction or repair of a utensil). R. Avraham Karelitz (*Hazon Ish*, Shabbat c. 50) believes that one who activates an electrical applicance violates the biblical prohibition of *Tikun Mana*. We should view an appliance that is off, he asserts, to be in a semi-broken state. Hence, one who turns it on has 'fixed' the appliance, thereby desecrating the Shabbat, even though this repair is only temporary in nature. He further explains that although the rishonim disagreed about whether a temporary construction is considered a desecaration of the Shabbat, in our case everybody would agree that it is. In order to violate this prohibition, we must view the newly constructed or repaired object as one unified object. Therefore, argues the Hazon Ish, only in a case where the construction involves the mere connection of two objects, and is only temporary, did certain authorities view the objects as two distinct entities, rather than a newly constructed object. However, here we are not merely joining two objects. We are infusing the object with a new power. (Lit. "we are adding a form to the matter, thereby making it usable.") Thus, the fact that it is temporary makes no difference, and all authorities would therefore agree that one who activates an electrical applicance has violated the prohibition of *Tikun Mana*

Once again, however, R. Auerbach (*Minhat Shlomo* c. 11) dissents, insisting that we should not view an inactivated appliance as 'broken,' but instead merely as one not being used. Turning on an electrical appliance is thus using the appliance, but not fixing it.

The purpose of this article was to determine the nature of the prohibition, not the existence of one. Of course, the accepted practice of the observant Jewish community is very clear on this issue. The use of any form of electrical appliance on Shabbat is considered an *issur hamur*, a severe transgression. The ruling of R. Schmelkish, that the prohibition of molid applies to electricity, and the ruling of the Hazon Ish, that the activation of an appliance constitutes *Tikun Mana*, have been accepted as the authoritative rulings by all of *k'lal yisrael*.

Pen & Ink



"The Holy Book" by Naama Goldstein

When I want to Speak

When I want to speak a word
The spirit has already descended
From its hiding place.
Before it came to strum the strings of my will
The roots of many souls,
The highest mysteries,
Were already reduced to finite forms
And became letters pressing
At the lower region of my soul
Close to the concerns of my worldly self
And linked to its essence,
And I am forced to speak.
I speak out of all the treasures that live in me.
The words flow on,
The thoughts flourish,
The sounds reach out,
Sound meets sound.
The ascending stream from my mortal self
Joins the descending stream from the source of my soul,
And seeds of light
Fill the world, my whole being.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook
translated by Ben Zion Bokser

Coming Home: *A Rationale Quest*

by Andrew Goldman

"And the L-rd said unto Moses, 'Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also believe thee forever.'" (Shemot 19:9).

Although a religious lifestyle, by its nature, leads to greater self-questioning, there were questions that for me had to be asked if not answered to begin my personal inquiry into religion. Prior to my acceptance of *tarvag mitzvot*, I wrestled with the issue of faith and reason. I had always assumed that religious commitment mandated suspension of rational thought-that any attempt to "prove" a particular religious outlook was futile. "Orthodox Jews," I told myself, "behave as they do because they were raised Orthodox, because they never entertained the possibility that their most basic belief, that G-d appeared at Mount Sinai and commanded them a set of laws, was untrue."

Having been raised in a non-observant, non-Orthodox home, I had a difficulty with Orthodox Judaism that was representative of my difficulty with religion in general. If I had to accept Torah Judaism on faith, then on what rational basis did I not also accept every other creed on the face of the earth? This question was only strengthened through a comment made by a high school friend—a disaffected Catholic; it left a heavy, albeit temporary, impression on my thinking: "Religions are all the same. If you're Catholic, then Catholicism is true, and if you're Jewish then Judaism is true. People just believe what they're raised with." If truth was so relative then I could accept everything, and by portraying religion as so subjective, my friend reduced its complexity to a matter of birthrite.

A little experiment seemed in order. Why not begin my own questioning with a look at the responses of others? During the past year, having participated in NCSY events and spent some time in the local Orthodox shul, I was in the right company to challenge many Orthodox Jews to explain to me why they do and why I should observe mitzvot. Unfortunately, their responses were almost always non-rational (let me make here a distinction between irrational and non-rational: irrationality implies an acceptance of religion despite reason's dictates, whereas non-rationality implies that reason, whether or not it supports religious dogma, is ignored):

1. "Torah is the path of our fathers; our people have lived by its laws for the last 3000 years." Such an argument is not compelling because it fails to address the correctness of that path-the fact that people have always believed in and observed Torah is irrelevant to whether Torah is true.

2. "The Jewish lifestyle, especially Shabbat, provides such a warm feeling." Whether Judaism provides a warm feeling is an entirely subjective matter and cannot gauge objective truth; the "feeling" of Shabbat is as much a criterion for truth as, *l'havdil*, a "white Christmas."

3. "Mitzvah-observance has been with us since we were children; we were raised with it." This argument, presented to a potential *ba'al teshuva*, falls on deaf ears-precisely because he wasn't raised with it.

4. "The Jewish people have produced scholars and Torah giants of immense proportions. How could their tradition be based on a lie?" With all due respect to Israel's *talmidei chachamim*, the existence or magnitude of great scholars fails to verify the Torah's claim to divinity.

5. "The Torah says *na'aseh v'nishma* which means that first we must observe, and only afterwards should we try to understand." This frequently misused, specious argument is only applicable to a generation which "perceived the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voice of the horn, and the mountain smoking." (Shemot 20:15). Only when we know that it is truly G-d Who is commanding us can we confidently proclaim *na'aseh v'nishma'*.

A friend-Orthodox from birth- once confronted me with the *na'aseh v'nishma* argument and charged that my conditioning mitzvah observance upon a rational understanding of Torah as a divine document was equivalent to self-worship. At the time, I was speechless, but I should have retorted: "On the contrary! Whereas I became Torah-observant only after being rationally convinced of the Torah's truth thereby knowing that it was truly G-d Whom I was worshipping—you are Torah-observant as a result of upbringing!"

The average Orthodox-from-birth Jew does not always appreciate the fact that the secular-from-birth Jew finds the very concept of Divine Revelation utterly bizarre. To the believing Jew, G-d is intimately involved with the world; to the secular Jew, by contrast, G-d either does not exist or does not make Himself known—and any claim of "divine revelation" is a fairy tale.

As my quest intensified, I discovered a number of rational justifications for the Jewish religion. Although there are several, only one can be effectively articulated in the space of a few paragraphs. One of the most powerful testaments to the Revelation-at-Sinai's historical veracity is the record that a nation of approximately two million people beheld, with their own ears and eyes, the unearthly and awesome manifestation of G-d. We know that this record of events is authentic since:

1. As the Ramban wrote, "Parents don't lie to their children." The Ramban meant that parents, knowing the account of an event to be false, would not lead their children to believe that the account was true. If the generation of Sinai had known the Divine Revelation to have never happened, it would not have transmitted the account to the succeeding generation.

2. If, at some point in Jewish history, subsequent to Sinai, a small group of conspirators had somehow fabricated an elaborate "revelation" which the entire nation had allegedly witnessed centuries earlier and whose account it had allegedly passed down, the group would have been laughed at by a generation which had never before heard of such an event.

3. The desert generation would have had every reason to reject 613 burdensome mitzvot if those mitzvot had not actually been commanded by G-d.

4. The Revelation could not have been, as some claim, a compilation of exaggerations and myths woven together centuries after Sinai because, as the Torah itself claims to have been written during the desert experience, any generation of Israelites would have been sufficiently alert to detect whether the scrolls being passed off as centuries-old were really that instead of a recent fabrication.

This is by no means a definitive line of reasoning; these are conclusions that I find personally compelling. I realize that as the search progresses, the answers may grow in sophistication, and this process of questioning must always permeate the life of the observant Jew. Submission to G-d's will often implies that there will always be unanswered questions, but a rational search can make observance more meaningful.

Gender Bender

continued from page 5

By Alan Stadtmauer

commitment function as role models for other students; by distributing these outstanding students between genders, however, fewer role models will be able to influence others. Members of the opposite sex do not function as good models because of the different roles of each gender. This argument rests upon two axioms: that genders do not influence each other, and that they each play different roles.

Though Brander assumes that each gender does not provide adequate role models for the other, this axiom cannot claim to be self-evident. Having a girl at the top of my Talmud *shiur* hardly curbed my achievement in Talmud, and I doubt that boys running chesed projects turned the girls into selfish scrooges. In fact, the very nature of a co-ed school downplays viewing achievement through gender-oriented glasses.

Brander's second axiom jumps from the notion that different sexes play different roles in Jewish society to suggest that each gender need not develop the values which form the role traditionally assigned to the other. In fact, the co-ed school provides a wonderful way to provide a smattering of the others' values. If women specialize in chesed, a boy in an all boys school may have no role models for *chesed* (and no one suggests that men should not be *baalei chesed*), whereas in a co-ed school the model would be filled by the girls in the class.

Brander sees the only social value of co-ed schools in easing "undesired social discomfort." This value, he argues, does not justify the violations of Jewish law likely to result from flirting with the liberal social standards of contemporary society. Once again the argument contains two elements, each demanding separate response.

To find other values in co-ed schools one need go no further than Yeshiva High School Seminar. Advisors constantly comment that students from the co-ed schools tend to be more mature than those from their single-sex counterparts. Value placed on intellectual achievement, the arts, *chesed*, leadership roles, independent thought, and respect for adults (read: rabbeim) form the stereotype of Ramaz and Flatbush students. Though no student embodies all these values, no one denies the extent to which these can be found in co-ed schools. Students in single sex schools often view intellectual pursuits, including learning, as "not cool," while the students from co-ed schools have learned that in an adult world achievement and talent of any kind should be admired and emulated.

The problem of forbidden social interactions is hardly as simple as Brander would like to see it. If adherence to Jewish social values were as easy as closing up the co-ed high schools, then perhaps Brander would be correct in claiming that the social benefits outweigh the risk of anti-halakhic behavior. (By the way, Brander assumes encouraging social interaction means adopting the liberal standards of "contemporary society where nothing is sacred except the right to be immoral." Shoshana Jedwab's article deals with this issue so I will not address it here.)

Unfortunately, listening to a group of MTA students whispering in a camp bunk at night or chatting over lunch in the cafeteria reveals the same social pressures and attitudes found in co-ed schools. Despite exhortations by their teachers, many students in single-sex high schools go to co-ed parties they attend the same Sweet Sixteens as their Ramaz friends. And they do the same things after the party too. Many Central students go out on dates, and the "risk of bottled up emotions letting loose" to which Brander refers applies to them as well. These social interactions form a serious problem for the Torah educator, and require solutions far more complex than attacking co-ed schools or giving mussar shmoozes in shiur. This particular problem does not concern us here; crucial for us is that Brander has failed to provide sufficient proof that co-ed schools do not foster as much religious fervor as single-sex yeshivot.

If the pillars upon which Brander has constructed his critique cannot withstand the weight of argumentation, this does not mean that co-ed yeshivot remain without problems. Perhaps *Hamevaser* will in the future print a cogent article discussing them, preferably written by someone with at least minimal experience with such schools.

A final confession may be in order. In truth, my most basic objections to Brander's article stem from personal experience, and perhaps here I am mistaken. Brander begins his piece by explaining that he would examine the effects of co-ed yeshivot only on a general level. He hedges his comments by pointing out that "the conclusions drawn will not pertain to every single individual who has attended a co-ed yeshiva." Perhaps my own experiences at Ramaz High School were exceptions to the rule. But it's funny - just about all the other alumni of co-ed high schools I spoke to also seemed to be exceptions.

continued from page 2

by Shoshana Jedwab

Secondly, your curriculum proposal, though I am certain it was motivated by sincere religious ideals, effectively threatens to reduce my involvement with the fascinating aspects of our halachic tradition. To me this alone would be a tragic loss.

My rage is further compounded because your gender role and curriculum choice places me into a neat box called "women" and this box does not include space for the non practical, ideological parts of me. It seems you are also prepared to deny me the opportunity to learn halakha independently. You threaten to make women more dependent on men, a proposal which can only be detrimental to both sexes.

Nechama Leibowitz, in her commentary on Genesis wrote that the first female was a paradigm for all females. Eve was woman, and woman is also Eve. Women are complex creatures (just like men) who can think and nurture. Mr. Brander, next time you seriously consider an ideal model for Jewish education and socialization you may want to take women's complexity into your picture. In the meantime, I feel your suggestions about religious coeducation and gender orientation diminish the *tzelem elokim* of both men and women and may not necessarily better guide Jewish men and women towards greater holiness and *shleimut*.

In Defense of Literature

continued from page 4

By Manfred Weidhorn

existence overwhelms us, and we wait. A way of passing the time is telling tales, tales of woe. For one who wakes up with a pain, physical or psychological or spiritual, quickly discovers that the one effective form of relief is not Anacin or Alka Seltzer but anecdote — telling others about one's pain. That's "history". He will also discover that the therapy works better if his telling makes an impact on his audience and that that in turn requires a certain amount of adornment, of tampering with the facts, of altering emphasis. That's "literature".

The Judaic tradition, then, suggests that story telling may be a mode of self discovery and a mode of therapy or consolation. It also implicitly invites literary discourse to help chart the nature of existence. The main text here is in the Talmud, and it is, frankly, a shocker.

For two and a half years were *Bet Shammai* and *Bet Hillel* in dispute, the former asserting that it were better for man not to have been created than to have been created, and the latter maintained that it is better for man to have been created than not to have been created.

They finally took a vote and decided that it were better for man not to have been created than to have been created. This piece of chronicle must, like the Hasidic tale, have delighted Kafka. Imagine having a vote not on who would be mayor but on the wisdom of G-d's decision! Imagine taking all of two and a half years to ruminate on so esoteric and impractical a question! Summer brings its heat waves, winter its cold gusts, ministers rise and fall, caravans move to and from Timbuktu -- and still the sages, magisterially oblivious to the quotidian life around them, carry on their earnest deliberations: "But, on the other hand, if you consider..." They were clearly not about to rush into any hasty judgments on the universe. One surmises that the vote must have been close.

The conclusion they reach is a startling one, and it goes against the mainstream of Judaic, indeed monotheistic, cosmic optimism. Nothing less than all literature, secular as well as Judaic, is necessary to help the reader come to terms with it. Certainly the major literary works force the reader to raise that question in one form or another. Homer: Was the ultimate triumph of the Greeks and the bringing to fruition of the latent nobility in Achilles worth the schism in the Greek camp, with the consequent death of Patroclus and of numerous Greek warriors? Sophocles: Did Oedipus's eventual apotheosis redeem his committing two of the most heinous of acts? Euripides: Did the transgressions of Jason, Hyppolitus, and Pentheus justify the terrible reactions of Medea, Aphrodite, and Dionysus? Virgil: Was the establishment of a pax romana a worthy trade off for the trail of bloodshed, of defeated and discarded lives, left first by Aeneas and his band and then by Roman legions? Machiavelli: Is the suspension of traditional morality balanced by the need to preserve the state? Cervantes: Is an idealistic beneficence a good return for delusion, oversimplification, and incipient madness? Shakespeare: Was Lear's eventual acquisition of wisdom worth ingratitude and irremediable catastrophe? Milton: Was man's supernatural redemption worth all the pain of the original fall from grace? Huxley: Is the advent of a society in which all creature comforts are attended to and all social ills ameliorated worth the elimination of individuality, independent thought, and traditional values? And (in a classic American work still to written) does the existence of the freest, most prosperous and generous society in history — that of the U.S. — justify what was necessary to make it possible: treason, rebellion, genocide, slavery, civil war, and atomic attack?

What all these works have in common is the raising of a question for which there is no easy answer. They share, indeed define, the tragic view of life. At issue is simply the dignity of man. Are — to confine ourselves to secular matters only — the plays of Shakespeare, the music of Bach, the paintings of Rembrandt, the findings of Newton and Einstein worth Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and Gulag? Do the pluses outweigh the minuses? Was the human adventure a success, was the game worth the candle? And if students wonder of what possible use is such an insoluble question to an accountant or a dentist, they forget that on it turns the meaning of life and the attendant question of how men are to comport themselves daily. The rabbis articulate the philosophic issue, but literature is necessary to make one feel it, to make its universality palpable.

The Talmudic passage does not reveal the occasion or the content of the discussion. What went on during those two and a half years — what sort of arguments did the rabbis use? The reader must supply those himself. How will he do so? By studying chemistry, mathematics, sociology, accounting, or computer science? Hardly. By studying history and philosophy? Maybe. From history he will get the raw data and from philosophy he will get occasional formulation of the question, but only in literature will he find the data combined with the formulation and the question posed in concrete rather than abstract terms — no, not even "posed" but felt, acted out, portrayed, lived, suffered through. A thorough grounding in literature will give historical and cultural reverberations and depth to the rabbinic question. To understand Torah fully, a sage has said, a man must study everything. "Everything" is a rather comprehensive word, somewhat hyperbolic, but if it probably excludes the Mickey Spillane and James Bond shlock, it probably includes Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare.

The Talmudic text is meaningful and symbolic even in its datum about time. Two and a half years is just about right. If I were dictator at an institution of higher learning, I would go so far against current emphases on preprofessional training as to require all undergraduates to devote the whole of their first two and a half years exclusively to the Humanities, and only then free them to pursue scientific and preprofessional studies. The two and a half years so spent would enable any college graduate to audit the rabbinic deliberations on that question. He might not have much to contribute and he still might not agree with the results of the final vote, but at least he would understand the debate.

THE JEWISH APPETITE

Think "Fast"

by Erica Schoonmaker

Today, fasting is a practice that we bear when we must; we often mark the night before a minor fast by eating exceptionally large meals and behave similarly at the fast's end. In some way we hope that by sandwiching the fast with overeating, we will mitigate the hunger and pray more sincerely. With the passage of time, as the regular practice of fasting was lost, the desire for the fast's end has replaced the emotion the fast should have generated. Fasting has become a perfunctory exercise, something akin to a spiritual fitness test. To regain sensitivity to the purpose of a fast, we must examine through primary and secondary texts, the apparently dual nature of fasting.

The Rambam presents us with a conflict in the rationale behind rabbinically declared fasts. On the one hand, in *Hilchot Ta'anit* the Rambam writes, "On the authority of the Scribes fasting is required whenever trouble befalls a community, until mercy is vouchsafed from heaven." Fasting seems to be not only the way to identify with a community's suffering, but also a form of beseeching heaven for mercy. Yet, the gemara in *Ta'anit* (11a) tells us, "Whoever fasts is called a sinner," and "A scholar has no right to fast because in doing so, he decreases the work of heaven." And the Rambam who one might think would disagree with the gemara in *Ta'anit* contradicts himself in *Hilchot Da'ot*: " 'Do not the prohibitions in the Torah,' say our sages, 'suffice you, that you add others for yourself?' In this condemnation, those are included, who make a practice of fasting: they too are not walking in the right way; our wise men prohibited self-mortification by fasting. And concerning this and similar excesses Solomon exhorts us, 'Be not overly righteous, nor excessively wise. Why should you be desolate?'"

On a simple level the Rambam makes a distinction between the individual and the community. While a rabbinically declared public fast is permitted, a personal fast, which may lead to excessiveness, is discouraged. This seems difficult because the *Tanach* itself provides accounts of communal fasting that lack proper intent and individual fasts that when coupled with prayer seem to "vouchsafe mercy from heaven." Obviously there are both negative and positive aspects of communal and individual fasting that must be explored.

Our most telling accounts of communal fasts are in *Megillat Esther* and in *Sefer Yonah*. First, we look to the heroes of the Purim story. Mordechai hears the king's decree that his people are in grave danger, and his reaction is one of alarm: "Now when Mordechai knew all that was done, Mordechai tore his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and bitter cry, and he even came before the king's gate, for none might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province where the word of the king extended, there was great mourning among Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes." Where eating is seen as an activity involving social interaction, refraining from eating becomes a public statement. The Rambam elaborates this point in the fifth chapter of *Hilchot Ta'anit*: "There are days which are observed by all Israel as fasts because tragic events happened on them, the object being to stir the hearts to open roads to repentance, and to remind us of our own evil deeds, and our fathers' deeds which were like ours, as a consequence of which these tragic events came upon them and upon us."

Yet, while a public fast enjoins the Jewish community to recognize a tragedy, there is a risk involved, namely, that the purpose of the fast will be lost in the ritual acts of the fast. The classic account of this is found in *Sefer Yonah* when the king of Ninveh decrees a fast (*Yonah* 3:7): "Let neither man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to G-d: and let them turn everyone form his evil way, and from the violence that is in there hands. Who can tell? G-d may turn and relent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we perish not. And G-d saw their deeds in that they turned from their evil way ." Note: G-d did not look at their fasting but looked at their deeds, and this point is reiterated in *Ta'anit* 22, "It is not said, 'He saw their sackcloth and fasting, but rather their actions.'"

Sefer Isaiah reaffirms that fasting is not an end in itself in the fifty-eighth chapter: "Is this not the fast that I have chosen? To loose the fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressors go free . . . . .Then will you call, and G-d will answer."

Fasting on a communal level is a form of request, as if the community were to look to heaven and in so doing, ask G-d to look down. When done properly, fasting "guarantees" in the language of the Rambam that "mercy is vouchsafed from heaven." Yet, there is a difficulty undertaken in using any symbol—that the symbol replaces the very act that it is supposed to represent. The symbol then becomes the desired goal, and the actual goal is seen as a sometimes unnecessary act of piety.

Perhaps this marks the danger in encouraging fasting for the penitent individual. On one hand we have the account of *David HaMelech* in *Shmuel II*. In the twelfth chapter of the *sefer* we find David in emotional anguish over the approaching death of his son. "And G-d struck the child that Uriah's wife bore unto David, and he was very sick. David therefore beseeched G-d for the child; and David fasted, and as often as he went in, he lay all night upon the earth." David's fasting is not seen as penitence but as petition. His fast is a spontaneous response to his suffering; it is not a premeditated act but one precipitated by a loss of appetite. Fasting in David's case is an act of catharsis; it is the language of the father who bemoans the suffering of his son.

Would the Talmud call David a sinner? Would they force a man experiencing turmoil to sit down to dinner as if in some way to negate his very emotions? This cannot be the same person that the Rambam spoke out against; then the Rambam has pointed his finger to every one of us whose emotional state dictates abstinence. Instead the Talmud and the Mishna Torah warn against those who make fasting a regular practice, thereby losing the intensity of the emotion and in some way misdirecting it. Voluntary propagation of fasting would not only lead people to adopt an ascetic lifestyle that is antithetical to Judaism but also lead them to forget that fasting, in itself, does not make you a better person; changing your attitudes and your actions makes you a better person.

Perhaps this is the sore spot in our present observance of fast days and in our general approach to undertaking more than what is halakhically expected of us. When we accept additional rituals and practices upon ourselves as individuals, we tend, in their defense, to pay more attention to them that what is really demanded of us by law. Thus, we lose focus in our *avodat Hashem* of what the *avoda* is; replacing it with "acts of piety" that serve only as a superficial display, what *Chaz"l* would call excessiveness.

Why then should we fast on Yom Kippur? We are not commemorating a tragedy as a community but asking for personal forgiveness. Could this not also lead to excessiveness? Given our present guidelines, perhaps a better *tshuva* would call for a day of saintly behavior within the confines of our normal routine and not a complete denial of that routine through *innui nefesh*. Yet, in order to tell us that we have the spiritual capacity to control our physical appetites, once a year we must abstain from them entirely. The very act of fasting should make us aware that our dietary habits sometimes remove us from the G-dliness that *kashrut* and *brachot* aim to instill. The ascetic ideal of fasting aims to remove man from his bodily needs and upholds fasting as a desirable, regular practice. The Jewish view of fasting should leave us hungry and remind us that we fast to insure that the day after Yom Kippur we do eat but say *brachot* with added *kavana*.

KASHRUT: Behind Closed Doors

by David Glatt

Eating isn't so simple any more. As the age of the local slaughterhouse and Jim's Country Market recedes further into the past, the food industry becomes increasingly complex. We live in a day when the production of almost all foods involves some sort of processing and the addition of many interesting ingredients (see Entemmann's ingredient labels). Besides the chemicals used, many ingredients are imported from foreign lands. Coconut oil, for example, originates in Indonesia and the Philippines. The complexity of the modern production process demands a greater production scale. Cakes are now baked in industrial complexes, not kitchens.

All this obviously affects a halakhic Jew. As the food industry becomes more involved, so does the problem of trying to ascertain *kashrus*. A modern *mashgiach* must deal with the problem of trying to watch ingredients also undergo extensive processing and shipping, which requires supervision. Also, the sheer size and activity of a plant creates difficulties for the *mashgiach*. He can't be on top of everything all the time. If in a *kosher* meat processing plant, a *hechsher* can be given by one young man who stands at a conveyor belt salting the meat as it passes by. Perhaps the only thing to actually reassure someone would be the fact that the owner of the plant personally holds himself to halakhic standards, not any guarantee or symbol. But can someone feel at ease when dealing with a company not owned by religious Jews?

According to the Orthodox Union, steps can and have been taken to deal with the above problems. In terms of imported ingredients, *kashrut* organizations discriminate in their acceptance of foreign ingredients. According to Rabbi Zweig of the Orthodox Union, "many overseas ingredients are rejected" because their *kashrut* can't be verified. Also, the flow of information between foreign *kashrut* organizations and their American counterparts helps to keep track of imported products. In regard to the production plants, after a company's application for *kashrut* signification is accepted, and the contract including the list of usable ingredients signed, *mashgichim* inspect the plant anywhere from "twice a year to (constantly) *hashgacha tmidit*." The frequency of inspection depends on the sensitivity of the product to *kashrut* problems and its production process.

The determination of a product's sensitivity to *kashrut* questions and decisions.

As the food industry becomes more involved so does "Kashrut."

According to Rabbi Moshe Tendler however, these decisions should not be made by *kashrut* organizations. Rabbi Tendler feels that an organization should supervise, not make decisions and than implement them, the responsibility for halakhic guidelines to modern *kashrut* falls upon the *Gedolim* in his view, and unfortunately, "the *Gedolim* have not organized industrial *hashacha* it is still at the "mothers kitchen level".

Can *kashrut* organizations avoid making *halachic* decisions? In the opinion of a New Jersey State *kashrus* Committee Inspector no. It is inevitable that *mashgichim* will encounter situations in which they will have to make decision. And the organizations recognize this. The Orthodox Union asks questions from its halakhic consultants who are recognized halakhic authorities. Still, the N.J. inspector agrees with Rabbi Tendler that the *Gedolim* should provide pragmatic guidelines. This would help prevent many of the arguments that lead to factional fighting over non-universal practices.

But What About Dishonesty?

Aside from the questions of production and ingredients, there are other problems that must be dealt with; problems that cannot be dealt with through halakhic guidelines. One can open any monthly or quarterly *kashrut* magazine and find over 20 instances of mislabeling. What can be done about non-*kosher* products with a *kashrut* symbol? Realistically, very little. According to the *kashruth* inspector, increasing the power of the state can help ease intentional mislabeling. If the punishment is large enough, no one would gamble. But the majority of mislabeling result from error and mistakes occur. The Orthodox Union handles mislabeling by forcing withdrawal of the mislabeled products and by quick notification of the Jewish world. Little else can be done.

But what about dishonestly such as in the recent *Shelat* scandal or as described in *In the City of Crakow* by Rabbi Sholom Yehuda Gross the sale of non-*kosher* meat by religious butchers in a *kosher* store. Can tragedies such as these be prevented; or at least nipped in the bud? Rabbi Tendler suggested that a combination of factors allows for fraudulent practices. Firstly, he thinks that many *hashachot* are lacking in terms of frequency of inspection and in terms of attentiveness to detail. He cites economic motivation in spite of inability to cope with scale as the reason such *hashgachot* are given. Secondly, he feels that a company's fear of the government can no longer be relied upon as a deterrent to fraud. He cites the recent Beechnut case in which Beechnut sold artificial apple juice as natural apple juice was an example of the increased daring of modern companies.

Interestingly, the state inspector concurred that organizations should be more stringent. As he sees it, intermittent inspections often have something to be desired. But while Rabbi Tendler suggests reducing the number of *hashgochot* an organization gives in order to achieve greater efficiency and greater stringency, the inspector felt that *hashachot* are needed. Without widespread *hashacha* he argued, people could very well decide on the basis of the listed ingredients whether to buy a product or not. Obviously, *kashrut* depends on more that simply the list of the ingredients.

Instead, he feels that while fear of the government has declined, if it were to be resuscitated, it would prove a most effective tool. He pointed to New Jersey, where according to him, "there was a lot of dirt" before the inspectors committee began to function. Presently though, the fear of a surprise visit from an objective *kashrut* inspector armed with an effective penalty code has greatly alleviated the problem. A *kosher* butcher caught with a crate of 20 non-*kosher* chickens can receive a minimum fine of $40,000 and a maximum level, his business can be forcibly closed. And if such measures do not suffice to assure honesty then perhaps more attention should be paid to Rabbi Zweig of the Orthodox Union who mentioned the need for more qualified people to enter *kashrut*.

The Ta'am of Mitzvot

by Ari Ackerman

January 1, 1980 Jewish tradition has always recognized multiple levels of interpretation. One area in which pluralistic explanation is most evident is, *tamei hamitzvot*. Jewish thinkers have always searched for the reason and purpose behind each mitzva, producing numerous explanations for every halakhic detail. Jewish law has been interpreted as having philosophic, ethical, mystical, sociological, and existential benefit. Yet despite the diverse conclusions that have been reached by different thinkers, all attempts at tamei hamitzvot share certain assumptions. These threads which form the fabric of *tamei hamitzvot* can be observed by investigating the reasons given for one particular commandment. The reasons attributed to the dietary laws, one of the most fruitful and creative areas for *tamei hamitzvot*, provides a useful model for this purpose.

Throughout the ages, both those sympathetic and hostile to Judaism have debated the benefit and rationale of the dietary laws. Early Christian criticism of Judaism argued that Jewish preoccupation with these laws led to the neglect of morality. Other critics of the dietary code portrayed these ancient laws as superstitious and mythological. Jewish thinkers have countered these attacks by describing the hygienic, moral, and sociological benefit of the laws of kashrut.

A recurrent explanation given for the dietary laws is that they provide hygienic benefit. The laws of kashrut, according to this understanding, are interpreted as a detailed program of public health which helps prevent the creation and spreading of disease. The first appearance of this reasoning is recorded in Macabees 5:25-27: "He has commanded us to eat the things that will be convenient for our souls and He has forbidden us to eat our meats that would be contrary." Philo, Maimonides, Nachmanides, Rashbam and numerous other exegetes and philosophers also follow this approach, explaining the intricacies of the dietary code in accordance with the contribution they make towards physical well being. Maimonides maintains that *helev* destroys the abdomen and produces cold and clammy blood. Similarly, Nachmanides posits that the milk of swine may cause leprosy.

The Abravanel rejected this approach, arguing that the Torah is not a medical textbook Arami in his *Akedat Yitzhak* echoed this position when he criticized the view which would "lower the status of the divine law to the status of any brief medical composition." Medical studies have also been marshalled to show that the hygienic value of the dietary laws has no scientific basis. The popularity of the hygienic rationale has waned and been replaced by alternative understandings of the reasons for kashrut.

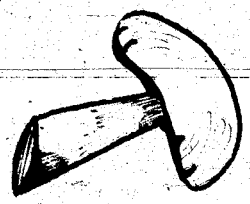
Maimonides, Bahya and other commentaries envisioned the dietary laws as a program of spiritual exercise which strengthens man's will, freeing him from the chains of his physical drives. Philo, following this line of reason, argues that mastery and discipline over one's desires allows a life free of physical excess. The Torah, according to Philo, advocated "neither rigorous austerity like the Spartan legislator nor dainty living like he who introduced the Donians and Sybarites to luxurious and voluptuous practices. Instead, he opened up a path midway between the two."

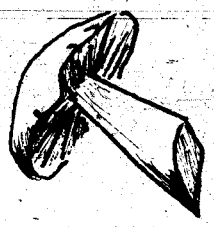
The sociological impact of kashrut observance has also been suggested as its underlying rationale. The dietary code is envisioned as a means of fostering Jewish solidarity. The patterns of living which are shared by Jewish homes helps forge a unified Jewish community whose boundaries stretch throughout the Diaspora. The socially isolating effects of the dietary laws have also helped to deter assimilation, preserving the unique identity and destiny of the Jewish people "as a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The connection between the dietary laws and God's relationship with the Jewish people is found in their biblical presentation. "For you are a holy people unto the Lord your God, and the Lord has chosen you to be His treasured people from among all the people on the face of the earth. Do not eat any abomination." (Deuteronomy 14:2-3).

The reasons given for *kashrut* demonstrate that the purpose of the commandments is irrelevant to its binding obligation. Those who argued against the hygienic value of kashrut never questioned the validity of the dietary laws. Even after the stated purpose of the commandment was no longer valid, they still followed the detailed regulations dictated by the commandment. The rationale given for kashrut also shows us that *tamei hamitzvot* rarely have an impact on the precise demands of each commandment. Though many commentators proposed different reasons for *kashrut*, they shared a similar understanding of the normative dimension of the dietary laws. Debate about why we should observe kashrut rarely effected discussions of how we should observe kashrut. The gap between speculation of the commandment's purpose and the imperative behind the mitzva indicates that the commandments must be accepted as expressions of divine will and not merely as a means for supplying us with physical, psychic, and spiritual benefits. Halakha demands obedience to the commandments above and beyond any rationale they might possess. Perhaps it is for this reason that R. Abdimi b. Hana, maintains that God coerced the Jewish people into accepting the covenant at *Har Sinai*. Yet submission to the demands of the commandments has not stopped the search to find the relevance of halakha. The numerous attempts undertaken to find the rationale of the dietary laws show that along with the acceptance of the yoke of the commandments there is a need to find the inner meaning of mitzvot. Every phase of Jewish intellectual-spiritual history has interpreted the inner meaning of halakha to accord with their own world view. Without questioning the authority or centrality of halakha, they picked from the multiple layers of meaning contained within each mitzvah the explanation that helped them confront the spiritual problems and intellectual challenges that they faced.

The search for *tamei hamitzvot* also demonstrates the need for personal spiritual input in the performance of the religious act. In an attempt to find the inner meaning of the mitzvot, the individual contributes his own sensibilities and personality. *Tamei hamitzvot* is, therefore, also in accord with another account of *Har Sinai*. *Pirke De Rav Kahane* states that "the Divine Word spoke to each and every person according to his particular capacity." *Tamei hamitzvot* is a testament to the tension between conservatism and creativity which runs throughout Jewish tradition. The demand for obedience to a code of behavior is fused with the permissibility, indeed the desirability, for a meaningful inquiry into the profound spiritual world that lies behind each commandment.

The Jewish Vegetarian...





by Wendy Zierler.

There are two ways to look at a roast turkey:

1) Honey glazed roast turkey, garnished with sauteed onions, succulent mushrooms and fresh parsley, stuffed plump with sweet-potato stuffing

OR

2) Burnt turkey flesh, drowned in sickly sweet death juices, splattered with onion peels, swollen with sweet-potato maggots — a carnivore's depraved dreamfood.

Once upon a time, most of the population of this country concurred with the first description. Over the past few years, however, the number of Americans who identify most readily with the second description has risen tremendously. According to Trish Mall of the *New York Times* Americans are eating more plants foods than ever before. More people are adopting completely vegetarian diets for health, diet, moral and religious reasons. A considerable number of Jews have converted to vegetarianism— as well, many of them believing the concern and sensitivity for all living creatures promoted by vegetarianism to be a native Jewish concern, rooted in traditional Jewish sources. Although Judaism permits the slaughtering of animals for food, the proponents of Jewish vegetarianism, draw support for their practices from within Jewish tradition.

This concept of Jewish vegetarianism requires examination. Does Judaism forbid, endorse, or ignore vegetarianism as a practice and ideology? To answer this multipartite question we first must deal with those sources within Rabbinic literature which ostensibly forbid the abstention from eating meat. According to tradition meat is the necessary foodstuff for a festive meal, particularly on Shabbat and Yom Tov. The Rambam writes in *Hilchot Shabbat* 30:1 that "eating meat and drinking wine constitute *Oneg Shabbat*. With respect to the commandant to be joyful on the festivals *V'Samachta B'Chagecha* the Rambam writes: "There is no *simcha* except with meat and wine." However, in an article entitled "Vegetarianism from a Jewish perspective," (*RJJJ Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*) Rabbi Alfred S. Cohen explains, that according to the *Shulchan Aruch*, "if a person fasts each day, and would have pain from eating during the Sabbath day, since it would be a change in his normal eating schedule" he would be permitted to refrain from eating. Rabbi Cohen points out that if fasting on Shabbat is permissible, then it is clearly permissible for a person who experiences revulsion at the sight of meat to refrain from eating it on Shabbat. Likewise, Rabbi Cohen cites a number of sources which dispute the Rambam's definition of *simcha* on Yom Tov. For example, *Pesachim* 108 indicates that although during the time of the temple, meat was the requisite food for *simcha*, since there is no longer a temple (and we no longer conduct animal sacrifices) one need only drink wine to fulfill the obligation of *V'Samachta B'Chagecha*. Thus we see, that according to the letter of Jewish law, one need never consume meat.

We still need to answer, however, whether a Jew is permitted to espouse the ideology of vegetarianism. By using the word ideology I am making a distinction between vegetarianism adopted for health and diet reasons ie. that red meat contains too much fat and cholesterol, and vegetarianism adopted for the ideological, moral reason that killing animals for food is cruel and immoral. According to this vegetarian ideology, a system that permits the slaughtering of animals for food is morally inferior; this would include the Torah's "paths of pleasantness" which are not that pleasant for the vegetarian. Obviously, for a halakhic Jew, this sort of thinking is unacceptable. It would seem, therefore, that vegetarianism and Judaism represent two mutually exclusive, unreconcilable codes of morality.

Does Judaism forbid, endorse or ignore vegetarianism?

And yet a close examination of the Biblical passages which refer to dietary codes, brings us to a completely different conclusion. Although the Torah tells us that God grants man permission to eat meat, the circumstances under which this permission is granted, and the language in which it is phrased seems to indicate that ideally man should not eat meat, but be vegetarian. If so then the tension between ideological vegetarianism and Judaism can be resolved.

Let us examine each of the sources involved. In the first source, found in *Bereshit* 1:29, God says to Adam: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth and every tree that has seed bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. God describes the diet of the rest of the animal kingdom in similar terms:

And to all the animals on land , to all the birds of the sky and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is the breath of life [I give] all the green plants for food." These passages indicate that God's original design for the world involved a bio-system in which mankind and animalkind harmoniously co-existed, sharing rather than competing for control of the world. Men were forbidden to devour animals and animals to devour men.

Several other details within the creation story that support the idea that God

"So I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon the earth"

envisioned a fellowship between the human species and the rest of the animal kingdom. The creation of both living creatures and the human species on the sixth day clearly points to this idea. In fact, fellowship played such a prominent role in God's design, that God offered Adam an animal mate. Adam's superior intelligence ultimately motivated him to reject this idea of an animal mate in favour of one of his own species. Nevertheless, this passage establishes the idea that men and animals are close enough in nature to be able to relate to one another meaningfully. Adam's role in naming the various animal species also strengthens this idea of fellowship between men and animals. In the same way that a human parent commits himself to the protection, rearing and shaping of a child through naming him, Adam asssumed the responsibility to protect, care for and ensure the survival of the animal kingdom through naming the various species.

Milan Kundera, a renowned contemporary Czech novelist explores the idea of man's relationship to the animal kingdom as seen in the creation story, in his novel, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being:*

Even though Genesis says that God gave Man dominion over all the animals, we can also construe this to mean that he merely entrusted them to man's care. Man was not the planet's master, merely its administrator.

Eating meat is forbidden was prohibited to man until the time of Noach. Then, the corruption, moral depravity, and violent behaviour demonstrated by Noach's contemporaries in their relationships not only with animals but with their fellow men too, prompts God to limit the scope of His moral demand. After the flood, God grants Noach and his descendants a dispensation to eat meat: "as with the green grasses I give you these." (*Bereshit* 9:3-4). Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook explains that God makes this dispensation in order to allow man to concentrate more seriously upon cultivating morality and fellowship within the human community. In a work entitled *Tallelei Orot* Rav Kook expounds this idea:

When the human being descended from perfection and could not bear the shining of the Great Light and its vessels were shattered, the separation from the fellowship of the animal kingdom was vitally necessary in order to accomplish the husbanding of the power of righteousness and uprightness in mankind alone, so that the Divine Fire which was burning very feebly could now warm the heart that had become cold through the pressures of life and its vicissitudes. The change in attitudes and ideas, paths and boundaries of living called for the concentration of all reserves of moral strength and humanity alone.

We inherited Noach's world, and as of yet, regardless of any opinions concerning the long-debated history of human progress, we been unable to create a morally perfect human society. Thus we have yet to reassume the difficult task of promoting fellowship between humans and animals.

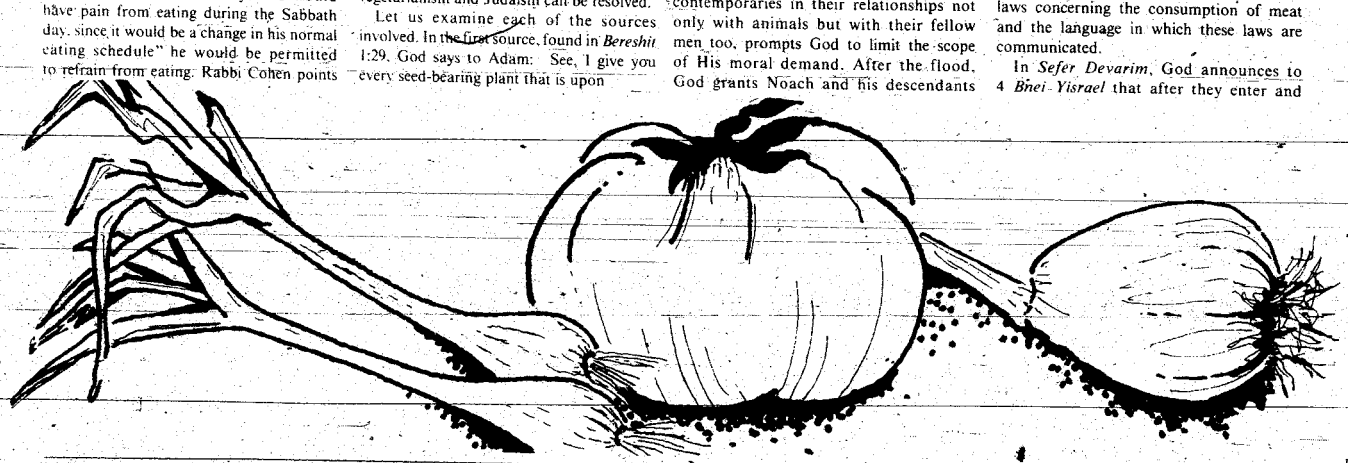
But should we still strive to achieve this ideal if we feel competent in handling the moral burden? Should we endeavour to return to the Eden dietary model? Perhaps, not. Perhaps, God's announcement to Noach that he may eat meat, ushered in an entirely separate age in which this idea in which the original design of fellowship between man and animals no longer applies.

Should we endeavour to return to the Eden dietary model?

Furthermore, according to Rav Kook, God permitted man to eat meat to enable him to concentrate his moral energies on perfecting the morality of the human community. Perhaps then, adopting vegetarian dietary practices would distract us from completing this task.

However, an examination of the rest of the Biblical sources concerning the eating of meat, reveals that even after God awards Noach and his descendants their carnivorous license, the Torah does not wholeheartedly encourage the practice of slaughtering animals for personal food intake. God's original design seems to linger on in the laws concerning the consumption of meat and the language in which these laws are communicated.

In *Sefer Devarim*, God announces to 4 *Bnei Yisrael* that after they enter and



It's Not Easy Being Green

conquer the promised land they will be permitted to eat meat when they want to eat meat.

When the Lord enlarges your territory, as He has promised you and you say: "I shall eat meat for your soul longs to eat meat, you may eat meat, whatsoever your soul lusts after." (*Devarim* 12:20) It is important for us to establish what new law concerning the eating of meat is being introduced by this verse. According to Rabbi Yishmael in *Hulin* 16a this *pasuk* comes to permit the eating of *basar ta'avah* that originally had been forbidden to them. In other words, according to Rabbi Yishmael, *Bnei Yisrael* were forbidden to eat meat solely for personal pleasure. If they wanted to eat meat, they could only do so in the context of a *shlamim* sacrifice. However, they were granted permission to eat meat solely for personal pleasure, when God "enlarged their territory" – once they completed the conquering and settling of the land.

If we adopt Rabbi Yishmael's position, that at this point, *B'nei Yisrael* received permission for the first time to eat meat for personal pleasure, we can make some very interesting observations about the literary style of this announcement of permission (it is important to note that Rabbi Yishmael's interpretation is not universally accepted. According to Rabbi Akiva, this verse does not come to permit the eating of *basar ta'avah* but to forbid the practice of *nechirah* — of killing animals for food without ritual slaughter which was permitted during *B'nei Yisrael's* sojourn in the desert. Therefore, this verse cannot be used to prove unequivocally that Judaism endorses vegetarian practice).

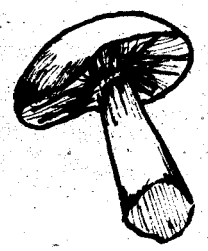
"God grants no whole wholesale dispensation to eat meat..."

First we notice the association that the Torah makes between the eating meat and the enlargement of territory, or in other words, the amassing of wealth. The Torah seems to indicate that the desire to eat meat is a natural extension of man's desire to conquer and dominate the world. A recent study conducted by Marvin Harris, an anthropologist at the University of Florida, corroborated this idea. The study indicated that people moving out of poverty tend to put more and more meat in their diets. Now this may seem a truism. Afterall, meat is expensive. It makes perfect sense that a person once too poor to afford meat will buy meat as his finances become more secure. However, a deeper meaning can be inferred, the idea being that when man succeeds in conquering, his self-confidence and his lust for further conquest increase. With this thought in mind, it becomes apparent that the Torah deliberately used the phrasing of, "When God conquers your territory." The Torah wishes to remind *Bnei Yisrael*, that God is responsible for their affluence. And yet, the Torah acknowledges man's tendency to believe that he is personally responsible for all of his triumphs. He is a conqueror, and as a conqueror he has a tendency to demand things. "I shall eat meat!" he says. He does not ask, "May I eat meat," but instead seizes what he wants because he wants it. The Torah recognizes this basic human impulse, but through careful use of language points out the dark side of this desire. The phrase "eat meat" is repeated three times to emphasize the baseness of this flesh lust. Similarly, the Torah purposely juxtaposes the word soul (*nefesh*) with lust (*ta'avah*) ("Whatsoever your soul lusts after") (to emphasize how incongruous the goal of satisfying animal urges is with the spiritual goals of a Jewish soul.

Thus, in *Tallellei Orot*, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook concludes on the basis of the language of this passage that God grants "no wholesale dispensation permitting meat but a qualified one designed to pave the way gradually to complete and final abstention from eating meat."

Similarly, Rav Kook maintains that all the Biblical laws concerning the slaughtering and eating of meat are designed to provoke an awareness of the injustice perpetrated upon the animal kingdom when a man slaughters an animal for food. In his opinion, ritual slaughter (*shechitah*), the commandment to cover the blood of the dead animal, the prohibition against cooking a kid in the milk of his mother and against killing two animal generations in one day are all practical methods of provoking this awareness. Ben Zion Bokser, in the introduction to his translation of Rav Kook's works, points out that Rav Kook goes so far as to "project the abolition of animal sacrifices in a restored Temple in Jerusalem." Rav Kook writes: " In the future, the abundance of enlightenment will spread and penetrate even the animals. They will not hurt or destroy on my holy mountain, for "the Earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (*Isaiah* 11:9)"

Even Rav Kook acknowledges, however, that the restoration of the fellowship between animals and men, is a sublime goal that will only be truly achieved in the age of Messianic redemption. If this is the case, then, is there any real reason for a Jew to adopt vegetarianism in this pre-redemption world? Is it not sufficient for



a Jew to fulfill those mitzvot that provoke awareness of the cruelty of the act, without him following a whole new dietary code of vegetarianism?

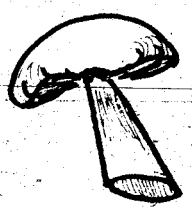
The answer to this question is both yes and no. Yes, according to the Torah, one need not be a vegetarian. At the same time, the language of *Parshat Re'eh* can be read to imply that vegetarianism is a noble ideal to pursue. Moreover, in our modern urban lives, we rarely get the opportunity to perform many of the mitzvot which inculcate moral sensitivity towards animals. We rarely find ourselves taking away chicks from a nest, and thus are unable to fulfill the mitzvah of *Shiluach Haken* – the sending away of the mother hen. Likewise, most of us have very little to do with the *shechitah* process and thus do not take part in covering the blood, or abstaining from slaughtering two generations of animals in one day. The only contact most Jews have with this idea of developing compassion for the animal kingdom, is as an idea, as a subject for intellectual discussion. Vegetarian dietary practice, however, gives the Jew the opportunity to enter the world of action, and to really develop a sensitivity for all God's creatures.

We must pause for a moment to consider the value of this sort of sensitivity. Refraining from eating meat enables people to look at animals no longer as potential calories but as living creatures, with emotions and needs, like themselves. I do not mean to

Fellowship between animals and meat will only be achieved in the age of Messianic redemption.

say that people who eat meat are not capable of feeling compassion for an animal. I know many carnivores, who love their dogs very much. I do think, however, that when people eat meat, they make it more difficult for themselves to entertain the notion of a fellowship between men and animals.

In the *Unbearable Lightness of Being*, Kundera advances some reasons as to why this relationship of fellowship should be pursued. He claims that when one develops a personal relationship with an animal,



relating to him as a living creature and not as a unit of calories, he achieves "true human goodness," the sort of goodness which is indispensable to man's goal of achieving moral perfection in the human community. He writes:

True human goodness in all its purity and freedom, can come only when its recipient has no power. Mankind's true moral test – its fundamental test (which lies deeply buried from view) consists of its attitude towards those who are at its mercy: animals. And in this respect mankind has suffered a fundamental debacle.

We cannot instantly become better people by becoming vegetarian

Kundera maintains that when man loves an animal, he achieves the highest form of love, a love that is completely selfless, accepting, and voluntary, given with no hope for personal gain. When we kill animals for food, we eliminate our ability to relate to animals in this way, and thus lose this vital opportunity to strengthen our moral fabric.

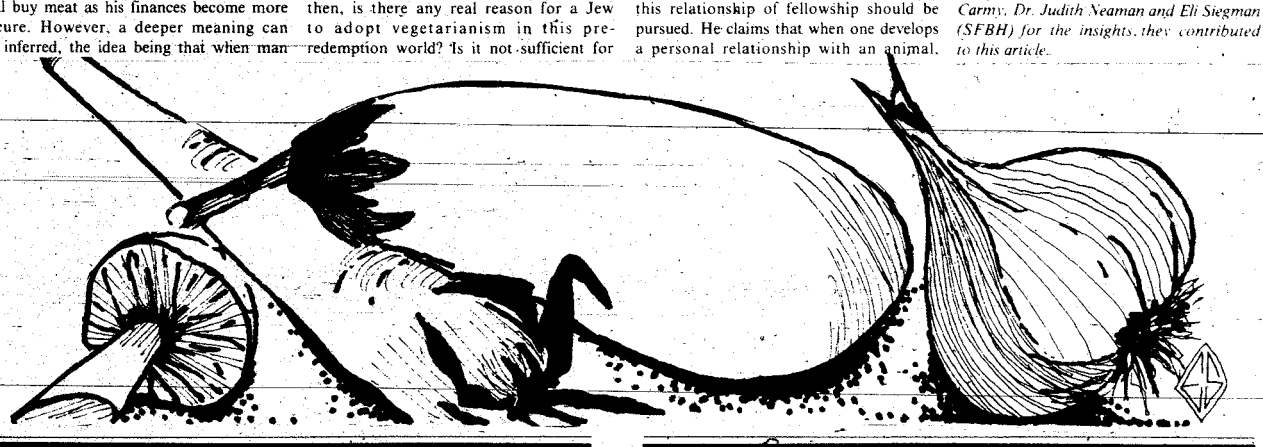
Of course, one always runs the risk of becoming excessively concerned about the welfare of animals, to the extent that he forgets his obligation to humankind. The Prioress in Geoffrey Chaucer's General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* immediately comes to mind:

Of smale houndes had she that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk or wastelbreed
But sore wept she if oon of them were deed Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte And all was conscience and tendre herte. (lines 146)

Chaucer's Prioress feeds her pet dogs food fit for a feast, and sorely weeps if any man causes them the slightest injury. Obviously, her values are somewhat skewed. She lavishly feeds and protects her dog, while outside her nunnery, men starve and die from injury.

What is necessary, therefore, is a balanced attitude. We cannot instantly become better Jews or better people by becoming vegetarians. However, we can conceivably become more sensitive.

Special thanks are due to Rabbi Shalom Carmy, Dr. Judith Neaman and Eli Siegman (SFBH) for the insights they contributed to this article.



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Empire

Food for Thought

by Jay Zachter

Tzvi walked in with an apple and a book, sat down and began reading. Dovid noted and approached. I drew my seat closer. The conversation was not to be missed.

Dovid: How could you bring that into the Beis Medrash?

Tzvi: (a bit confused) Oh Dovid, everybody brings it into the Beis Midrash. We all need some nourishment during the day.

Dovid: No, it's not just because this is the Beis Medrash. The real problem is how sure are you that it is kosher?

Tzvi: What do you mean? How could it not be?

Dovid: Do you know what could be inside?

What about having a hashgakha on the title page of every publication!

Tzvi: What? Worms!

Dovid: Exactly, the heretical serpent within!

With that I realized that Dovid's problem was with Tzvi's book, not his lunch. The realm of kashrut was not restricted to eating and drinking, but included reading as well.

My mind began to wander. Could I see myself reaching for a book and checking its table of contents to see if any non-kosher ingredients were included? What about the idea of a *hashgakha* on the title page of every publication? Oh, but that would cause many a problem. I would have to worry about the acceptance of each *hashgakha* by the general public. I would never want to recommend a plain kosher book when my fellow reader may only ingest glatt kosher material. Heaven forbid to suggest an article to a *Bnei Akiranik*, whose *hashgakha* is under the supervision of those who burn flags on *Yom Ha'atzmaut*. And what about the issue of separation among kosher books themselves? Could I place a meatier work on the same table as a lighter, more dairy, piece?

I caught myself. One should never let his mind run free. You can never know where it might lead. Yet, the questions remain. Is there, in fact a notion of kosher and non-kosher books? Are there time-periods needed between servings? Must one completely digest religious axioms before indulging in other readings?

Is there a notion of Kosher and non-Kosher booms?

The concept of having edible and non-edible books has several practical implications. Does one dismiss an entire book, because one footnote might contradict a basic tenet of his belief? Or, does he continue reading, relying on a "*bitul b'rov*" construct? Does he weigh the positive, tangible benefits received from the book, or disregard them in light of the potential harm which might result?

These issues demand honest resolutions, supported by both religious guidance and open-mindedness. Yet, perhaps, the primary determinant of a book's *hasgakha* may be the reader himself. Surely the intentions and motivations of the one nibbling on the forbidden fruits of heresy play an important, if not essential, role in his actions. A person grappling with issues, searching to strengthen his religious commitment, all in the name of G-d, may not be compared to the frivolous one who seeks to reject faith. For the former, such pursuits define his spirituality, for the latter, they ridicule it. Before proceeding, it must be stressed that religiosity is by no means a monolithic experience. Some live their lives in complete faith. They guard themselves against any idea that may threaten their belief. They stand firm on their convictions, and let nothing sway them. Their piety goes far beyond an "ignorance is bliss" existence, yet, to refer to their commitment as such would not insult them. They would simply smile, knowing that they are better off.

On the other hand, there are those whose religious commitment is defined differently. For them, faith does not exist without agony. Their spiritual experience is produced by the struggle, not the ease, with which they attempt to fulfill religious obligation. The overcoming of their skepticism expresses their servitude to G-d. Religion embodies the complexity of antinomies, not the complacency of answers. It is a paradox, not paradise.

Entitling his article "Does YU Education Prepare its Students?" (*Commentator*, November 12, 1987), Dov Pinchot raised an important problem. It seems that in the world at Yeshiva certain major issues confronting the modern Jew are being neglected. He asserts that too many of our students are woefully unprepared to cope with questions regarding either the validity of Divine biblical authorship or the problem of theodicy. Although he later concludes with an optimistic proposal, his original question is still troubling. The reason for the silence accompanying these issues is based on a specific frame of mind. Since discussions of this sort may involve addressing opposing, if not heretical, views, the entire venture is deemed irrelevant and hazardous. The theory is that certain problems are best shunned and ignored, rather than explained and discussed.

By suggesting another perspective I do not mean to deny the validity of the other. For some, this defensive attitude towards foreign ideas is the most effective, as well as, meaningful solution. However, for others, this seemingly "safe" approach may in fact be counter-productive and present further challenges.

The scenario centers around our protagonist Tzvi. During his adolescent life he had heard of the *Documentary Hypothesis*, proposing that the Torah was not written by G-d but rather a redaction of several "biblical" documents. Of course, such a notion was antithetical to his vision of religion and so he filed it away in the dark recesses of his mind as absurd. Time went on and Tzvi's Torah learning intensified. He would spend hours learning the interpretations of *Chaza"l* and studying the exegesis of the Jewish commentators. Often he would notice that the classical Jewish explanations were a bit farfetched. He would see them struggling with problems and offering "apologetic" solutions. The small worm of biblical criticism had not remained in the apple; it was beginning to poke its head about. Tzvi aligned himself with the Jewish exegetes, but the thought that the critics had easier and smoother solutions was very enticing. Soon, Tzvi

The worm of biblical criticism was beginning to poke its head about

began to sub-consciously question the integrity of the Jewish view. It seemed to him that modern scholarship could answer any and all difficulties. Of course, Tzvi's conclusions were unsupported. He had never read any of the works or ideas of biblical criticism. After all, he was always warned that reading these non-kosher ideas was dangerous and would lead to doubt and, perhaps, non-observance. By consideration an opposing view, Tzvi was in fact succumbing to the very heresy he was running away from.

To make a long story short, Tzvi soon realized his predicament. Against the better judgement of his peers, he felt determined to struggle, to search for the truth. First he talked to professors and rabbis, then immersed himself in a serious study of biblical criticism. And lo and behold, he realized that the scholarly studies were not free of inconsistencies, flaws and "*kvetches*". The celebrated *Documentary Hypothesis* was just that- a hypothesis. Circular reasoning was not quite good enough to dismiss the traditions of normative Jewish belief. Only now, after seeing for himself, did Tzvi realize that the great

The key is to confront the shadow, realize it is only a shadow, and continue to walk

pillars of biblical scholarship had feet of clay. Only by pursuing his inquiry in an honest straightforward manner could he set his doubts to rest. For Tzvi, the heretical worm of biblical criticism gnawed him no more.

Sometimes a student walks through the alley of religion and is frightened by a shadow. The key is to confront the shadow, realize it is only a shadow, and continue to walk. All too often, however, the confrontation never occurs. The student just quickens his pace and flees in fear. Yet, most regrettable is the truth behind the shadow that is never learned.

Ess, Gezuntah Heit!

by Erica Schoonmaker

When contemplating Jewish dietary habits two commercials from the distant past come to mind. One is holy, the other not so holy. The first one features a close-up of Uncle Sam arguing for fillers and preservatives for a popular 'kosher' hot dog, to which a deep voice in the sky responds, "We answer to a higher authority." Commercials like that make you proud to be Jewish. Then there's the other commercial. It features a close-up of a characteristically Jewish stomach covered by an apron which is in turn covered with mustard. The stomach belongs to a Jewish deli owner who holds up his latest creation and comments on the rye bread in a voice that streiches from the Lower East Side to Canarsie, "Makes a nice sandwich, a nice sandwich." Commercials like that make me feel good about being from New Jersey.

The actresses in Diet Pepsi, Tab, and Jack Lalane spa commercials are never Jewish. The actors in Rolaids, Alka Seltzer, and Dr. Scholl's foot spray adds are always Jewish. Or they look Jewish and talk like Jews, and, inevitably, the discussion revolves around food.

Sure there's a holiness about keeping kosher. But there's a culture in kosher-style that goes far beyond the little symbol on the package. Even the symbol is part of a culture.

Approximately once a week my grandmother brings home a product of questionable halakhic status. I'll ask if it's kosher, Grandma gets upset. "I have to come all the way from Poland, from a house that didn't know from *treif* to hear *mine anekle* tell me what's kosher and what's not kosher. It has an 'R.'

More than that. Jewish people identify with food. You can sum up thousands of years of Jewish martyrdom with six words. "So what am I, chopped liver?" And food is great for metaphors: "Let me tell you, she has legs like a boiled chicken." "Only a prune would have such a face." "Fat? Uncle Sy is so fat if you put him in the oven for twenty minutes, he'd look like a baked apple." How about this oldie? "It was so hot yesterday, the tongues in the deli were crying, 'Seltzer, seltzer.'"

Despite all of the environmental pressure, I never took a liking to Jewish food, which is a crime on par with breaking the Sabbath and intermarrying. I always preferred quiche to kugel, ravioli to kreplach. No stuffed cabbage, no honey cake, no horseradish. Not even falafel. I call chicken soup 'broth'. If it weren't for bagels, matza balls, and challah my family would think I'm not Jewish (and those foods don't really count because they're all starches).

What gets me is that there's a whole generation under forty who still eat foods that require a translation. You'd never walk into a French restaurant and order something you couldn't translate, so what is *tzimmes?* It certainly doesn't sound appetizing. Neither does *mandel brot, kichel, cholent, borcht,* and *kasha varnishkas*. Foods like that don't even look appetizing. Who would have thought to put carrots, prunes, and pineapples together? Even the very innocuous peanut and raisin mix leaves me confused.

Gefilte fish gets its own paragraph. First of all there's the jelly. No one would eat two ounces of chicken fat or petroleum jelly for that matter, and people have the nerve to give gefilte fish jelly its own attractive saucer and place on the table. Then there's the carrot. I've done extensive research at many a shabbos table as to the origin and need for the carrot slice on top. The two most probable hypotheses which can be accepted independently or together is that A) it's the only thing that gives the fish any color, or B) (my favorite) it's a symbol of fertility. This makes the most

there is a culture in Kosher-style that goes beyond the symbol on the package...

sense when combined with the fish which certainly carries that connotation. After hearing this bit of research the Surgeon General put a warning on all jars of Mothers Gefilte Fish: "Warning, eating this fish can be hazardous in mixed company on Friday night."

I take it back. Gefilte fish gets two paragraphs. I cannot mention gefilte fish without recalling what you would call a story and I call a nightmare. While we were studying in Israel, a friend and I went to the home of her very pious relatives. My Hebrew was just beyond the *boker tov* stage and my Yiddish reached a standstill at *pipik*. Remember, communication at mealtime is vital.

The children bring out a piece of gefilte fish for everyone. The lucky guest get two—home-made, so homemade that they still had the eyes. I dare anyone to eat anything that stares back. I didn't know the Hebrew word for allergies; what was I to do? I decided to be mature and eat half of one to show a minimal degree of participation. I made sure there was a lot of water and bread at my side.

Anyone can tell you that eating something you dislike, even for moments, is torture. And it takes hours to eat. Thus, the piece of fish. I finish half, and with a triumphant

What is Tzimmes???

smile, I listen to the *baal'at habayit* tell my friend how much everyone loves this gefilte fish. She makes for her children and her neighbors and her friends. Of course, the heartstrings give way to the taste buds. (this should not be tried at home), and I proceed with the other half, which is really three-quarters. I finish as everyone is reaching for the desert and my gracious host puts her arm around me and says, "I see, you like the fish. Don't be embarrassed to eat the other piece."

Another dilemma in Sabbath observance is wine. You know you are making a sacrifice in quality when you can buy wine by the gallon. And *kiddush* wine unlike other wines gives you cavities while you drink it. It's sometimes so thick you don't know whether to drink it or pour it on pancakes.

Shabbos isn't the only time for special ritual dishes. Notice: Gentiles have turkey for Thanksgiving and Christmas and Easter. Not Jews. It's latkes, matza, or cheesecake

food determines the day. For example, I always know when Passover's coming in my house. Not because the drapes are cleaned for the first time all year or because the refrigerator's really been defrosted but because there is candy in the house. All year long there's never really candy in the house except for the box of fancy chocolates my mother keeps under her bed that she thinks we don't know about. But in the middle of March, lo and behold, behold and lo, our pantry is stocked. The Barton's is only for company. The halvah is only for people who have no teeth. And what do we get? Semi-circles of candied jelly, the kind that come in assorted colors and have a little white rim. If we are good we get macaroons. Ugh. I wouldn't think of eating macaroons at any other time of the year; should two weeks of not having yeast products put me in such dire straits that I need a macaroon? You can't fool me with Horowitz-Margareten eakes or special recipes for Pesach biscuits. I'm a purist: matza and creamcheese, please (no creamcheeses and jelly, no butter and jelly, no creamcheese and butter).

And what article on food would be complete without a tribute to the carnivore. Jews don't eat prime rib; they eat brisket. They eat chopped liver. They eat salami and pickles. They eat tongue. And they eat sweet breads. How many of us were fooled by sweet breads? Thought it was a take-off of challah, didn't you. When mom gave it to you, she didn't tell you what it was, did she? "Try it you'll like it." Years later you find out at some kid's bar-mitzva that sweet breads is only a code name for brains and you hold it against your mother for the next twenty years.

Chicken also deserves its own paragraph. It's not the way it's cooked that matters (although every little bit is recycled in some way), it's the way it's eaten. In every family there's always one person who only eats light meat and one who only eats dark. There's one person who eats the neck, and one who likes the wings, and one who likes the skin. The kids only eat the drum sticks (explain that one), and everyone over sixty eats the bones and sucks out the marrow.

We have pretty much worked our way through the four basic food groups and at this point I can't help but interject a little Jackie Mason humor. You can write about Jewish eating habits from now until tomorrow, but the truth is that Jews would throw it all away for a couple of wontons. Jews have supported Chinese restaurants for decades, and it is not uncommon to hear a Jew commenting on his latest craving for Sing Song Duck and Fone-ee Shrimp. But when's the last time you saw a Chinese man in the mood for gefilte fish?

The Need For Creed

Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought
By Menachem Kellner
New York: Oxford University Press, 1986
Reviewed by Jonathan Reiss

The subject of dogma, or creed formulation in Judaism, which concerns the establishment of certain basic principles of faith as the cornerstone of our religion, was a major topic of discussion in medieval Jewish thought. Menachem Kellner has undertaken, in his important new work, to conduct the first thorough study examining the writings of all of the medieval Jewish thinkers who dealt with dogma in Judaism.

The title of Menachem Kellner's book does not mean to imply that dogma was also a subject of concern in Jewish thought prior to the middle ages, nor that deliberations over dogma have continued to flourish since then. Rather, as Kellner emphasizes in his introduction, no comprehensive account of dogma in Judaism had ever been offered before Maimonides introduced his dogmatic principles of Judaism in the twelfth century. And after the death of Isaac Abravanel, who lived into the sixteenth century, most Jewish intellectuals completely abandoned the subject, only readdressing to the issue in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The scant attention that the topic of dogma in Judaism has received might lead one to suspect that Judaism is not a religion tremendously concerned with the affirmation of dogmatic principles. According to Kellner, this assumption is essentially correct. Obviously, certain key principles of faith, such as belief in G-d and belief in Divine revelation, had always been central to Judaism, but faith in these principles was always manifested through "belief in" rather than "belief that", through trust and loyalty, rather than affirmation. Maimonides, building on the groundwork of his predecessor Saadiah Gaon, was innovative in the sense that he required people to "affirm" rather than simply believe in the basic principles of Jewish faith, which he described in his commentary to the Mishnah in *Perek Helek* of Tractate *Sanhedrin*.

The thirteen principles of Maimonides were, as Kellner summarizes them, (1) G-d's existence; (2) G-d's unity; (3) G-d's incorporeality; (4) G-d's ontic priority; (5) that G-d alone may be worshipped; (6) prophecy; (7) the special nature of Mosaic prophecy; (8) Torah from heaven; (9) the eternity of the Torah; (10) G-d's knowledge; (11) reward and punishment; (12) Messiah; and (13) resurrection.

What inspired Maimonides to formulate his principles? According to Abravanel, Maimonides composed his foundation of faith so that even ignorant people would be able to perfect themselves by comprehending the most basic and fundamental beliefs of Judaism. Solomon Schechter and David Neumark, picking up on another suggestion of Abravanel, namely that Maimonides may have been influenced by the gentile scholars of his day who searched for the roots or axioms behind every science and system, posited that Maimonides wrote his principles as a reaction to what he called the "imitating creeds", Christianity and Islam. Dr. Arthur Hyman, objecting strongly against this kind of approach, has recently suggested that Maimonides intended through his principles to enable even the simplest Jew to earn a place in the world to come through the acceptance of these principles. Kellner's own theory, which he partially bases upon an allusion Maimonides makes to his thirteen principles in the *Treatise of Resurrection*, is that Maimonides postulated his principles in order to lead Jews to greater halakhic observance, since holding correct beliefs, especially concerning G-d, lies at the core of the proper observance of halakha and its interpetation by rabbinical scholars.

Many thinkers have debated over how to divide Maimonides' principles into certain basic categories. The most convincing breakdown was suggested by R. Shimon ben Zemach Duran, who opined that the thirteen principles could be reduced to the following three: G-d's existence, Torah from heaven, and retribution. This breakdown was later re-affirmed by Joseph Albo, who is often mistakenly credited as being the first thinker to demarcate the principles in this fashion. Abraham Bibago, a contemporary of Albo, divided the principles into two groups: those relating to G-d, and those relating to his actions.

Considering the fact that many later authorities counted creation as a fundamental principle of Judaism, and occasionally as the most essential principle of Jewish belief, it is odd that Maimonides did not include creation on his list (though there is some evidence that the Rambam added the belief of creation in the margins of a manuscript later in his life). And although a number of medieval thinkers contended that the Ramban included creation in his fourth principle, Kellner argues that Maimonides seems to have really gone out of his way not to embrace creation as a dogmatic principle of Judaism, as he also does not mention it in his Mishnah Torah. Rather, Kellner argues, in accordance with his general approach, that since Maimonides considered creation to be one of the "mysteries of the Torah" which should not be revealed unless absolutely necessary, and belief in it does not lead to greater halakhic observance, he saw no reason to teach this belief to the Jewish masses.

Why did Maimonides choose precisely thirteen principles of faith? Kellner cites an unknown author quoted by Duran who proposed that Maimonides purposefully selected the number thirteen in order to base himself on G-d's thirteen attributes, and because of this design was compelled to both add principles that should have been excluded and eliminate principles that should have been included. Abraham Bibago demonstrated that the thirteen principles can be found in the ceremony of circumcision. This last possibility would actually stand to reason because Maimonides may have developed upon the Rabbinic dictum which states that circumcision, which symbolizes the acceptance of Judaism, is structured upon thirteen covenants, as we see from the fact that the word "covenant" is written thirteen times in the section of the Torah dealing with circumcision.

In any case, many thinkers after Maimonides not only selected different principles as the cornerstones of Jewish faith, but cavalierly switched around the number of principles as well. Dovid ben Yom Tov ibn Bilia, for instance, added another thirteen foundations of faith to the original thirteen propounded by Maimonides, while Duran at one point wrote that Judaism really only has one principle: the acceptance of Torah and its teachings as true. However, as Kellner astutely points out, both the discrepancies in the number of principles and in their content stem from different definitions as to what constitutes a "principle of faith". Thus, while Maimonides defined principles in a dogmatic sense, namely as beliefs upon which a Jew's personal salvation depends, Hasdai Crescas defined principles in an axiomatic sense, as beliefs without which Judaism would be inconceivable. Joseph Albo, in turn, defined the principles of Judaism scientifically and analytically, as axioms upon which all other beliefs are logically based, and each thinker formulated his particular conception of the principles of Judaism accordingly.

Isaac Abravanel took perhaps the most radical position, maintaining that all of the precepts and beliefs of Judaism share equal importance, so that Judaism does not possess any principles that can be elevated from all others as "foundations of faith". The only defense for Maimonides, in his opinion, is to assume that Maimonides never intended his formulation of the principles of Judaism to serve as a guide to the foundations of faith, but rather as a pedagogical way of teaching certain especially praiseworthy beliefs to ignorant people.

Kellner devotes a great deal of attention to the question of inadvertent heresy. What would be the status of a person who rejected one of the fundamental principles of faith based on ignorance or his misinterpretation of Biblical and Talmudic sources? Maimonides and Abravanel would label such a person a heretic, although Abravanel would extend this title to one who rejected any principle whatsoever contained in the Torah, while Maimonides would limit his application to his thirteen principles. However, other thinkers, such as Rabad and Duran, and possibly Crescas as well, would not cut off such a person from the community of Israel, since they would treat such a person as a *shogeg* (an unintentional sinner). Kellner finds this treatment to be much more in consonance with the general thrust of Jewish law, which ordinarily distinguishes between intentional and unintentional sinners. However, it is not clear at all that the disagreement in this matter is as far-reaching as Kellner seems to imply. Rabad merely defended those who ascribe corporeality to G-d based on their naive reading of Biblical texts, and Duran, the only other thinker who clearly accepted Rabad's position, was similarly only lenient towards one who errs about a matter he incorrectly thinks represents the intention of the Torah. Thus, Kellner's assertion that Duran would "[make] a sharp distinction between purposeful and accidental heresy; even with respect to his so-called fundamental principles" is dubious and misleading. Even Duran would not have pardoned somebody who rejected the Torah because he "mistakenly" believed

שלשה עשר עקרים

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ הוּא בּוֹרֵא וּמַנְהִיג לְכָל הַבְּרוּאִים, וְהוּא לְבַדּוֹ עָשָׂה וְעוֹשֶׂה וְיַעֲשֶׂה לְכָל הַמַּעֲשִׂים.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ הוּא יָחִיד וְאֵין יְחִידוּת כָּמוֹהוּ בְּשׁוּם פָּנִים, וְהוּא לְבַדּוֹ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הָיָה הֹוֶה וְיִהְיֶה.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ אֵינוֹ גּוּף, וְלֹא יַשִּׂיגוּהוּ מַשִּׂיגֵי הַגּוּף, וְאֵין לוֹ שׁוּם דִּמְיוֹן כְּלָל.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ הוּא רִאשׁוֹן וְהוּא אַחֲרוֹן.

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אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שְׁנְּבוּאַת מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ עָלָיו הַשָּׁלוֹם הָיְתָה אֱמִתִּית, וְשֶׁהוּא הָיָה אָב לַנְּבִיאִים, לְקוֹדְמִים לְפָנָיו וְלַבָּאִים אַחֲרָיו.

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אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שְׁזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה לֹא תְהֵא מְחֻלֶּפֶת וְלֹא תְהֵא תּוֹרָה אַחֶרֶת מֵאֵת הַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ יוֹדֵעַ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה בְנֵי אָדָם וְכָל מַחְשְׁבוֹתָם שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר הַיֹּצֵר יַחַד לִבָּם הַמֵּבִין אֶל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁהַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ גּוֹמֵל טוֹב לְשׁוֹמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו וּמַעֲנִישׁ לְעוֹבְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ, וְאַף עַל פִּי שִׁיִּתְמַהְמֵהַּ, עִם כָּל זֶה אֲחַכֶּה לּוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם שֶׁיָּבוֹא.

אֲנִי מַאֲמִין בֶּאֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים בְּעֵת שֶׁיַּעֲלֶה רָצוֹן מֵאֵת הַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ וְיִתְעַלֶּה זִכְרוֹ לָעַד וּלְנֶצַח נְצָחִים.

A Picture Says A Thousand Words

Maus: A Survivor's Tale
by Art Spiegelman
New York: Pantheon Books, 1986
Reviewed by Goody Greenberg

Maus is the story of Holocaust survivor, Vladek Spiegelman, the author's father. Art Spiegelman trys to come to terms with the horrifying reality of his parents' history, as well as with his own relationship with them as a child of survivors. The chronicle begins with his father's bachelor days in pre-war Poland, and carries the reader through to the arrival of Vladek and his wife Anja to Aushwitz. The younger Spiegelman describes the sociological climate of the time as a historical backdrop to his father's personal account. Yet, while recounting his parents' horrific story, Spiegelman interjects his own feelings towards his aging father.

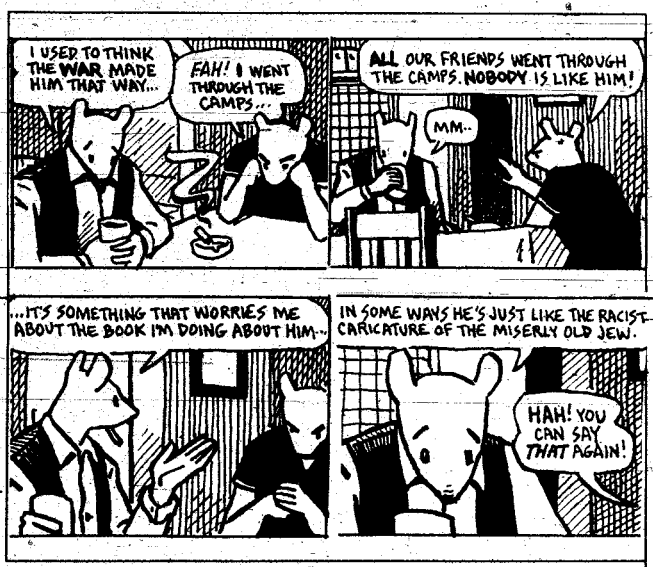
In his book, Spiegelman employs an original and compelling medium of communication. A cartoonist by profession, he tells the story in comic book form, the medium through which he can best express himself. This medium, though often used to parody, turns out to be an eloquent form of narration. The comic strip enables the author to use characterization in describing the prevalent racial discrimination of World War II Europe. All Jews are mice. All Nazis are cats. All Poles are pigs. Although to the untrained eye, there may be no external differences between human beings, to residents of wartime Europe, the differences were obvious and frightening. There was no need to consider individuals; to the Nazis , a Jew was an animal. To every Jew, every Nazi was his persecutor. None were distinguishable from the next. It was not a war against one Jew, or one human being, but a war of races, categories. Spiegelman quotes Adolf Hitler to emphasize the Nazi doctrine: "The Jews are undoubtably a race, but they are not human." Once classified as animals, Jews were that much easier to kill.

The conciseness of the cartoon medium makes this tale so powerful. The story is told with few words, and this maximizes its effectiveness. One visual image with its accompanying dialogue can communicate entire paragraphs of information. Spiegelman's compositional style is particularly penetrating in this medium. He manages a suberb portrayal of his father by using the broken grammer of Vladek's immigrant tongue. The reader hears his own grandfather in the voice of the elder Spiegelman. This lends the story its authenticity.

The author captures the paradoxical nature of his father, as well. As his son, the author describes the stereo-typical miserly, meddling, stubborn old Jew and juxtaposes that image against the noble hero who survived the war. Full justice is done to his father's ingenuity and street-smart wisdom, to his kindness and responsibility to those he had loved. Every action to protect his family and survive a living nightmare is depicted. Vladek's powerful account of his own survival, honestly portrayed by his son, commands the reader's attention. One feels as if he or she is in the presence of a witness, a victim giving testimony. Every scene in the narrative is experienced. One can feel the fatigue, smell the garbage, and recall the fear and anxiety of Hitler's sudden grip on European Jewry. And as the author paints the picture, the reader senses Spiegelman wrestling with his own ambivalent feelings towards his father.

In the final analysis, we must ask how the writer has the audacity to take as awesome a subject as the Holocaust and rewrite it in comic strip form? Is it not absurd and almost offensive to portray such a personal story in this manner? Perhaps the very incongruity between the subject manner and the medium through which it is conveyed is meant to emphasize a key philosophical point. The idea of six million people being murdered, of one race assuming the right to destroy another, is jarring and inconceivable. The use of the comic strip form effectively underscores this ultimate absurdity.

One wonders if the sequel *Maus Part II, From Mauschwitz to the Catskills* might help resolve the reader's mixed feelings towards Vladek, be they anger or sadness, pity or respect. Has the author achieved his catharsis? One cannot say. But in drawing the reader into the very center of the story, forcing him to into the emotional madness of the characters, the author has achieved a relationship with the reader. *Maus* does not bring the reader close to comprehending the Holocaust as much as it makes the Holocaust that much more difficult to forget.



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that the Torah should be rejected. As Kellner himself writes matter-of-factly about Duran's position towards the end of his book, "this position maintains that the criterion of true orthodoxy is not the rigid acceptance of certain carefully formulated, catechismal beliefs so much as the general acceptance of the Torah and trust in G-d," but trust in G-d and the acceptance of the Torah would still be mandated!

Rather, both Rabad and Duran can only be construed as lenient towards people who err by misinterpreting the intent of the Torah and of the Sages, but not toward people who rejected the Torah or belief in G-d, even if they were only led to such mistaken beliefs inadvertently or unintentionally. As Duran clearly writes, "if he found a tradition from the Sages to the effect that he ought to turn from the position he adopted, he would do so. He only holds that belief because he thinks that it is the intention of the Torah." In fact, Duran centered his entire discussion about inadvertent heresy around his theory that the principles of Judaism could be reduced to the belief "that everything [which] is included in the Torah is true," but this much he required. Hence, Kellner's criticism of Julius Guttman's assumption that even Duran would label somebody who inadvertently disbelieves in the three key principles upon which he understands Judaism is based (belief in G-d, belief in prophecy, and reward and punishment in the next world) as a heretic is not so convincing. We could indeed defend Guttman by arguing that at least regarding these matters, which are clearly indicated by the text of the Torah and the words of the Sages, even Duran would surely agree that rejection of these principles would be unforgivable under any circumstances, and that an alternative reading of the Torah and the Sages which would discount these principles would be so outlandish as to be inexcusable.

It seems, therefore, that there is practically no justification to extrapolate from the writings of Duran to the sweeping assumption made by Kellner that "for Duran, there is no teaching so basic that if one makes any honest mistake about it, he is thereby condemned as a heretic." Duran, and certainly Rabad whom he was basing himself upon, were focusing upon mistaken notions similar to the corporeality of G-d, which could reasonably be accepted even by pious people who had plowed through all of the written and oral Torah, and indeed occasionally was.

In any case, as Kellner himself points out, the hard-line position of Abravanel is very difficult to refute, since the approach of Rabad and Duran, especially if interpreted very broadly, and even if interpreted more narrowly as we have suggested, could conceivably classify even one who had rejected the majority of the teachings of the Torah based on his misinterpretation of Torah thinking as a pious Jew, which would be preposterous (although Kellner does take pains to remind us that even according to Duran, a mistaken unbeliever should be guided back to the correct path). It should be noted, incidentally, that Abravanel too seems to have interpreted the Rabad (he did not address Duran specifically at all) according the broader interpretation of his tolerance, but of course his interpretation could be met with the same objections that we have raised above.

Much more is covered by the book than has been covered by this review, but that is only natural since the book is two hundred pages long. Undoubtedly, Menachem Kellner's book is an immensely thorough and extremely valuable study of the role and history of dogma in Judaism. Kellner has done an adroit job at organizing and presenting the numerous medieval Jewish sources that dealt with this subject, from Maimonides to the Mabit. His work will most probably serve as a standard textbook on the subject of dogma in Jewish thought for years to come.

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Seeondly, your curriculum proposal, though I am certain it was motivated by sincere religious ideals, effectively threatens to reduce my involvement with the fascinating aspects of our halachic tradition. To me this alone would be a tragic loss.

My rage is further compounded because your gender role and curriculum choice places me into a neat box called "women" and this box does not include space for the non practical, ideological parts of me. It seems you are also prepared to deny me the opportunity to learn halakha independently. You threaten to make women more dependent on men, a proposal which can only be detrimental to both sexes.

Kellner's work will most probably serve as a textbook on the subject of drama.

Nechama Leibowitz, in her commentary on Genesis wrote that the first female was a paradigm for all females. Eve was woman, and woman is also Eve. Women are complex creatures (just like men) who can think and nurture. Mr. Brander, next time you seriously consider an ideal model for Jewish education and socialization you may want to take women's complexity into your picture. In the meantime, I feel your suggestions about religious coeducation and gender orientation diminish the *tzelem elokim* of both men and women and may not necessarily better guide Jewish men and women towards greater holiness and *shleimut*.

HAMEVASER

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