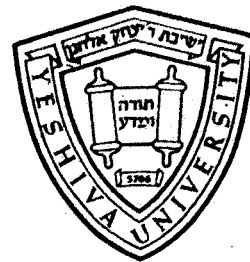


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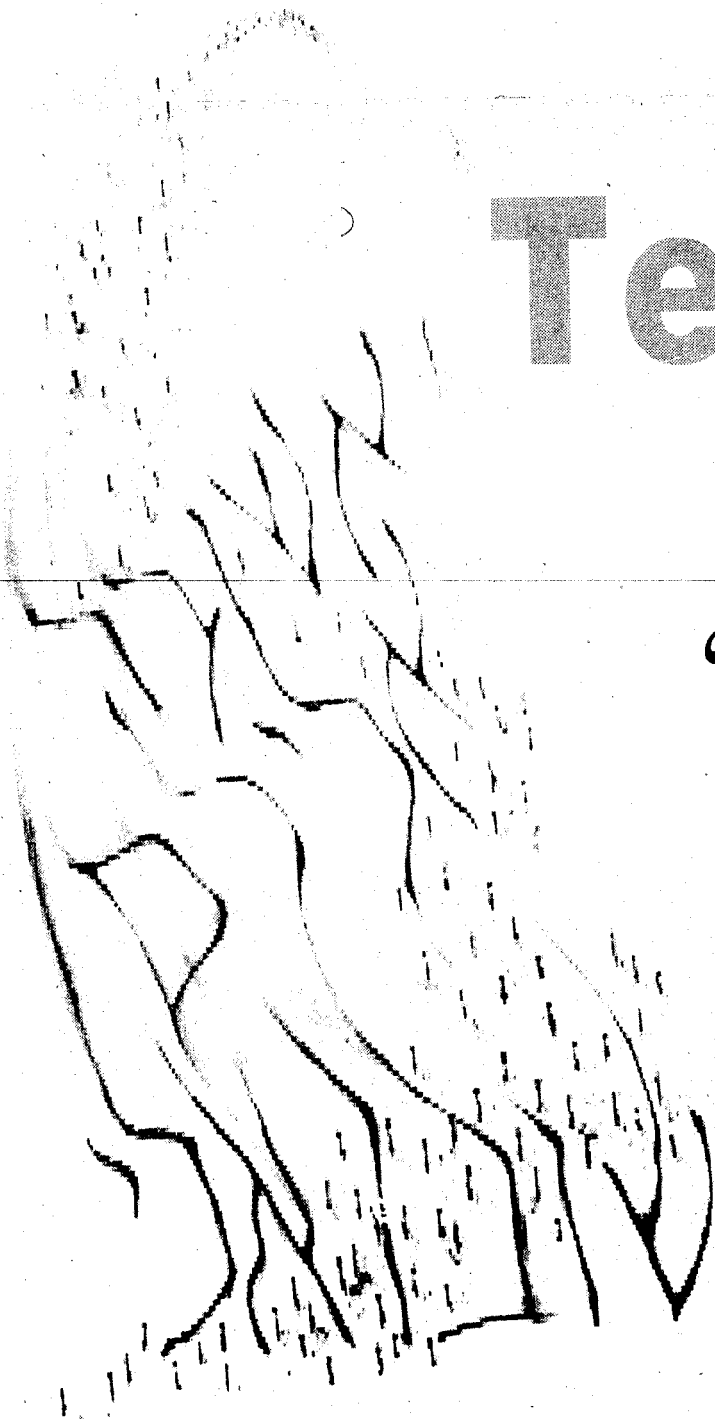
Teshuva

“You return

to me;

I will return

to you.”



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Letter to the Editor

The Jewish yearly cycle is comprised of several different themes. During this time of the year, we focus on *cheshbon hanefesh*, introspection, both on an individual and communal level. While we are part of *Klal Yisrael* as a whole, we must also examine our role in our immediate *tzibbur*, Yeshiva University.

Last year there were many controversies on campus. Women's tefila groups, Megilah readings, *Daat Torah*, and pluralism were hot topics of conversation not just in class or shiur, but in the libraries, *batei medrash*, and cafeterias. It was good to see complex issues becoming central topics of discussion, as it shows a thinking and actively maturing community. The debate was often intense and emotionally charged. As much of the conversation centered around feminism, at Stern College in particular students felt and reacted strongly. We and many other Yeshiva University women felt hurt and frus-

trated that our voices went seemingly unheard, our *kavanot* misjudged, and our desire to be more active in our *kiyum hamitzvot* denigrated.

However, unfortunately the discussion sometimes left the realm of healthy debate over *hashkafa*, where the notion of "*elu va'elu divrei elokhim chayim*" is honored. In its place, we began to hear personal attacks against *gedolei Torah*. Instead of speaking about *Roshei Yeshiva* with the respect due to *talmidei chachamim*, students dismissed *Rabbanim* in a glib and flippant manner. Sometimes the discussion became both vituperative and hostile. The Rambam (*Hilchot Talmud Torah* 6:11) says, "It is a great sin to disgrace Torah sages or to hate them. Jerusalem wasn't destroyed until (its inhabitants) disgraced its sages, as implied by 'and they would mock the messengers of God, despise his words and scoff at His prophets' (Chronicles 2 36:16) i.e. —

they would scorn those who taught His words... Whoever disgraces the sages has no portion in the world to come and is included in the category 'these who scorn the world of God' (Numbers 15:31)." It is sad to see how we who devote a large portion of our day to the learning of Torah can so easily forget the central principle of "*morah rabach kemorah shemayim*."

While we still believe that healthy disagreement over *hashkafa* is an important vehicle for voicing our thoughts, the way we engage in such discussion is critical. Dissatisfaction can be expressed in a respectful manner. We hope that the coming year will bring with it increased sensitivity and respect for the religious strivings of students, but more importantly, a greater emphasis and dedication to treating our *Rabbanim* with the proper respect.

Ketiva v'chatima tova,

Shoni Mirvis, Tzippy Russ SCW '98

Editorial

A New Beginning

Yossi Ziffer

Contrast these two familiar scenes. On one side, New Year's Eve in Times Square, a chaotic hybrid of screaming, drinking, and reveling. On the other side, a *shul* on Rosh Hashana, packed with families, defined by the electric atmosphere of awe, joy, and *kavana*. Both settings celebrate moments of transition, but the participants in each represent opposing attitudes towards the year that was, and the year that is to be.

Let's put this distinction in different terms. The secular notion of the new year might be symbolized by a line of hurdles, each one symbolizing a year. The athlete aims to clear each barrier cleanly and as effortlessly as possible, because he or she knows

full well that more hurdles await. Once passed, however, a given hurdle will never be revisited. So too in Times Square, hordes count down the seconds until they can close the book on the year just completed, washing their hands from the challenges it presented. The year ahead stretches before them with seemingly unbounded promise. Although we can admire the optimism that arrives punctually every January 1, rest assured that come next December, the same people will bid farewell to this new year with a collective sigh of relief, happy in the knowledge that they have cleared another hurdle on their track.

The Jewish approach lends itself

to a related but different image. Imagine a marathon runner in training, traveling the same long route time after time. He or she certainly feels accomplished at the end of the run, but not for merely completing the course. Hopefully, the runner has learned about both the route and the art of running, noticing nuances that will enable him to grow stronger and run better. The training never ends, and the athlete cannot lapse into complacency. Within a few days, he will be running again, always pursuing improvement. Similarly, our celebration of the new year cannot disregard the year just completed, for only through the experiences of that year can we

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No Immunity

Rachel D. Leiser

One of the tenets of modern religious Zionist thought is that God was directly and immediately involved in the historical process that led to the creation of the State of Israel. Although the Jewish people are still in exile, we rejoice in the fact that we are once again in possession of the land that is intrinsically holy, land that enables us to draw ever closer to God. If, however, we truly believe that God is somehow more intimately involved with Israel, we are compelled to look for His presence in both the wonderful and the tragic.

Recently, violence seems to have inundated Israel, reverberating throughout the country. Riots, stabbings, and bombs have begun to seem routine, if not predictable. With the

recent bombing of Ben Yehuda Street, many of us were unsure as to how to react: we felt saturated with grief and disbelief, overwhelmed with a haunting sense of repetition. People were unwilling to read yet another article about Jewish lives lost, watch more television broadcasts from a Jerusalem in mourning. There was an intense desire to inure and insulate ourselves from events that are beyond our control.

Yet, as religious Jews, particularly as religious Zionists, we are obligated to remain emotionally engaged. Perhaps instead of examining Oslo, Arafat, or Netanyahu, the time has come for us to examine ourselves. Maimonides states in *Hilchot Teshuvah* (7:5) that "only through re-

pentance will Israel be redeemed." If in fact we do repent, then "the Holy One blessed be He, has... promised us in the Torah that if we observe its behests joyously and cheerfully, and continuously meditate on its wisdom, He will remove from us the obstacles that hinder us in its observance such as...war, famine, and other calamities" (9:1). It seems clear that personal actions have ramifications extending far beyond the individual's immediate surroundings.

Many theologians assert that one's experience with evil can be a catalyst for further religious growth. When one comes into contact, even distantly, with evil in the form of untimely death and needless suffering,

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A New Beginning,

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hope to improve in the year to come. Further, although we run the same route every time, it should never appear quite the same. The major landmarks remain constant — markers of both happiness and sadness — but each new trip reveals more. We must make certain that we take notice of the new within the seemingly old.

The best paradigm of the Jewish year and its cyclical nature is our annual journey through the Torah. We read the same Torah every year, start to finish, yet even our greatest scholars and teachers never exhaust the wisdom contained in those holy words. Be it a new angle or a different approach... our *Torat Chaim* is simultaneously ancient and new, symbolizing the Jewish year and its inherent resistance to rote.

When we begin reading the Torah every year, we encounter the story of Adam, Eve, and the Garden of Eden. According to Jewish tradition, not only did the Garden's trees produce sweet tasting fruits, but the very bark of those trees was originally intended to taste just as delicious.

However, because the land "sinned," this did not occur. Consequently, it's left to us to recapture that original lofty status, and Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook *zt'l* translates this mission into relevant terms. Fruits are naturally sweet, and hence people automatically focus on them. They are the end result, the climax, and their sweetness is apparent to all. The bark, on the other hand, seems to offer us little. Rav Kook explains that we must learn to appreciate the importance of the bark, the means necessary to reach the desired end. Not only are those means necessary, but they are inherently valuable; they are sweet. Instead of making the common mistake of resenting them, we should maximize their potential, appreciating their importance. This world-view validates the Jewish approach to the year, while rejecting the secular view. Other groups may remain end-oriented, only focusing on the finish line. We, however, attach equal importance to the race itself, the route that we decide to take, for even if two paths eventually reach the

same destination, how they get there makes a tremendous difference.

These messages ring with particularly strong resonance for those of us in school. Whether we are just beginning, or entering the last leg of the trek, we have a choice at the outset of every school year. We can remain end-oriented, focusing only on the diploma that hopefully awaits us. If this is our attitude, then the interim means are a nuisance, for they separate us from our goal. But if we accept Rav Kook's approach, and place premium value on the path that leads to that destination, then the school year and our experiences here take on a radically different image, transforming from burdensome tasks into cherished opportunities. Worry not, we'll all get to the same finish line. The only question is how we do so. We at *Hamevaser* hope that our paper contributes toward making this year a meaningful one. Through *Hamevaser*, as well as the other student projects on both the downtown and uptown campuses, let's make the year sweet. ❖

No Immunity

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it is difficult to draw religious strength from the event. Often, anger towards God is the only emotion vividly felt. Yet, it is precisely at that moment when we are most angry with God that we are most aware of His immanent presence. It is this awareness that acts as a spiritual catalyst; by wrestling with God one may end up embracing Him.

One of the missions of a religious person is to attain knowledge of God.

Life is an unceasing quest to gain a more penetrating gaze and further insight into the nature of the Divine; ultimately ending with passage into the *Olam haEmet*. The more immanent God is, the more intimately we may know Him. During profound suffering, man often feels the weight of the Divine presence as a heavy and seemingly unbearable burden. Although this may lead to existential paranoia, it often provides a means

of furthering our religious belief. We defiantly assert our love of God and His world, refusing to be repelled by tragedy or sorrow. ❖

Hamevaser
wishes everyone a

ketiva u'chatima tova.

Human Dignity and Self Respect in Jewish Law

Joshua Abraham

As human beings, we are very much aware of ourselves. We know our preferences, recognize our inclinations, and sense the mix of history and temperament that makes each of us unique. Intuitively, we understand that we possess a degree of self-worth. The Torah tells us, "So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created him, man and female He created them" (*Bereishit* 1:27). As a result of this Godliness, we expect that the value of human dignity will be reflected in our legislation. In the purely political realm, we demand nothing less than the complete protection of our civil rights, personal autonomy, and freedom of expression.

But beyond liberty and independence, each of us expects to be treated with courtesy and basic decency — if not with honor and reverence — on an individual and inter-personal level. We are the centerpiece of God's creation, endowed with God-like characteristics; and because we are divine creatures, our feelings and emotions are inherently important. The thought of public humiliation and its ensuing shame makes us shudder. The Talmud (*Bava Metziyah* 58b) even goes so far as to equate one who publicly embarrasses a friend with a murderer. We refuse to allow ourselves to be slighted or berated. Human dignity contributes a critical and indispensable element towards our very self-identity. The *halacha* (Jewish law) also holds human dignity in high regard. Thus, when the two seem to come into conflict, the *halacha* readily

responds.

In the Talmud, *Berachot* 19b, the sages permit the violation of *mitzvot d'rabanan* — rabbinically initiated ordinances — if adhering to them would cause great embarrassment and shame. "Great is *kavod habriyot* (literally, "respect for God's creations") for it supersedes negative commandments of the Torah." The Talmud interprets "negative commandment of the Torah" to mean laws that are of Rabbinical origin, which themselves derive authority from Divine sanction. Therefore, if one is wearing a garment that contains a form of *kilayim* (mix of wool and linen) prohibited by the Sages, one need not remove it and expose his nakedness. (For additional examples see Rashi *Berachot* 19b.)

However, we limit the extent of this leniency. If *kavod habriyot* comes into conflict with a biblical commandment — *mitzvah d'orieta* — adherence to the *mitzvah d'orieta* takes precedence. Hence, the Talmud informs us that if a man is wearing a form of biblically prohibited *kilayim*, he must immediately remove the forbidden garment, even if doing so will cause him embarrassment. Yet even with regard to *mitzvot d'orieta*, the *halacha* allows some latitude. In *Berachot* 20a, the Talmud explains that when in conflict with *kavod habriyot*, a biblical commandment may be disregarded by means of *shev v'al taaseh*. That is, if one is obligated to fulfill a certain biblical commandment, but doing so would cause him egregious embarrassment, he is permitted to

passively refrain from performing the commandment. For example, if performing the obligatory Passover sacrifice would somehow be a source of humiliation, one is permitted to refrain from offering the sacrifice and thus allow the sacrifice's appointed time to pass. However, one may not actively violate a *mitzvah d'orieta*, even to avoid or respond to potential shame or abasement. Therefore, as cited above, if one realizes that he is wearing *kilayim d'orieta*, he is obligated to remove the garment regardless of the circumstances, for by continuing to wear the forbidden garment, he is actively violating the explicit biblical prohibition.

Still, there is a view in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Kilayim* 9:1, that slightly amends the above ruling. The Talmud there states:

One who was walking in the market and found himself wearing [a garment of] mingled stuff — two *amora'im* [discussed this matter.] One said, "It is permitted [and one may continue to wear the garment until returning home.] "The authority who said, "it is prohibited," [maintains that one must immediately remove the garment because the prohibition is a matter of] scriptural law. The authority who said, "It is permitted," accords with that which R. Zeira said, "Great is [the concern for] the honor of the public, for it sets

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“Being created in the image of God carries

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aside [the observance of] a negative commandment for a short time. (from Jacob Neusner’s translation of the Jerusalem Talmud.)

This ruling, as recorded in *Beit Yoseph* (*Yorah Deah* 303) and other later sources, replaces the words “honor of the public” (“*kavod hatzibur*”) with *kavod habriyot*. Either *Beit Yoseph* had another version of the above quoted passage, or he simply understood “honor of the public” as synonymous with *kavod habriyot*. If so, this version of the Jerusalem Talmud would indicate that some Talmudic authorities did in fact hold that even a negative commandment may be actively transgressed — albeit for a short time — when it conflicts with *kavod habriyot*. Although this opinion is not accepted as normative practice, its possibility accentuates the concern that the *halacha* has for personal dignity.

But, to truly understand *kavod habriyot*, we must use its origin in *halacha* as our point of departure. Rashi, in *Berachot* 20a, believes that concern for *kavod habriyot* is *d’rabanan*. He explains that just as the Sages sometimes postpone or even prohibit the fulfillment of biblical ordinances in order to ultimately preserve them, they also will uproot biblical commandments for the sake of *kavod habriyot*. Rashi’s view can be understood in two ways. First, perhaps our concern for *kavod habriyot* is pragmatic. Ideally, human dignity

should not be a factor in deciding whether or not to fulfill the will of God. After all, who is man — fashioned from dust — to put his dignity before the Holy One, Blessed be He, creator and sustainer of the world? If fulfilling a commandment causes embarrassment, let man suffer the shame! But alas, man is psychologically frail and deficient, prioritizing his own honor above the fulfillment of God’s will. Therefore, the Sages allowed certain concessions for the sake of *kavod habriyot* in order to make God’s commandments bearable for “lowly” man, thus hopefully facilitating man’s adherence to the Torah.

There is, however, another way we can understand the Rabbinic deference towards *kavod habriyot*. The Sages were not compensating for man’s vanity, but rather recognized man’s lofty and majestic nature, and molded the legal system in a way that reflects that understanding. As it is written in *Chapters of the Fathers* 3:18, “Cherished is Man for he was created in the image [of God].” Because man was formed to resemble his creator, he is the most loved and valued of God’s creations. Man mirrors the Master of the World, endowed with a divine spirit, and therefore deserves to be approached with a certain degree of reverence. Thus, the *halacha* treats man with sensitivity and compassion.

Now accepting *kavod habriyot* as an *a priori* concern of *halacha*, we can understand numerous positions in the Talmud that extend beyond merely preventing or limiting personal em-

barrassment. In fact, in many instances, *kavod habriyot* is accorded to man even when he is not consciously aware of it. In *Bava Kama* 79b, R. Yochanan Ben Zakai begins his ruling by lauding the institution of *kavod habriyot*. He then states that if a man steals a bull by walking the animal away from its owner’s property, and then proceeds to slaughter and sell it, he is obligated to repay five times the value of the stolen animal. However, if he carries the animal — instead of leading it — from the owner’s property, the fine is only four times the original value of the animal. Interestingly, *kavod habriyot* is given as the rationale behind this differentiation. Namely, because the criminal degraded himself by carrying the stolen bull, we mitigate his punishment. Although his act was criminal and his degradation self-imposed, R. Yochanan Ben Zakai nevertheless maintained that the criminal’s *kavod habriyot* was tarnished, and that embarrassment serves as part of the criminal’s payment.

Another instance in which we apply *kavod habriyot* is the commandment of *meit mitzvah* (see Rashi *Berachot* 20a). A *meit mitzvah* is a dead body found in a field, left with no one to care for it. The *halacha* rules that if anyone encounters a *meit mitzvah*, he must tend to the burial of the body. Even the High Priest himself must do so, although he is normally prohibited from coming into contact with dead bodies, including those of his closest relatives. Because the body was created in the

with it both privilege and responsibility.”

image of God and once contained a soul that served God, the lifeless body must be treated with great respect and receive a proper burial. *Kavod habriyot*, then, is not limited to the conscious or to those who are aware of themselves and sensitive to their own abasement. Rather, it is an objective idea that has been incorporated into the very fabric of Jewish law and conduct, regardless of one's sensitivity to one's stature and personal dignity.

So far, we have seen cases of *kavod habriyot* that dictate man's behavior in relation to others, or at least in light of the perception of others. However, *halacha* extends *kavod habriyot* farther, as an objective norm and criterion of conduct even on a personal and private level. That is, man is even obligated to demonstrate *kavod habriyot* towards himself.

Being created in the image of God carries with it both privilege and responsibility. One must have reverence for his own life and his own body because, essentially, it is not his own. The body is the vessel in which the spirit of God inheres, and man lives his life bearing God's message to the world. Thus, we assert every day in our morning prayers, "Blessed be our Lord who has created us for His glory." We are the executors of a Divine mission, and just as one must honor the king, one must also honor his messengers.

Kavod Habriyot as expressed towards oneself is found in many forms along the vast spectrum of *halacha*. An extreme manifestation of self-di-

rected *kavod habriyot* is the prohibition against suicide. The Talmud in *Bava Kama* 91b derives the prohibition against suicide from Genesis 9:5. Within its context, this verse relates the general prohibition against murder to the idea that man was created in the image of God.

However, your blood which belongs to your souls I will demand of every beast will I demand it; but of man, of every man for that of his brother I will demand the soul of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall he blood be shed; for in the image of God, he made man. (*Artscroll* translation)

Because man is created in the image of God, his life is sanctified and serves a lofty purpose. Therefore, man must respect his life and is prohibited from ending it prematurely.

Similarly, man is prohibited from injuring himself. The *Mishna* in *Bava Kama* 90b states, "Whoever injures himself, *although it is not permitted*, he is exempt from paying the fine." Despite the lack of monetary punishment, inflicting wounds on oneself is forbidden. This prohibition is derived in *Bava Kama* 91b from Numbers 6:11. That biblical verse describes a sacrifice that a *Nazir* must bring for coming into contact with a dead body. The Talmud, however, expands the scope of the transgression, eventually concluding that because the

Nazir deprived himself of wine, he is obligated to bring a sacrifice of atonement. From this precedent the Talmud declares that man is not allowed to injure himself, "for if a *Nazir* transgresses when he deprives himself of wine, how much more so does one transgress if one willfully deprives oneself of anything." Additionally, although one who injures himself is exempt from punishment, the Talmud in *Bava Kama* 93a rules that he may not exempt others from payment if he asks them to injure his body or to physically abuse him. Thus, one must have unconditional respect for one's body. Man is sanctified by God and may not profane himself through self-inflicted bodily harm and willful mistreatment.

As a logical extension of the above law, man is also prohibited from placing himself in a dangerous situation. Rambam in *Hilchot Rotzeach uShmirat HaNefesh* 11:5 writes:

There are many things that the Sages prohibited because they are potentially hazardous. And whoever transgresses these enactments and declares "I am hereby endangering myself and it is nobody's concern" or "I am not concerned with my own safety" is to receive lashes.

Rambam then continues by listing the various Rabbinical decrees designed to ensure personal safety. For example, it is prohibited to drink water that was left uncovered for a

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Repentance Man: Idealizing Our *Teshuva*

Ben Beres

There are two primary views in Jewish thought as to how a man, having done *teshuva* (repentance), should relate to a sin he committed in his past. The first view is shared by both Moses Hayim Luzzatto and Moses Maimonides. Luzzatto, in the chapter of *Mesilat Yesharim* concerning "Watchfulness", declares that when a man does *teshuva* "the wrong act departs from existence and is uprooted." Similarly, Maimonides states in *Hilchot Teshuva* (2:4) that to fully repent, a man must change his name, as if to say "I am another." An obliteration of the memory of the sin must take place. Man must not let evil remain as part of his consciousness for, by definition, it makes him fall further from God.

Luzzatto calls upon man to avoid any contact with evil and dispose of any attachment to sin. Assuming that the purpose of life is for man to choose good over evil, then the only purpose of evil is to contrast the good. To Luzzatto and Maimonides, man's avoidance of evil is an heroic act.

In contradistinction to the first view, the second major trend in Jewish theology believes that evil itself may be used to attain spiritual heights. Specifically, a past sin need not necessarily be erased from existence, as it may yet serve some purpose. HaRav Joseph Dov Soloveitchik suggests in *Al HaTeshuva* that evil may be used as a catapult to achieve greater spiritual heights. HaRav Abraham Isaac haCohen Kook has a similar thought in *Orot HaTeshuva*. He states that only through reflection on past faults will we maintain the necessary contrast

needed to see the spirituality of the post-repentant state.

Though the above outlooks seem diametrically opposed, those same differences may ultimately compliment each other. One possible resolution is that they are addressing two different audiences. The first view is talking to a regular Jew. Man is by his very nature a slave to his evil inclination. If even the mere memory of a sin exists, it might grow into an actual relapse. For this type of person the temptation of sin is so overwhelming that even if it exists only in the mind, the evil inclination will allow the sin to actualize. Furthermore, the mere thought of sin taints a man's spirituality and watchfulness, and caution must be exercised to wipe out any hint of sin. Therefore, a sin committed in the past is best left forgotten.

While the first approach deals with the issue on a practical level, the second approach deals with the issue on a more abstract, philosophical level. Ideally, a truly righteous person can use the memory of past evils to help himself draw closer to God. Thus, the opinion of Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Kook applies for that advanced person. With this distinction in mind, we need not insist that Maimonides and Luzzatto suggest their approaches for a perfectly righteous man, nor that R. Soloveitchik or R. Kook would insist on the leniency of their approaches for the general population.

Similar to the above resolution, it may be said that these two main approaches describe one man — Repentance Man — and his progression to-

wards a perfect repentance. The first step, corresponding to the first view of R. Luzzatto, would be for Repentance Man to ensure that sin is no longer a threat. He must confess and swear never to repeat it. As long as he is still at risk of a relapse, the sin must be forgotten. This may be the final stage for most men, but not for Repentance Man. After the first level has been achieved, the specifics of the sin have been forgotten. Repentance Man must now deal with his distance from God which resulted from his sins. As Repentance Man inches his way closer to God, his point of view with respect to his past begins to change and evolve.

The first change is the one described by R. Soloveitchik in *Al HaTeshuvah*. R. Soloveitchik explains that "it is the memory of sin that releases the power within the inner depths of the soul of the penitent to do greater things than ever before. The energy of sin can be used to bring one to new heights." The memory of sin enhances a man's inner longing for holiness. Mere confession and abstinence from sin can only return man to his state prior to committing the sin; after repentance, he is neither better nor worse than he was before the sin. The next level is when man converts his past evils into productive energy. This energy, born out of a distance from God, catapults Repentance Man closer to God than he was before.

R. Soloveitchik uses an analogy to describe this phenomenon. After a relative dies, one grieves. However, this grief can not compare with the grief felt later. Only with time does

man fully realize how much the relative meant to him. The true nature of the loss only becomes apparent as time progresses. The relative had filled a void which will now remain empty forever. One wishes for one more encounter with the deceased to communicate one's intense love for him.

So too, when man sins he inserts a barrier between himself and God. Just as man does not realize the severity of the sudden loss of his relative, so too a man while sinning does not think about the distance being created between him and God. However, as soon as the initial excitement dies down, the sinner experiences isolation and alienation. Repentance Man longs to feel his lost intimacy with God. While man cannot bring back loved ones, he can return to God. On this level, sin is a driving force pushing Repentance Man closer to God.

R. Soloveitchik also states another reason why a sin committed should not be forgotten. There are two forces which drive man, the constructive force and the destructive one. These are evident in the conflicting emotions of love and hate. By nature, the destructive force of hate and anger is fiercer than the constructive one of love. A naturally loving and kind man will often be a man without spirit or intense determination, a static and passive individual. A man who discovers within himself the zealous urges of the hitherto destructive force can tap that hidden reservoir of energy for a loftier purpose.

Repentance Man uses the fierce destructive forces within him and channels that energy to propel him towards God. The first level of repentance, according to Maimonides, calls upon man to become a different person. In contrast, the next level, that of R.

Soloveitchik, distinguishes between man starting anew and continuing onward by "sanctifying evil and raising it to new heights."

R. Kook in *Orot HaTeshuvah* describes the next level. Once a man escapes from "sinful enslavement" he can feel the glow of God reaching out to him. Yet his sin remains with him, keeping "his spirit bowed and melancholy. Indeed, this lowly feeling itself, which suits him in his condition, adds

"The next level is when man converts his past evils into productive energy. This energy... catapults Repentance Man closer to God than he was before."

to his spiritual satisfaction and his sense of true peace." His relief is felt in coming closer to the source of life, in contrast to his previous inner anguish. R. Kook draws upon the passage in Psalms which describes the soul's escape from the pit of sin; "its dark, vulgar and frightfully oppressive weight lay upon her...and how blissful she is now in the inner feeling that her inner burden has been made lighter, that she has already paid her debt and is no longer oppressed by inner confusion and distress."

Repentance Man looks back on his sin with sweet sorrow. He appreciates his salvation by contrasting it to a time when he was far from God. While the first level insists that we forget our past sins, and the second that we use past sins to attain greater heights, the third says that sins must be maintained to appreciate salvation.

The next level, proposed by R. Kook, suggests that as man comes closer to God, his sins no longer remain sins. In Judaism the concept that willful deeds turn into merits is the highest expression of repentance. The

idea begins with the premise that man's actions are intertwined with his will. A change in a man's disposition can actually change the essence of an act; "the will can impose a special configuration of past actions." An evil deed can be thought of as a function of a man's disposition, independent of time. "The evil deed causes ugliness, deterioration and destruction, as long as the will did not put a new complication on it. Once the will has put on it a configuration of the good, it itself becomes a stimulant for good and delight, the joy of God and His light." Repentance is a holy act and every holy act "sends waves reverberating backward and enlarges the activities

of the zone of the holy." This concept only makes sense in the "highest dimension of the Spiritual." It is here that there is no deficiency or darkness whatsoever. Once man has reached this level, he realizes that there is no true evil.

The differing opinions of R. Luzzatto and Maimonides versus R. Soloveitchik and R. Kook may be thought of as different levels travelled by Repentance Man as he returns to God. The first level ensures that the sin is erased, thereby returning the sinner back to his status quo. The second level utilizes the experience of a past sin to come even closer to God. The third level maintains that the memory of a sin should remain, so the sinner can appreciate the salvation of God. By understanding the despair of man separated from God, the holiness of the union between them becomes more possible. Finally, R. Kook describes the highest level: "there flows only good, without impediment; evil and ugliness never had any place here... there is only the light of God and His goodness."

Toenet Beit Din: Resting Our Case

Nava Bak, Yedida Goldman, and Shira Hecht

Sometimes, certain types of advancement in women's Torah scholarship meet with opposition from part of the Orthodox community. The institution of *Toanot Beit Din*, female Rabbinic Court Advocates, stands out as a notable exception. While preparing to become *Toanot*, women spend much time immersed in intense study of some of the most complicated sections of the Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch* (Code of Laws). Yet, beyond receiving official authorization from the Sephardic and Ashkenazic Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the *Toanot* feel that they have been accepted by the Rabbinic community at large. One of the first *Toanot*, Rachel Levmore, notes that "all the Rabbis, as well as the Charedi men and women with whom I have come into contact, view me with respect and trust...and I have not felt any suspicion or resentment." A close look at the goals of the program and the need it aims to fulfill will shed light on its unusual universal acceptance.

To fully understand the role of a *Toenet*, we must first understand the unique construct of Israel's legal system. It is a dual system comprised of both Civil and Rabbinic courts, with both courts exercising parallel jurisdiction in some areas of the law while maintaining sole jurisdiction over others. Specifically, the areas of divorce and marriage are solely determined by the Rabbinic courts. Therefore, all women in Israel, regardless of their religious background, must go to *Beit Din* (Religious Court) to obtain a divorce. Other areas of litigation, such as fi-

nancial matters and community disputes, may be brought to *Beit Din* upon the agreement of all parties involved. Unlike the *Batei Din* in the United States, the *Batei Din* in Israel have the same powers as civil courts in all fields under their jurisdiction.

A Rabbinic Court Advocate, or RCA, plays a role in *Beit Din* similar to that of a lawyer in civil court. While civil lawyers may represent clients in *Beit Din*, they are at a disadvantage if they are not proficient in the relevant areas of Jewish law. It is an extensive knowledge of Torah, not necessarily of civil law, that enables one to argue the intricacies of *Halacha* upon which *Beit Din* formulates its decisions. Therefore, an RCA with an in-depth knowledge of Torah, as well as basic legal training, is best suited to argue a case before *Beit Din*.

Originally, the position of RCA was held only by men, due to the intense study involved in learning all the relevant *halachot*. However, seven years ago Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, dean of Ohr Torah Institutions, approached the Chief Rabbinate with the following thesis: ninety-percent of all cases that appear before *Beit Din* are divorce cases; obviously, fifty-percent of the litigants in these cases are women. In ruling on divorce, all the facts must come to light. These facts are often painful, embarrassing, and deal with intimate issues. Since a woman would understandably feel self-conscious about sharing such details with a male RCA, many pertinent facts may fail to reach the court. Without

knowing such crucial information, a *Beit Din* cannot reach a "*din tzedek*" (righteous decision).

In the past, although a woman could be represented by a female civil lawyer, certain problems arose. Aside from the scant knowledge of *halacha* that accompanies a civil legal degree, non-observant female lawyers would often appear before *Beit Din* in dress and manner unbecoming to a religious court. Rabbi Riskin proposed that women acting as RCAs, or *Toanot*, would bring greater dignity and justice to these cases. After much effort to gain recognition, the proposal was accepted by both the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Chief Rabbis, the Knesset, and the Supreme Court. The Israeli Law was then amended to include the possibility of female RCA's.

In October 1990, under the auspices of Ohr Torah Institutions, a program of study was established to formally train and certify women for the position of RCA. Taking into account the required examinations administered by the Chief Rabbinate and the Religious Affairs Ministry to all prospective RCAs, the program places primary emphasis on the study of *halacha*. The women concentrate on learning the *halachot* of *Choshen Mishpat* (testimonial law and civil damages), *Even Haezer* (laws of personal status), and women's rights. Participants in the program also receive training in civil law, social work, psychology, and rhetoric. Under the supervision of legal experts and rabbinic scholars, these women learn the religious court system's procedures, and how to benefit their clients'

rights within that framework. One of Ohr Torah's directors defines the program's aim as to "strengthen women's Torah education and at the same time have them take an increased part in community responsibility."

Only women with a broad secular education and at least four years of yeshiva background are accepted into the program. Prospective students are required to be married and religious. Additionally,

they must have a B.A. from a recognized university or an equivalent degree from a religious seminary. Nurit Fried, director of the program, sees the university background of most of the *Toanot* as enhancing the reputation of the Rabbinic courts in secular Israeli society. Because they have a broader involvement with Israeli society than a typical male RCA, Fried feels that the *Toanot* "have a greater rapport with the general public."

Teyna Akerman, the first graduate of the program, was exposed to the workings of *Beit Din* while pursuing a personal real-estate matter. Her fascination with the legal proceeding of *Beit Din* prompted her to apply to this new and innovative program. A graduate of Michlalah Jerusalem College, she met the requirements and was accepted into the program. Upon completion of the necessary training Akerman was approved and certified by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi at the time, R. Eliahu Bakshi-Daron. However, shortly after Akerman's certifi-

cation, the program faced a challenge, when the Chief Rabbinate became hesitant to certify more women as *Toanot*. Its primary concern was that women applying for certification were motivated more by their own feminist interests, rather than by a desire for justice. When the issue was brought to the Supreme Court, Akerman stressed that the sole objective of the *Toanot* was to work within the guidelines of

as RCAs. Akerman feels that the *Toanot* have encountered nothing, but help and support from *rabbanim* and *dayanim*.

Often, after a case is decided by *Bet Din*, matters like child custody remain unsolved. These issues fall to the civil court system. This has frustrated many *Toanot*, because they are unable to represent their clients in both courts. Because of this, Akerman recently began pursuing a legal degree at Hebrew University

Law School. Additionally, Akerman has expressed optimism towards Ohr Torah's proposal to establish a joint program with Bar Ilan Law School. Perhaps the best gauge of the intensity of the *Toanot* program is Akerman's statement that, "the most difficult law school doesn't even compare to the *Toanot* program."

Last year, as part of the Y.U. Joint Israel Program, a group of students was addressed by Mrs. Rachel Levmore about her experiences as a *Toanot*. Levmore, who graduated YUHSGB, attended Michlalah Jerusalem College, and received her bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Brooklyn College, and eventually

settled in Efrat, the home of Ohr Torah Institutions. She became interested in pursuing a career in *limudei kodesh*, and when the *Toanot* program began, Levmore thought that it was a perfect career choice for her. As a certified *Toanot*, Levmore has represented both husbands and wives before the *Beit Din*. Levmore stressed that before proceeding with the di-

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Halacha to benefit their clients, and secure justice in *Beit Din*. Akerman's testimony paved the way for future *Toanot*, for the Supreme Court's ruling resulted in the continuing authorization of *Toanot*. To date, approximately one hundred students have attended the institute, while thirty women have qualified and received their licenses. Presently there are approximately sixteen women working

'The Rav' and 'HaRav':

R. Soloveitchik and R. Kook on Repentance

Aton Holzer

Of all the great Talmudic scholars, Halakhists, thinkers and communal leaders of our century, few succeeded in achieving all of these titles — and excelling in all of them — as did two men. These outstanding personalities earned the appellation of “the Rav” — *the Rabbi par excellence* — from their respective communities, and the fruits of their scholarship and leadership have inspired and will continue to inspire us in centuries to come. We refer, of course, to Rav Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook and Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *zt”l*.

What is perhaps most fascinating about these two giants is the approximate equivalence of their positions in the practical realm despite the utter divergence of their theoretical perspectives. Practically, both Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Kook were ardent Zionists, but their perceptions of Zionism derived from radically different conceptual constructs.¹ Similarly, both sanctioned secular studies and Orthodox participation in both the general Jewish and the non-Jewish communities, but their endorsements came as reactions to two antithetical movements.² Even their tolerant approaches to nontraditional Jews derived from two divergent conceptions of both the nontraditional Jew and tolerance.³ Perhaps these key theoretical differences can be traced to a greater chasm dividing their respective theories regarding one basic theosophic issue: the idea of *Tsimtsum*, the Kabbalistic notion of Divine withdrawal.

The unity of God is a basic tenet

of the Jewish faith; *Abdut HaBorci* is affirmed by numerous biblical passages, the most familiar perhaps being that of the *Shema*, recited by all Jews thrice daily. The extension of this Oneness to include the notion of God’s absolute uniqueness (that is, nothing exists but He, who is infinite) is possibly biblical⁴ and comes to greatest expression in the *Zohar*.⁵ Thus it was the expositors of the *Zohar* who were particularly perturbed by the inevitable paradox: if God is unique, how can humanity, or, for that matter, the entire finite physical universe, exist?

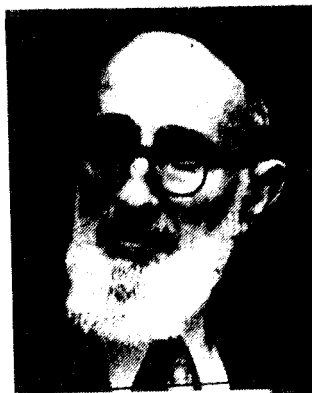
Hence was the concept of *Tsimtsum* formulated; first developed fully in the writings of Rav Moshe Cordovero,⁶ it became a cornerstone of Lurianic Kabbalah.⁷ *Tsimtsum* solves the above problem by postulating that God “withdrew” from a “space,” as it were, within His uniform Self so as to re-inhabit it via the process of creation.

The idea of *Tsimtsum* was further developed in numerous Kabbalistic works, as well as in two of the most important theological works of eighteenth-century Jewry — namely, the *Likkutei Amarim* (henceforth “Tanya”) of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (henceforth “the Ba’al HaTanya”) and the *Nefesh HaHayyim* of Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin. Representing the theological underpinnings of the Hasidic and Mitnagdic movements, respectively, these two works concur with regard to most of their clarifications of *Tsimtsum*; regarding the current state

of things, both recognize two perspectives — namely, ours and God’s; both concur that *MiTsido*, from His perspective, existence is characterized by undifferentiated immanence,⁸ and that even *MiTsidennu*, from our perspective, God remains immanent and omnipresent — albeit differentiated, whether due to “numerous and great *Tsimtsumim* (here constrictions) from level to level”⁹ or “via gradual transition and development.”¹⁰

The critical difference between these two views, and, willy-nilly, the vast rift between Hasidic and Mitnagdic practices, is formed by the *Nefesh HaHayyim*’s articulation of a prohibition to “examine or regard the essence of the matter [of *Tsimtsum*]... [or] to... establish one’s entire order of practice in accordance with this matter (3:8);” that is, despite the fact that God’s relationship to the world is clearly one of immanence — that is, His presence permeates the entire universe, we must behave as if it were one of transcendence, one in which the Divine stands above and removed from the physical and mundane (with several minor exceptions) so as to forestall antinomian thoughts and practices.¹¹ Hasidism had no such inhibitions, and it retained the emphasis on God’s nearness and ubiquitousness; it nonetheless (for the most part) refused to permit pantheistic tendencies to detract from Halakhic practices, thus making Halakhah an exception to an immanentist world view. Hence, it appears that the theosophies of both the *Nefesh HaHayyim* and the *Ba’al HaTanya* sit

“What is perhaps most fascinating about these two giants is the approximate equivalence of their positions in the practical realm despite the utter divergence of their theoretical perspectives.”



between, but do not reach, the pantheistic conception of immanence and the deistic conception of transcendence — for the former begets antinomianism and the latter is heresy — but diverge in that each tends toward the opposite perspective.

If Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik are regarded as the twentieth century's foremost theologians from the Hassidic and Mitnagdic (respectively) traditions, it would be instructive to determine their positions as concerns matters of Tsimtsum and theosophy and their additions to the aforementioned themes.

Rav Kook's position on the matter is relatively easy to discern; as R. Lamm has noted, “it was Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook who gave the Unity Theme its greatest development in modern times.”¹² All of Rav Kook's works, and particularly *Orot HaKodesh*, are replete with the practical applications of monism and God's immanence; as we shall soon see, they also play a key role in his description of repentance as formulated in *Orot HaTeshuvah*.

Some question whether it is fair to search Rav Soloveitchik's works for a position on issues of theosophy, for many view his thought as “a phenomenology of the religious personality rather than... a philosophy or a theology.”¹³ One could suggest that since his acceptance of the notion of Tsimtsum is made clear in his writings,¹⁴ even the very nature of his

thought may be construed as representing his approach to that idea; his pluralistic approach to matters of man's conception of his relationship to God and even the very act of avoiding discussion of strict theology appears to bespeak a *Nefesh HaHayyim*-type approach as far as pondering theosophic issues *MiTzidenu*¹⁵ — practically speaking, it is Halakhah, and not theosophical truths, that must shape the Jew's world view. Even if this evidence is inadmissible, the transcendental nature of human perception of the Divine clearly permeates most of the Rav's writings, epitomized by such statements as “...Halakhic man... strives to bring down His divine presence into the midst of our concrete world.... God... descends to halakhic man.... Transcendence becomes embodied in man's deeds.”¹⁶ This is, of course, thoroughly consistent with the *Nefesh HaHayyim*'s insistence that a pluralistic, transcendentalist approach be adopted regarding most of Jewish thought in general and Halakhah in particular.

To be sure; as was true for the positions of their predecessors, neither Rav Kook's nor Rav Soloveitchik's view is unilateral; even as he proclaims the need “LeHashkif Gam Al HaHol MiTokh Aspaklaria Shel Kodesh,”¹⁷ “to look also upon the profane from the perspective of sanctity,” and thereby recognize the non-existence of the potential for ab-

solute *Hol*, Rav Kook acknowledges the distinctness of *Hol*, the profane, on some level (*Mitzideinu*); similarly, while Rav Soloveitchik notes that God is seen as transcendent in our world (as a result of *Shekhinta be-galuta*¹⁸), he nevertheless proclaims that Halakhah brings the Divine presence into the midst of empirical reality,¹⁹ hence providing a glimpse of the eschatological revelation of Divine immanence.²⁰

Perhaps one might further suggest (as several have) that the philosophies of Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik both affirm the centrality of Tsimtsum in Jewish thought; but whereas in Rav Kook's thought, man's task is one which is entirely post-Tsimtsum — to ensure that any degradation of an item's holiness (i.e., ‘proximity’ to God) is rectified, in Rav Soloveitchik's, man's task is to imitate the act of Tsimtsum by cultivating his own creativity so as to sanctify the profane.

The practical implications of these two approaches, particularly regard-

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ing areas outside the aegis of Halakhic practice, are immense; most of the theoretical discrepancies enumerated at the outset can probably be traced directly to these theosophical differences. One area which is of particular relevance in the month of Elul—that of Teshuvah, or repentance—figures prominently in the thought of both Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik; of the former, it was said to be “the main pivot on which his philosophy turns.”²¹ Repentance is also a prominent theme in Rav Soloveitchik’s writings and lecture; it would thus seem that a comparison of some of their views on the matter of elementary individual repentance might reveal ties to the basic approaches outlined above.

The distinctive monism of Rav Kook is evident from the outset of his work devoted to repentance, *Orot HaTeshuvah*. Intriguingly, both Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik develop emotion and cognition as causes of Teshuvah; in *Orot HaTeshuvah* 1, Teshuvah is portrayed as possibly resulting either from nature (i.e., the pain resulting from man’s sensitivity to sin) or faith (i.e., the knowledge of the promise of forgiveness to the penitent). In chapter 4 of *Al HaTeshuvah*, Pinchas Peli’s transcription of Rav Soloveitchik’s *Kinus Teshuvah* shiurim, the Rav similarly outlines two possible stimuli of Teshuvah—emotional shock and shame, or an intellectual comprehension of the advantages of a life of purity. There remains, however, a distinction between these two dichotomies; while Rav Soloveitchik leaves these two categories as separate pathways to repentance, Rav Kook unifies them in a third category, that of reason, a comprehensive outlook on

life²² which understands the need for removal of the barrier which sin has placed between the sinner and his Source.

Also of note is Rav Soloveitchik’s presentation of Halakhic *Nafkutas* (ramifications) — here, the need for *Kabbalah Al HaBa*, resolve not to transgress in the future, in the formal Teshuvah process; Rav Kook apparently finds no need to formulate most Teshuvah-related concepts in Halakhic categories, due, perhaps, to their exclusion from the principle of Divine immanence. Halakhic distinctions again play a major role in Rav Soloveitchik’s *Kapparah-Taharah* dichotomy (*Al HaTeshuvah* ch. 1, 3; Halakhic Man 2:3), in which atonement is accomplished by the former, while the status of *rasha* is divested by the latter. Perhaps this reflects the *Nefesh HaHayyim*’s insistence upon adopting a Halakhic perspective as regards theosophy.

Rav Soloveitchik’s approach to the individual and the community with regard to *Kapparah* stands in contrast to Rav Kook’s. In the former’s, *Knesset Yisrael* (a corporate entity) achieves *Kapparah* automatically via Yom Kippur, and the individual may benefit from that *Kapparah* only by attaching himself to the community via “belief” in the community, which is expressed through Torah (98). In the latter’s, “*Knesset Yisrael*” needs no *Kapparah*—it represents the striving for absolute justice and all moral virtues; via *Teshuvah*, one reattaches himself to the soul of that community (4:7). The monistic nature of the latter view is most evident when compared with the former; while Rav Soloveitchik perceives *Yahid* and *Tsibbur* as independent entities, Rav Kook sees this dichotomy as an arti-

ficial one which disappears in the ideal state. While Rav Soloveitchik emphasizes this pluralism—which forms the basis for many Halakhic issues—Rav Kook sees no need to create categories—which by definition are artificial—in the world of Jewish thought.

Another distinction comes to expression upon examination of the Rav’s notion of *Taharah*. In *Al HaTeshuvah* 1, the Rav portrays the notion of self-creation as integral to the *Taharah* process; this is perhaps best expressed in *Halakhic Man*: “Man, through repentance, creates himself, his own ‘I’.”²³ *Orot HaTeshuvah*, in contrast, places little emphasis on creativity, individuality and personal initiative; Teshuvah is seen not as an act of self-creation but of re-connection to one’s roots, of reunion with the unity of the universe. Thus does Rav Kook see Teshuvah as “the result of an inner drive that results from a heavenly external force (*Orot HaTeshuvah* 12:8, *Arpelei Tohar* 36);” for him, Teshuvah consists mostly of Divine inspiration and assistance; personal initiative is not the central theme. Much more creativity is necessary to connect to a God who abides in transcendence than to uncover an immanent force latent within every fiber of one’s own being.

The distinction between personal initiative and divine inspiration may help us understand two instances in which Rav Kook and Rav Soloveitchik establish parallel categories in their classifications of components of the Teshuvah process. Rav Kook’s discussion of particularized versus general repentance—i.e., Teshuvah for particular individual sins versus Teshuvah for a sinful lifestyle and personality (ch.

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3) seems to precisely parallel Rav Soloveitchik's development of the repentance varieties of *Kapparah* vs. *Geulah* (243). The prime difference between their respective developments of these categories lies in the means of their achievement. For Rav Kook, the penitent need register only a token struggle or regret before "a kindly light shines upon him" and God completes his healing process. For Rav Soloveitchik, the penitent needs to pray so as to garner God's assistance to aid him in the gargantuan task of transforming his own personality. Here again, one difference lies in the proportions of the roles of God and man.

Another similarity is manifest in their shared dichotomies of sudden versus gradual repentance. For both, the former type is brought on by a "flash of illumination," while the latter involves a long series of struggles; but Rav Kook prefers the former type, since for him, the illumination is external, a Divine flash that 'enters the soul (ch.2).' Rav Soloveitchik considers both varieties equally legitimate, since for him, the illumination is internal, one which "springs forth from the core of the personality (310)," so that both pathways involve the utmost in personal initiative.

Perhaps it is for this reason that while Rav Kook extrapolates from individual to national and world "repentance," (i.e., redemption (4:3, etc.)), in which Divine guidance is key, Rav Soloveitchik extrapolates from national to individual "exile, destruction and the ingathering of the exiles," (i.e., repentance (308)), in which human initiative comes to the fore. Both thinkers see the need for both *Hishtadlut*, human involvement, and *Bitahon*, reliance upon the

Divine; they differ with regard to their respective proportions.

It would appear, then, that the basic approaches of Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Kook to theosophy are expressed in numerous manifestations in their respective developments of the concept of Teshuvah. One could suggest that this is more than a mere coincidence. For both Rav Soloveitchik and Rav Kook, Teshuvah parallels creation of the world, either in the re-creation of the macrocosm from a personal state of *Tohu Va'Vohu* or in the resurgence of the *Shekhinah* into the "void" created by misdeeds, as in Tsimtsum. Chazal further note in numerous places that Teshuvah (like Tsimtsum) is indispensable for the continued existence of the world, and that both creation and Teshuvah are results of Divine *Hesed*; theosophy and Teshuvah are thus integrally bound. May we merit to partake of this *Hesed*, the echo of creation, as we approach the anniversary of creation and conclude this season of Teshuvah.

Notes

1. See Moshe Sokol, "*Ger Ve-Toshav Anokhi?*: Modernity and Traditionalism in the Life and Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik," *Tradition*, 29:1, 36.

2. Contrast, e.g., the condemnation of parochialism in Rav Kook's *Derishbat Hashem* in *Tkvei HaTson* 126-129 with the critique of the Westernized Jew and his 'single-confrontation' philosophy in part two of Rav Soloveitchik's *Confrontation* (*Tradition* 6:2).

3. See Tzvi Yaron, "On Tolerance," in Ezra Gellman, ed., *Essays on the Thought and Philosophy of Rabbi Kook* (New York: Herzl Press, 1986), 229-246 (especially p. 235); compare this exposition of Rav Kook's concrete Halakhic approach in *Al Bamoteinu Hallalim* (cited in Yaron) with Rav Soloveitchik's more abstract dual-cov-

enantal approach as set forth in *Kol Dodi Dofek* (*Be-Sod HaYahid V'HaYahad* 368-400) and its practical expression as developed by Rabbi Walter S. Wurzburger in "Rav Joseph Soloveitchik as Posek of Post-Modern Orthodoxy," *Tradition*, 29:1, 13-14 and Dr. Bernard Rosensweig in "The Rav as Communal Leader," *Tradition*, 30:4, 213-214.

4. The clearest source for this concept would be Devarim 4:39, assuming we accept the interpretations of the Tanya (*Sha'ar HaYibud V'HaEmunah* Chap. 1, 76b) and the Nefesh HaHayyim (3:3) as Peshat.

5. 3:225a and *Zohar Hadash* Yitro 35c.

6. See Brakha Sack, "R. Moses of Cordovero's Doctrine of *Zimzum*," *Tarbiz* 58 (5749), 207-237.

7. *Eitz Hayyim* 1, *Heikhal* 1, *Anaf* 2.

8. The two approaches have been brilliantly delineated by R. N. Lamm in his response to the critique of Rabbi W. Wurzburger in his article "The Unity Theme: Monism for Moderns," in *Faith and Doubt: Studies in Traditional Jewish Thought* (New York: Ktav, 1971), 42-68.

9. Tanya, *Sha'ar HaYibud V'HaEmunah* chap. 8, 84b.

10. Nefesh HaHayyim, *Sha'ar* 3, chapter 7.

11. The dangers that radical monism poses for Halakhic observance are discussed by Rabbi Walter S. Wurzburger in "Pluralism and the Halakhah," *Tradition* 4:2, 221-239.

12. "The Unity Theme: Monism for Moderns," 57.

13. Eugene Borowitz, as cited and affirmed by Lawrence Kaplan in "The Religious Philosophy of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik," *Tradition* 14:2 59 (see also the latter's conclusion in "*Motivim Kabaliyim BeHaguto Shel HaRav Soloveitchik: Mashma'utiyim O Ituriyim?*," *Emunah BeZ'manim Mishtanim* (Jerusalem: Eliner, 1996), 90.)

14. As it is in "The Community,"

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Maimonides on the Ultimate Goal of Human Life

Uri Etigson

Introduction

Throughout his works, both philosophic and halakhic, Maimonides repeatedly deals with the purpose of human life, emphasizing the importance of focusing all of one's efforts upon achieving completion and human perfection. However, many of his statements seem to contradict each other; in some the ultimate goal of human life seems to be the contemplation of God, while in others Maimonides focuses upon living a life of moral action, of religious and halakhic practice, and of involvement in perfecting the world. In many of the texts, especially in individual chapters of the *Guide to the Perplexed*, Maimonides deals with only part of the picture, or a specific aspect of the goal of life. I will try here to integrate the different sources in order to reconstruct Maimonides' complete position on the goal of human life. I will also try to show, from a practical perspective, how the various components of Jewish life are integrated into achieving this goal, and I will try to characterize what living a life of perfection entails according to Maimonides.

The Centrality of God & The Contemplative Life

Maimonides may not always make his complete position on the goal of human life explicit. However, throughout his works, his absolute focus remains the importance of God. God is the axis of Maimonides' thought; He is the foundation upon which every other goal or concept rests. God is the source of all existence, and thus, of all meaning. There

is nothing of independent and inherent value outside of God. All things are important only insofar as they connect to God.

It is understandable how this position could easily lead one to conclude that the ultimate goal of human life would be the contemplation of God, for He is the only true reality. Man must connect himself to God, in order to attain a degree of true and real existence. In many passages, Maimonides states that the only way for man to connect to God is through his intellect. If one develops his intellect to the level of a true knowledge of God, and his intellect focuses upon God as its object of intellection, then even after physical death, the intellect will have attained eternal and true life (i.e. *olam ha-ba*) by uniting with its divine object of intellection, God. (See *Yesodei ha-Torah* 4:9; *Teshuvah* 8:1-3; *Hakdamah le-Perek Helek* 4.)

According to this position, man's most important task must be to develop his intellect so that it is capable of attaining true knowledge of God. And the most noble activity of man would be to sit and contemplate the perfect, eternal, metaphysical truths (i.e. knowledge of God) so that his intellect can attain eternal and true existence. In fact, this seems to be Maimonides' exhortation in a number of passages in the *Guide*. In the famous palace parable of III 51, Maimonides seems to rank a person's degree of closeness to God exclusively according to his level of intellectual and philosophical training and according to his degree of contemplative focus upon God. Thus, it would

seem that the simple performance of the commandments leaves one outside the palace, while the contemplation of Aristotle's metaphysics gains one access to the presence of God. Furthermore, in III 54, Maimonides declares that the only perfection which has true independent value, and which is inherent to man, is intellectual perfection. Hence, man's ultimate goal must be to perfect his intellectual faculties. However, developing one's other perfections and faculties, such as health and moral attributes, as well as learning the traditional Jewish laws and beliefs without delving into their metaphysical foundations, is all just a preparatory stage for the ultimate goal of intellectual contemplation of God. These preliminary activities seem to have no inherent value; and if they do not actually lead one to intellectual perfection, then they are ostensibly worthless.

However, this entire position in Maimonides is only part of his overall view, and does not indicate his true comprehensive position on this matter.

The Active Life & Imitatio Dei

As stated above, Maimonides posits God as the absolute focus of life. Thus, the intellect plays a crucial role in attaining closeness to God, and contemplation is of great importance for human perfection. However, both attaining closeness to God, and, more importantly, the life which results from attaining knowledge of God, involve more than contemplation alone.

The ideal life can be divided into

a three part process:

1) The path which leads to attaining correct knowledge of God. Man's first goal is to perfect himself in every way necessary for attaining correct knowledge of God, and to actually attain this knowledge. Thus, this stage includes maintaining a healthy body, perfecting one's moral attributes, and studying metaphysics and every other study preliminary to it.

2) The actual attainment of knowledge of God, maintaining this level of knowledge, and concentrating the intellect upon God.

3) The life which results from attaining knowledge of God, a life of *imitatio Dei*. Since the only positive knowledge we can have of God, according to Maimonides, is knowledge of His "attributes" of action (i.e. the actions which result from His simple, unknowable essence), therefore, we must live a life of *imitatio Dei*, imitating God's attributes of action, which are primarily moral actions such as loving-kindness, righteousness, etc.

Maimonides focuses upon stage one in his *Introduction to Pirkey Avot*, and stresses the crucial importance of perfecting one's moral attributes. In this work, he sets up the goal as attaining prophesy, which is equivalent to reaching stage two, and exhorts one to focus every thought, every action, and every speech upon attaining this goal. He claims that all of *Pirkey Avot* is a training guide for perfecting one's moral attributes, which is a crucial step for attaining prophesy. Thus, although perfecting one's moral attributes is a means to the greater end of attaining knowledge of God and prophecy (as stated in the

Guide III 54), yet it is a means which is extremely important, and requires a tremendous amount of attention and effort. Thus, in a practical sense, it remains an important focus of life, even though it is only a means.

Maimonides states the ultimate importance of stage three most explicitly in the *Guide* at the end of III 54. However once we become aware of this ultimate stage, it becomes clear that Maimonides refers to the importance of this stage in numerous other

"Thus, the final stage is one of complete, passionate, intellectual enrapture with God, expressed and actualized through the moral life of divine emulation."

passages, which I will refer to shortly. At the end of III 54, Maimonides explains the goal of life based upon the verse in Jeremiah 9:22-23:

Thus saith the Lord: Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these I delight, saith the Lord.

Maimonides explains that "riches," "might" - (i.e. bodily perfection), and "wisdom" - (which, according to Maimonides, refers to moral perfection), are only means to an end. The ultimate goal is to know God. But knowing God does not mean knowing His essence (which is impossible), but rather knowing His attributes of

action. Ultimately, God desires us to emulate these "actions." Maimonides ends the *Guide* with the following statement:

The object of the above passage is therefore to declare, that the perfection, in which man can truly glory, is attained by him when he has acquired, as far as this is possible for man, (1) the knowledge of God, (2) the knowledge of His providence, and the manner in which it influences His creatures in their production and continued existence. (3) Having acquired this knowledge he will then be determined always to seek loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness, and thus to imitate the ways of God. (numbering is mine)

This passage outlines the basic structure of the ideal life. First one must perfect himself so that he can attain knowledge of God. Once he attains knowledge of God, he learns that the only true knowledge he can have of God is knowledge of God's providence (i.e. attributes of action). Finally, he must emulate these attributes by living a life of loving-kindness, righteousness, justice, etc.

In a practical sense, the spiritually striving person may in fact live the same type of life throughout this entire process. In stage one he will engage in moral actions so that he can come to know God. Then, having achieved that knowledge, he will continue to live the same moral life as an expression of *imitatio Dei*. However,

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there will be a necessary qualitative difference between these two stages. In the first, the moral acts were simply a means to an end. However, in the ultimate stage, the moral acts take on the sublime quality of emulating the divine. The moral act is inherently meaningful through its connection to the true reality, God. This is as similar to God as a human can possibly become. Thus, the final stage is one of complete, passionate, intellectual enrapture with God, expressed and actualized through the moral life of divine emulation.

It is interesting to note that Maimonides arrives at this conception of life's ultimate goal based on his conception of God. Both Aristotle and Maimonides have *imitatio Dei* as their ultimate goal. However, because they have different conceptions of God, they apply the concept differently. According to Aristotle, God is the unmoved mover, who can contemplate only Himself. Thus, one emulates God

by contemplating the ultimate metaphysical truths. However, according to Maimonides, although God's essence does not change, that same unchanging essence still "causes" many changes to take place in the world. Thus, the God of Maimonides and of Judaism is one that "acts" upon the world. Hence, emulating God means emulating these "actions" and the moral qualities which would result in similar ac-

tions.

More References to the Ultimate Goal of *Imitatio Dei*

Once one becomes aware of Maimonides' understanding of life's ultimate goal, other passages in his

then, of course, the ultimate goal, and the natural result of this knowledge, is to emulate those Godly "actions." Thus, once God revealed His attributes of action to him, Moshe could emulate them by guiding and ruling over the Jewish people according to these principles.

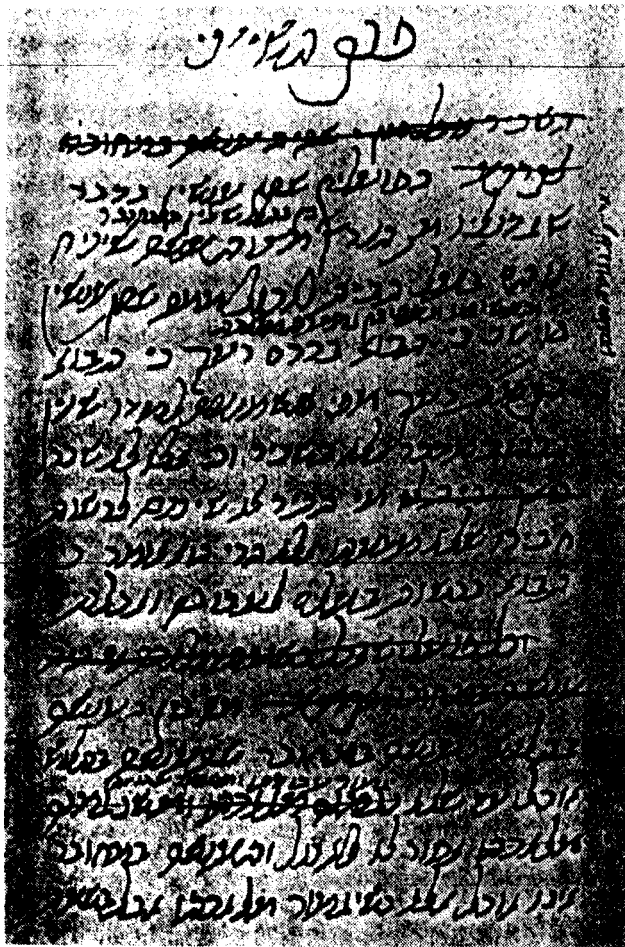
This understanding also clarifies Maimonides' statement at the beginning of III 5:

Our sages further say that man has first (1) to render account concerning his knowledge of the Law, (2) then concerning the acquisition of knowledge (which Maimonides explains as true intellectual understanding of metaphysical truths), (3) and at last concerning the lessons derived by logical conclusions from the Law, i.e., the lessons concerning his actions. (numbering and parentheses mine)

Obviously, everyone must follow the law from youth.

Therefore, stage three cannot refer to simply following *halacha*. Rather, Maimonides refers here to the process described above, of first coming to know God and His providence and then emulating that providence.

Even in the palace parable of III 51, which previously seemed to refer only to contemplation, we may now discern an important point in the description of those who are at the



writing clearly take on that very meaning.

One clear reference is in the *Guide*, I 54, where Maimonides explains Moshe's request to know God (Exodus 33; 13). God answers Moshe by revealing thirteen of His attributes of action. Maimonides explains that the more one understands God's providence in the world (i.e. the more attributes of action one knows), the closer one is to God. And

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level of knowledge of God. (All prophets must reach this level; however, non-prophets may reach it as well).

There are those who set their thought to work after having attained perfection in the divine science (metaphysics), turn wholly toward God, may He be cherished and held sublime, renounce what is other than He, and direct all the acts of their intellect toward an examination of beings with a view to drawing from them *proof with regard to Him, so as to know His governance of them* insofar as possible. These people are those present in the ruler's council. (emphasis mine)

Once one has attained correct knowledge of God, the goal is not to merely contemplate Him, but rather to learn how He governs the world in order to emulate those actions.

In the *Guide* I 15, Maimonides explains Jacob's vision of the ladder as referring to the task of a prophet, first ascending the ladder to attain knowledge of God, and then descending the ladder in order to apply this knowledge in action for guiding society.

I think that one of the clearest sources for this view of a three part process ultimately leading to a life of actions of *imitatio Dei* is found in Maimonides' *Introduction to the Mishnah*. In section six of this introduction, Maimonides discusses the *telos* of all beings. He states that the *telos* of man, whose form is uniquely characterized by having an intellect, is to use this intellect to acquire

knowledge of the eternal metaphysical truths, especially of God. Based upon his entire analysis, Maimonides should have come to the conclusion that the ultimate goal of man is to be wise. Yet, surprisingly, at the end of this analysis Maimonides states, "the purpose of this world, and all that is contained therein, is (to help make) a wise and *good* man. And when a man attains intelligence and *deeds* ... then such a man is the goal (of the world)," (italics mine). One might think that Maimonides is referring only to the deeds necessary for perfecting one's intelligence. However, he concludes by emphasizing that these deeds are the *result* of attaining true knowledge. Furthermore, if one performs these deeds without first attaining true knowledge, then "he is lacking in perfection ... because his acts are not based on truth and clear knowledge." Therefore, an ignorant cannot be a truly pious person, and Maimonides states that "through understanding, man will be led to action." Although he does not explain here that these actions are a result of *imitatio Dei*, it is clear that Maimonides views the correct and good actions as being a natural result of true knowledge of metaphysics, and the indication that one has attained true knowledge. If one claims to have attained knowledge of God, but does not display the correct actions, then in fact he cannot have attained true knowledge of God. Thus, it seems clear that Maimonides must be referring here to the good deeds of *imitatio Dei* which result from a true knowledge of God.

Other Types of a Three Part Process

We have seen numerous examples

of this pattern in Maimonides, how attaining true knowledge of God lends an entirely new quality of *imitatio Dei* to the acts one performs. However, I do not think that this gives us the entire picture. Maimonides had a more comprehensive vision of what Jewish life holds important, more than moral action alone. I would like to bring two important examples of a three part process which focus on different aspects of Jewish life.

In his introduction to the *Guide*, Maimonides states,

You should observe that the Almighty, desiring to lead us to perfection and to improve our state of society, has revealed to us laws which are to regulate our actions. These laws, however, pre-suppose an advanced state of intellectual culture. We must first form a conception of the existence of the Creator according to our capacities.

Obviously, according to Maimonides, one must observe the laws even before reaching knowledge of God. However, once one achieves knowledge of God, then the laws take on an entirely different quality and lead to true perfection. Once again we find the three part process. First one must train himself in physics and metaphysics so that he can attain true knowledge of God. Then, once one has this knowledge, he attains completely new insight into the laws, which take on an entirely new quality of effect upon him. And finally, one lives a life of performing the commandments after attaining this level

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of knowledge; this is living the life of true perfection.

The second example is from the *Guide* III 52. In this chapter, Maimonides explains that the purpose of performing the commandments is to lead one to *yir'at Hashem*, fear of God, which is a constant recognition of the omnipresence and awesomeness of God. Once again, we find here a three part process.

For by [carrying out] all the details of the prescribed practices, and repeating them continually some few pious men may attain human perfection. They will then revere God and fear Him and will know Who is with them. Then they will do that which is correct.

First, one performs all the commandments. This eventually leads one to a recognition of the omnipresence of God. The natural result of achieving this level is that afterwards one will naturally do that which is correct and constantly act as one naturally should act when in the presence of the King.

The Life of Divine Worship - Avodat Hashem in III 51

The palace parable of III 51 is often understood to mean that the religious life is nothing more than a basic preparatory stage. Once one is trained in metaphysics, he advances beyond the need for a religious life and instead engages in the greatest pursuit, contemplating God. Or, according to our new understanding, he would replace the religious life with a life of moral activity at the highest level. However, a close reading of III 51 reveals that one never advances past the religious life, but

rather intensifies and deepens its meaning by bringing it to new levels. Menachem Kellner, in *Maimonides on Human Perfection*, thoroughly demonstrates that the highest level of the parable does not refer to a philosopher who studies only metaphysics. Rather, it describes a Jew who follows *halacha* and studies it, and then studies the principles of Jewish belief and tries to prove them, and then comes to a true knowledge of God through the study of physics and metaphysics.

Furthermore, this is not where the path ends. The first step is crucial, because if one does not arrive at the correct conception of God, then he has nothing. If he believes that God has any positive attributes, then he does not believe in God at all, but rather in some other being (*Guide* I 60). However, any person who studies the *Guide*, and understands all of the philosophic discussions concerning God, is most probably already at this level of the wise man who has entered the palace by having the correct conception of God. Now, Maimonides exhorts the reader to go further. The true goal, Maimonides continues, is to be in the presence of God, and to be involved in the "worship of God, *avodat Hashem*," which is the level of prophets. One should spend as much time as possible being involved in *avodat Hashem*. Maimonides describes this as the religious life. One must use every moment of prayer, as well as every moment of performing the religious commandments and of reciting the benedictions, to focus his intellect on God. Maimonides encourages the reader to work at increasing the time he can focus his intellect on God during

these religious actions. If one can do this, then he should focus his intellect on God even when he is sitting alone, not doing anything particular. And if possible one should focus his intellect on God even when involved in physical actions by intending these actions to be for the sake of drawing closer to God. For instance he should care for his physical needs only so he will be healthy so that he can focus his intellect on God, or he should intend his actions to help perfect the Jewish people or the entire world so that everyone can attain knowledge of God.

Thus, we find that the religious life is not something from which you graduate upon contemplating God. Quite the contrary, once you can contemplate God, the religious life becomes all the more important and meaningful as a means of continued focus on God.

Although Maimonides does not deal with this explicitly, it seems that one lives the religious life of *avodat Hashem* at the same time that one lives the active moral life of *imitatio Dei*. Apparently, they both occur chronologically after one attains correct knowledge of God. A possible distinction between these two concurrent aspects of the perfect life is that one lives the life of *avodat Hashem* in order to maintain one's level of focus on God, while, concurrently, the actions of *imitatio Dei* are the actions which result naturally from this focus on God.

The Components of Jewish Life & Attaining Knowledge of God

As a summary of much of the above analysis I would like to give a brief explanation of how the various

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basic components of Judaism each fit into Maimonides' system as part of stage one, and help one in reaching knowledge of God.

Prayer, Torah study, and the performance of *mitzvot* are ideal times for focusing one's intellect on God. Moreover, the Torah holds in it all the true metaphysical beliefs and ideas of Judaism, and it is the greatest revelation in history of the true conception of God. Therefore, we must study the Torah in great depth, so we attain these true ideas and then become filled with love of God.

Many of the commandments lead us to reach a level of *yir'at Hashem*, recognition of God's omnipresence. Commandments connected with rejection of ancient idolatrous rituals encourage us to focus upon the correct conception of God. Prohibitory commandments, and all commandments of *beyn adam le-havero*, aid us in perfecting our moral attributes, which is a crucial prerequisite for being able to perfect our intellect and then attaining knowledge of God. Furthermore, in chapter seven of his *Introduction to Pirkey Avot*, Maimonides states that one's degree of moral perfection will directly affect the quality of the prophecy which one's intellect can attain. Many of these commandments also perfect society, so that everyone in the society will also be able to attain knowledge of God. However, it seems from a number of sources in Maimonides that these moral commandments are not only important as a preparatory stage for reaching intellectual perfection. It seems as though they may even have some inherent value, perhaps, because they already hold a glimmer of *imitatio Dei* in them.

Characterization of the Ultimate Level of Human Life

All that remains is for us to characterize the type of life which one lives after having attained true knowledge and closeness to God. Clearly, based upon III 54 and I 54, the ultimate level of human life is one of moral action in which one emulates God's attributes of divine providence. Thus, one would act morally towards others. If possible, this would also include trying to establish the perfect society, as Moses did in the desert, in emulation of God's governance of the world. Thus, as an act of *imitatio Dei*, one can live on the highest level by trying to spread knowledge of God to the world, and by trying to perfect his society and the entire world. However, as stated above, this does not comprise the only aspect of the perfect life. Maimonides mentions other components as well, which are all integrated to comprise the perfect life.

According to III 52, living on this ultimate level also includes fulfilling the commandments and performing all of one's actions out of a sense of God's omnipresence. And according to the introduction to the *Guide*, it includes performing all of the commandments, not because they are a means to an end, but rather out of a clear intellectual understanding of them, which one attains after reaching knowledge of God.

According to III 51, anyone who can reach this level should live a full religious and physical life in which every moment is dedicated to and focused upon worship of God. One can achieve this if his intellect is completely in control of every decision. He should use his divinely focused intellect to guide even his physical

actions, such that he focuses every action upon improving himself so that he can draw closer to God, and upon perfecting his society so that it too can draw closer to God.

Part of our challenge includes returning to the perfect life, in which we have clear intellectual knowledge of God and His commands, and in which we live a full physical life focused entirely upon God.

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Human Dignity & Self Respect, *continued from page 7*

long period of time, or from a river during the nighttime. The Sages enforced these prohibitions out of fear that something unknown and dangerous may have entered the water. Thus, just as man is prohibited from directly injuring himself, it is similarly forbidden for him to carelessly compromise his personal safety. He must display respect for his health and his well-being; he must practice self-directed *kavod habriyot*.

The *halacha's* concern for self-respect and self-oriented human dignity also extends to how one is required to cover one's body. The *Mechilta* (*Yitro, parsha 11*) explains the structure of the altar in the Temple in terms of respect for others. The altar was equipped with a stone ramp instead of stairs, enabling the robe-modesty itself. Indeed, R. Yose asserts in Shabbat 118b, "The beams of my house have never seen the seams of my shirt." Rashi explains this to mean that when R. Yose undressed, he would lay under his blanket and remove his shirt in the manner in which he put it on, thus minimizing the exposure of his nakedness. If, as the *Mechilta* stated, modesty is usually a sign of respect towards others, the requirement of modesty while alone is certainly an expression of self-respect and personal dignity.

In addition to the prohibition of self-injury and the requirement of modesty, we are also enjoined to maintain a proper level of cleanliness and personal hygiene. Vayikra Rabbah (39:3) records a fascinating dialogue between Hillel and his students:

The merciful man doeth good to his own soul (Prov. 11,17) This applies to Hillel the elder who once, when he concluded his

studies with his disciples walked along with them. His disciples asked him: 'Master whither are you bound?' He answered them: 'To perform a religious duty.' 'What,' they asked, 'is this religious duty?' He said to them: 'To wash in the bath-house.' Said they: 'Is this a religious duty?' 'Yes,' he replied; 'If the statues of kings are...washed by the man who is appointed to look after) them...how much more I who have been created in the Image and Likeness; as it is written, *For in the image of G-d made man*' (Gen. 9:6) (*Soncino translation*)

Because we have been created in the image of God, we must display respect for our body and insure its upkeep. Our bodies are the holy vessels of our Godly soul and must be treated with respect.

Interestingly, with regard to public degradation of oneself, the Talmud states that it is in fact permitted. The Talmud in Bava Kama 91a initially believes that public self-denigration is forbidden, but eventually concludes that it is allowed. However, the fact that the Talmud initially claimed that it is forbidden is itself significant. The Sages held the credo of self-respect in such high regard that they actually entertained the possibility of disallowing public self-degradation. Despite rejecting this idea, the underlying concept may surface in another ruling. The Talmud, Shavuot 36a, states that it is prohibited to utter a curse directed against oneself. In addition, the *Sefer Hachinuch* (Commandment 338: The Prohibition of Verbally Badgering a Fellow Jew) maintains that

one should not remain silent when confronted with verbal abuse:

And it should not be believed that if a Jew confronts another Jew and proceeds to attack him with harsh words that the listener should not answer his attacker. For a man cannot be like a stone that never turns over; and additionally, if he remains silent, it will appear as if the words spoken are in fact true. And truthfully, the Torah did not require a man to remain silent like a stone when confronted by verbal abuse, as he would when blessed.

But the most compelling source that prohibits public self-denigration is the Rambam, *Hilchot Eduv* 11:5. Concerning those who are barred from offering testimony in Jewish courts, the Rambam writes:

And all those who humiliate themselves are Rabbinically barred from testifying in court. This includes those who eat while walking publicly in the marketplace; and those who walk naked in the marketplace while they attend to their business; those who are despicable, and the like; for they show no concern for their own shame. They are likened to dogs and think nothing of perjury.

Essentially, the *halacha* mandates that one exhibit self-respect before receiving respect from others, and even from the court.

Thus, beyond caring for his body, clothing, and hygiene, a Jew is re-

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quired to possess a positive self-image. This idea is further accentuated in the Mishna in Sanhedrin, 37a. In their boldest formulation of self-directed *kavod habriyot*, the Sages wrote, "Every single person is required to say 'for me the world was created.'" Man has graciously been given unlimited potential, and he is commanded to maximize and implement that gift. As the previously quoted Mishna in *Pirkei Avot* states, "Cherished is man for he was created in the image of God. Man is further cherished for he

was told that he was created in the image of God." We have been informed of our inherent value and must therefore display *kavod habriyot* to ourselves and others.

We have thus seen the laws of *kavod habriyot* made manifest in many forms. We have seen how the *halacha* responds when seemingly in conflict with *kavod habriyot*, and how concern for *kavod habriyot* has been incorporated into the *halacha*, even sometimes without the knowledge of the party involved. Finally, we have seen

kavod habriyot expressed in Jewish law as a self-directed imperative.

This article is dedicated in loving memory of my grandmother, Florence K. Abraham. She always showed great concern for *Kavod HaBriyot*. Besides her tremendous selflessness, generosity, and the unconditional love that she always gave, she also carried a strong sense of dignity and an immense appreciation and respect for life. May her memory be a blessing for us all.

- J.A.

Notes from 'The Rav' and 'HaRav',

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"Majesty and Humility," "U'Vikashtem MiSham," et al. See Kaplan, *ibid.* (latter) 82-90. (See also my reconstruction from notes of a 1958 philosophical discourse of the Rav in *Shem V'Yefet* 3:1 174-179 in which he discusses *Tsimtsum* and its moral lessons.)

15. This seems to be bolstered by the Rav's enunciation of this belief in "The Halakhic Mind" (New York: Seth Press, 1986), 45. "The prime problem of the philosophy of religion is not theosophy or theology but the understanding of the sensible world. The *homo religiosus* is not only theocentric but also ontocentric. He is not concerned with interpreting God in terms of the world but the world under the aspect of God."

16. *Halakhic Man* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983), 45. It is somewhat ironic that one version of *Tsimtsum*—albeit the Midrashic one—is subsequently employed by Rav Soloveitchik as a metaphor to illustrate this transcendental phenomenon.

17. *Orot HaKodesh* 1:143.

18. *Halakhic Man*, 49.

19. *ibid.*, 94.

20. *ibid.*, 99. See also *The Halakhic*

Mind, 46.

21. Itamar Gruenwald, "The Concept of Teshuvah in the Teachings of Maimonides and Rav Kook," *The World of Rav Kook's Thought* (Jerusalem: Avi Chai, 1991), 293.

22. Most of the translations of complete phrases from *Orot HaTeshuvah* and *Al HaTeshuvah* derive from Ben Zion Bokser's translation in *Abraham Isaac Kook* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 43-128 and Peli's English edition entitled *On Repentance* (Jerusalem: Orot Press, 1980).

23. See Rabbi Walter S. Wurzburger, "The Centrality of Creativity in the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik," *Tradition* 30:4, 219-228, who demonstrates the development of the theme of creativity within the Rav's writings and traces it back to several Kabbalistic doctrines as employed by none other than the *Nefesh HaHayyim* (!). See also Eliezer Goldman, "Teshuvah U'Zeman BeHagut HaRav Soloveitchik," *Emunah BeZ'manim Mishtanim* (Jerusalem: Eliner, 1996), 175-188, who discusses the role of creativity in Rav Soloveitchik's concept of Teshuvah as formulated in *Halakhic Man*. ❖

Toenet

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voice, the *Toanot* always attempt to help reestablish *shalom bayit* (peace in the home). She has been "repeatedly thanked for the warm care" she offers.

Levmore pointed out an interesting service that the *Toanot* can provide to American Jewry. In a case of "get-refusal," where the recalcitrant spouse settles or even visits in Israel, a *Toenet* can represent the spouse remaining in America and bring the recalcitrant spouse to *Beit Din* while in Israel.

At the end of her remarks to the YUJIP students, Levmore imparted an inspiring message. "By serving as a role model, my wish is that women of all ages will immerse themselves in learning Torah and actively help form a just society through their accomplishments and surpass what has been in particular professions. I know that this is a pretty tall order, but I know it can be done. It is up to young students like yourselves to rise up to this challenge." ❖

The Torah U-Madda Project:

1997 Fall Semester Calendar

Wednesday October 29, 1997

Professor David Berger and Professor Shnayer Z. Leiman, *panelists*, Rabbi J.J. Schacter, *moderator*
Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?
Midtown Campus 8:00 p.m.

Monday December 1, 1997

Professor Daniel Sperber
Main Campus 8:00 p.m.

Thursday December 4, 1997

Rabbi Moshe Tendler and Professor Neil Bradman
Main Campus 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday December 10, 1997

Rabbi Michael Broyde
The Relationship Between Jewish Law and American Law
Midtown Campus, Club Hour



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