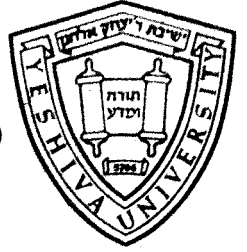


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Hameva'er

Israel

At 50



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The Hamevaser staff would like to wish Mazal Tov to

Dov Siegman and Tzviya Zitter

Nasanayl Braun and Tamar Wadler

on their respective engagements.

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David Ben-Gurion.



Dreams

Joseph Etra

Dreams were taken seriously in Biblical times. While sometimes dreams had an obvious meaning, as in the case of Yosef and his dreams, on several occasions, the dreamer did not understand what he had dreamt. In these cases, others were called in to assist. Two notable figures who served as Potrei Chalomot were Yosef and Daniel. Though living in different periods in Jewish history, there were many similarities between these two men, which uniquely qualified each one for their role as Poter Chalomot.

The similarities between Yosef and Daniel begin with their backgrounds. Yosef was the son of Yaakov, the patriarch of Judaism. He was brought up in an environment of awareness of Hashem and the teachings of Avraham's ethical monotheism. There was a slight dysfunctionality to the family, though. Yosef and his brothers did not get along particularly well, as he was the favorite son. This became crucial to the point that they sold him into slavery. Once in Egypt, however, he was quickly elevated to positions of authority in Potifar's home, the prison, and finally, the entire country. His adaptability and political savvy were tremendous. Even his self-control was admirable as he rebuffed the advances of Aishet Potifar.

Daniel's background is not quite as easily discerned. I Divrei HaYamim 3:1 includes a son named Daniel among the sons of David HaMelech.

The same second son of David, born to his wife Avigail of the Carmel in Chevron, had been called Chil'av in II Shmuel 3:3 [according to Chaza"], because he was "Machlim Pnei Mipiboshet Bihalacha." While this Daniel was also identified as extremely wise, as ours is, it is unlikely that he is the same Daniel, as he would have had to be extremely old to live to the days of Nevuchadnetzer. The Pasuk at the beginning of Sefer Daniel (1:4), while also stressing their wisdom, says that it was "Y'ladim" who were brought to Bavel. It would seem doubtful that he was a son of David. Rav Saadiyah Gaon and Abravanel say that Daniel and the other captives were descendents of Hizkiyah Hamelech. This identification would have them be the fulfillment of the Nevuah of Yeshayahu that Hizkiyah's descendents would be officials in the king of Bavel's court. Maharal says that Daniel, but not Chananyah, Mishoel, and Azaryah, was of royal lineage. It seems clear that many Mefarshim, who we can assume to be sensitive to themes in the text, identify Daniel as the descendent of kings. The king with whom they identify him also is consistently a Tzadik, presumably a conscious choice and intended to highlight something significant about the character of Daniel. It is clear, then, that Daniel's background is supposed to strike us as very impressive. Like Yosef, he was elevated to positions of authority throughout his time in Galut. He, too, was viewed as

an archetypal Chacham by the king and was even elevated to the position of vizier for a time. He also turned down physical temptation and ate seeds and water instead of the king's food.

The significance of the similarities in the backgrounds of Yosef and Daniel lies in the effects of a person's upbringing on his personality. Someone brought up in affluent conditions is comfortable with money and places of wealth. So, too, the child of an important figure is accustomed to power. Both these characteristics also build self-esteem and confidence. Whether as a slave in the house of Potifar, an important Sar, as a prisoner in jail, or as Vizier, Yosef had the ability to take on responsibilities and oversee endeavors. It would be irresponsibly ignoring the obvious to deny the preparation that Yosef's early life in the household of Yaakov gave him for these experiences. Daniel, too, regardless of his precise identity, was clearly well prepared for life in a king's court from before he was brought to Bavel. Immediate and direct evidence of this can be found in the criteria that Nevuchadnetzar gave Ashpenaz (his Chief Eunuch) for choosing the group of captives in which Daniel found himself. He said, "Yiladim ... Va'asher Koach BaHem LaAmod BiHeichal HaMelech," "youths ... and who are able to be in the king's court" (Daniel 1:4). Therefore, it is understandable, perhaps even predictable, that Yosef and

“The Potter Chalomot...finds a basis

Daniel would have the self-confidence to go before kings to interpret dreams and to serve comfortably as members of the royal court.

“Chochmah” was also a very important aspect of our Potrei Chalomot. It takes a unique person to tell someone else what a dream means and to be believed. Self-confidence helps, but is only the beginning. Someone with a reputation of being extremely smart, wise, and resourceful is the most likely to be believed. By giving a cogent explanation and being a smart, savvy person, Yosef was able to interpret dreams for two Sarim and a king. Nevuchadnetzar found Daniel ten times smarter than the wise men and sorcerers of his court (Daniel 1:20).

The self-control demonstrated by Yosef and Daniel made them especially qualified emissaries for Hashem to send to a nation in Galut. They were pious and religious men who could be expected to resist assimilation into their host nations. Because they had to be role models for others, it was necessary for them to be extremely loyal to Hashem and to have great internal reserve.

An interesting parallel between Yosef and Daniel can be demonstrated through their initial responses when called upon to interpret dreams. When the Sar Hamashkim and Sar HaOfim told Yosef that they had dreamt apparently uninterpretable dreams (“Chalom Chalamnu U’photer Ain Oto,” Braishit 40:8), Yosef responded with an interesting phrase. He said, “HaLo Lelohim

Pitronim; Sapru Na Li.” Ibn Ezra interprets Yosef’s response as meaning that there could be no harm in telling him the dream even if he interpreted it negatively. After all, there was no reason to assume that he was correct; only Hashem truly knows the interpretation of dreams. Ibn Ezra also points out that there is a Gemara in Brachot (55b) that contradicts this explanation, saying that “Kol HaChalomot Holchim Achar HaPeh”, “[results of] all dreams follow the given interpretations.” He opines, though, that since this is an individual’s view, it can be argued with. Radak understands Yosef as saying that Hashem would not deliver a message via a dream if no one could interpret it. Therefore, he said that perhaps he would happen to be that interpreter. Most later Mefarshim, specifically Ramban and Chizkuni, offer similar answers to Radak’s. They choose to explain in accordance with the Gemara in Brachot and, therefore, must find an interpretation that would allow Yosef to hear the dreams and attempt to explain them while still not contradicting the statement “Halo Lelohim Pitronim.”

Again, when Yosef was brought before Paroah to interpret his dreams, he insisted that the Perush would not come from him. He said, “Biladai; Adonai Yaaneh Et Shlom Paroah,” stating that Hashem would provide the explanation. As in the previous case, most Mefarshim say that Yosef was claiming to be a mere intermediary who would pass along the mes-

sage from Hashem to Paroah. Ibn Ezra reads through the *atnach* and says that Yosef is just saying that he is unnecessary and that without him Hashem would pass on the correct explanation to Paroah in some other way.

Daniel also credited Hashem for his ability to interpret dreams. When Nevuchadnetzar asked him if he was capable of telling what the dream was and its interpretation, he answered that none of the humans the king had consulted could explain Nevuchadnetzar’s dream because only Hashem has the ability to know the future. That Daniel could explain the dream, he explained, was solely due to the fact that such was the will of God. He made it eminently clear that he was just a messenger. Both Yosef and Daniel stressed to those for whom they interpreted that they were themselves mere intermediaries.

The Potter Chalomot does not fabricate explanations from thin air, but finds a basis within the dream for his interpretation. In Brachot (55b), Rav Shmuel Bar Nachmani quotes Rav Yonatan that a person is only shown in his dreams from the thoughts of his heart. Rashi explains this to mean that a person only dreams about things he was thinking about before retiring. Maharsha comments that even truthful dreams only occur in the framework that the person considered while awake. This is also true in the cases of the Sarim, Paroah, and Nevuchadnetzar.

When the Sarim were in jail, each wondered about his fate. Would

within the dream for his interpretation.”

Paroah pardon him? Would he languish in jail for the rest of his life? Would he be killed? Therefore, predictable themes for these dreams would be the concern of the prisoner about his fate. The motif used in each dream also had a basis in the sub-conscious mind of the dreamer. The Sar HaMashkim, accustomed to dealing with the beverages and spirits of the king, dreamt of a three tendrilled vine springing up in front of him, blossoming, and giving forth fruit. He harvested the grapes and squeezed them into Paroah's cup, a clear image of him doing his job. Therefore, Yosef saw that the answer to his question about his fate, contained within this dream, was that he would be restored to his previous position. The motif of the Sar HaOfim's dream also related to his prior position. He dreamt of three baskets of bread on his head with birds eating out of the top one. This demonstrated that he would never be able to do his job again as the birds, and not Paroah, were eating the bread. R. S. R. Hirsch points out that the birds eating off his head also demonstrate that he would be killed, as birds are not courageous enough to eat off the head of a live person.

The dreams of Paroah also had their roots in his waking thoughts. As the leader, Paroah worried about the economic prosperity of his country. A weak country is dependent on others and the slightest sign of weakness can lead to invasion or a coup. It was in Paroah's personal interests that his country flourish. Egypt's major

agricultural (and in those days, by extension, overall economic) advantage over many other lands is the Nile River, which overflows and provides water for irrigation and both animals and people drink its water. It is the key to Egyptian prosperity. Therefore, it was the logical setting for the dream. The agriculture of the country provided the people with food; as the Egyptians worshipped their livestock, there was little to eat except produce. Therefore, the dream contained the elements necessary for planting and harvesting: There were cows (oxen) to plow and stalks of wheat to provide kernels for flour and to plant the next season. We see that the issues of his dream were those things that worried him.

Nevuchadnetzar's dreams were also influenced by his waking thoughts. Here, in fact, is the source of Rav Shmuel Bar Nachmani's statement. Daniel told Nevuchadnetzar, "Ant Malka Ra'yonach Al Mishk'vach S'liku," "your thoughts came to you while you were on your bed." (Daniel 2:29) Nevuchadnetzar's first dream was about the future of his kingdom and the world, a natural concern for the ruler of a great empire. There were many other nations under his rule and others that he had yet to conquer. Many possible destinies were open to his empire, both during his life and after his death. A dream about the four great kingdoms of the world would be understandable for such a person to have. The form of a giant man also could have been symbolic of the people of the

world as a whole. The different materials for different parts of the body were explained by Daniel as characteristics of the empires. The positioning of the represented empires on the body also showed the greater stature of the early empires, as the head is the most important part of the body.

Nevuchadnetzar's second dream also was based on his thoughts. Once he had been told the future of his empire, his thoughts and, hence, his dreams turned to himself. He dreamt about himself only after his kingdom as a person is more concerned with leaving his mark than he is worried about his inevitable demise. He dreamt of a giant tree that provides shade and food for many. A heavenly spirit said to cut the tree down. Its roots were left in the ground to be nurtured by the dew and sustained like wild beasts. In time, the tree would eventually return to its former glory. Daniel interpreted the tree to be the king whose influence had spread all over the world. Like this tree, he was weakened, losing power, and forced to recognize Hashem and rely on His generosity and goodness. Again, the king's personal concerns became part of his dream.

Not every part of the interpretations given by a Poter Chalomot, though, is apparent from the dreams. Within each dream cited so far, there is at least one example of the interpreter saying something that was not obvious. For example, in the dream of the Sar Hamashkim, how did Yosef

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The Current State of Religious-Secular Relations in Israel

Rabbi Yosef Blau

Fifty years ago, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion agreed to excuse four hundred yeshiva students from military service. Today, twenty nine thousand take advantage of this exemption. This situation reflects an extraordinary growth in commitment to Torah studies, but also an ever-widening cultural gap between two worlds - the religious and the secular. The primary result of the Ne'eman Commission, after the heated debate that surrounded it, is confusion. Opinion polls indicate that the single most divisive issue facing Israel is not the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but rather the religious-secular divide. Yet, the Avi Chai (Guttman) study showed that the majority of Israelis do not identify themselves as either fully religious or totally secular.

When Yigal Amir, an Orthodox Jew, used religious arguments to defend his assassination of Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, tensions hit an all-time high. It took more than two years before the national religious community, which felt threatened, was able to initiate a serious reevaluation of itself. Strikingly, the secular world, including the leadership of Meretz, is beginning to reconsider its antagonism towards Jewish tradition. While the number of secular Jews who seriously study traditional texts remains relatively small, the fact that some of them study together with religious Jews is significant.

Israeli society has absorbed immigrants from all over the world, including Sefardim and Ashkenazim, Russians and Ethiopians, in a historically unparalleled ingathering of the exiles. This has complicated religious reconciliation within the Israeli community, because Russians and Ethiopians pose unique Jewish identity problems, while the Ashkenazim and Sefardim differ over attitudes towards tradition. The emerging Ba'al Teshuva moment, primarily Sefardic, and the anger it has engendered adds another factor to the picture.

The association of religion with na-

tionalism, which reflects the stance of Mafdal, guarantees that the political divide will affect any attempt at religious understanding and reconciliation. The Chareidi parties, viewed by many as relatively unconcerned about issues of state as long as they receive government funding for their institutions, represent another aspect of the complex entanglement of religion and politics. While allowing for individual exceptions, one can usually place the religious community on one side of the political spectrum, particularly on issues relating to Israeli relations with Arabs.

The recent introduction of government bills that would require the majority of Chareidi men to perform some kind of army service reflects the unhappiness in the non-Orthodox world with the status quo. Surveys indicate that eighty percent of the population supports such proposals in principle. Within the Chareidi world itself, the remarkable increase in numbers has created strong economic pressure to find a way of getting more men into the workforce. A consequence of the growth of Kollelim, and the corresponding retention by their members of the yeshiva exemption, is to prevent all these men from legally working.

Future developments are always difficult to predict, but certain interesting trends are emerging. The status quo on secular-religious relations is fraying, and a new model has been suggested. While this approach will certainly be modified, the fact that it resulted from a dialogue between rabbis and secular political figures, and both sides accepted it, is significant. Younger rabbis are showing greater concern about the impact of requiring religious ceremonies such as marriage for non-observant couples, and they have developed models for making these practices more meaningful. Rabbi Moti Elon, considered a rising star in the rabinate, has called for introducing the American model of community rabbis who will reach out to their congregants, including those who are not fully observant.

Increased involvement in the political process is forcing many in the Chareidi world to begin to acknowledge that they are part of the state and have responsi-

bilities to it. Some of the proposals for a form of national service for yeshiva students are coming from within those very communities.

The Religious Zionist world is slowly beginning to question its messianic thrust. It took decades for Mafdal leadership to move from the political center to its present position as the right wing of Prime Minister Netanyahu's government. Will the reevaluation move it back to the center? The increase in Torah knowledge and level of observance that has created the term "chardal" (combining charedi and Mafdal) may signify a growing turn to a charedi lifestyle within Religious Zionist circles. It is yet unclear whether the sharply different approaches to the religious significance of the state will remain a barrier between the two groups.

What about the large number of traditional, though not fully observant, Sefardic Jews? How dependent is Shas' political growth on the rabbinical leadership of Rav Ovadya Yosef? Will the next generation, which might see itself as more Israeli than specifically Sefardi, be more or less observant? Will Geshet, with its non-charedi orientation, become a serious threat to Shas? It is clear that Ashkenazi Jewry cannot continue to see Israel's religious future in only Ashkenazic terms.

The hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants who are not Jewish according to Halacha remain a problem for the Jewish nature of Israel, in a manner far different from the native Arab population. The lack of clarity that surrounds the results of the Ne'eman Commission indicates that the issues supposedly addressed remain unresolved.

The enormity of the issues ahead in Israel's future can obscure the incredible successes of the past fifty years. Israel has once again become the center of our religious life. The survival of observance in the Diaspora is in no small measure dependent on it. If we take a moment to compare the state of Orthodoxy fifty years ago and today, we will realize that we must express our gratitude to Hashem for placing us in the world at the time that Israel came back into existence.

Answering the Call

Jonathan Snowbell

The 50th anniversary of the birth of the State of Israel cannot go by without comment. But where to start? There is so much to say. The problem for North American Jewry is clear. Fifty years have passed since God gave the Jewish people the ability to return to Eretz Yisrael, yet Orthodox Jews in North America continue to watch comfortably from across the Atlantic Ocean as bystanders. They continually fail to understand how the advent of the State of Israel relates to them, and what it demands of them to do. Furthermore, they make long term plans to stay in Galut. I dare not say definitively what lies at the core of this problem, but I will make an attempt to explain.

A problem that has existed since the beginning of the period of "Shivat Tzion" in the 19th century is the attitude that things will only truly change when Mashiach comes. Until that final redemption, we do not have to do anything. We should continue to live as we have over the long period of Galut. We should certainly not make any plans to actually return to Eretz Yisrael without the Mashiach. Further, a more subtle but common attitude states - either actively, or, if in a vacuum of any other opinion, passively - that we should not try to reorient ourselves to a national form of religion. Rather, whatever we have done until now we will continue to do, focusing only on individual spiritual goals.

But the prophets taught us differently. Whereas with regard to Ge'ulah Mitzrayim the Torah states "Ki B'chipazon Yatzata Mei'eret Mitzrayim" (Devarim 16:3), when speaking of the final Ge'ulah, the prophet Yeshayahu tells us, "Ki Lo

B'chipazon Teitzei'u U'vinnusah Lo Teileichun" (52,12). The Ge'ulah is a long and slow process. In fact, beyond the textual proofs, this fact is logically compelling as well. A young nation that, after 210 years of slavery, was suddenly free and quickly received the Torah was soon involved in the worst transgression possible. A nation cannot be transformed without the proper preparation. Whatever transformation is intended for the Jewish Nation in Galut has already been continuing for some 2000 years (see Orot Yisrael 6:4 of Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook for his analysis). Likewise, the transformation that the Jewish Nation must undergo in order to reorient itself to a religion which has a central national component that can only manifest itself in Eretz Yisrael also takes time. Why does it take time? In order to internalize anything, we must deal with it extensively. Whether learning how to speak, how to study a text of Talmud, or developing Midot Tovot, nothing happens overnight. Why should the process of returning to Eretz Yisrael and reorienting ourselves as a national religion be any different?

As a result of not recognizing the need for this process, we fail to see the birth of the State of Israel in its deeper, more significant light. Modern Orthodoxy claims to see significance in the birth of the State of Israel. Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik eloquently presented six significant issues relevant to the birth of the State of Israel in his famous article "Kol Dodi Dofek." Modern Orthodoxy recognizes the miracle that transpired in the UN in the creation of the State, the miracle of the military victory, the theological ramifications with regard to the Catholic Church, the positive impact on countering assimilation in North America, the ability of Jews to defend themselves, and the fact that Jews have a place to run in times of danger. These six developments are of tremen-

dous significance, but they did not awaken North American Jewry. We've failed to recognize the all-encompassing message of the "Defikot of the Dod." In Rabbi Yehudah Halevi's Kuzari, when faced with the accusation of the King of the Kazars that his bowing and praying in the direction of Eretz Yisrael is an act of hypocrisy or an act of worship lacking "kavanah," the Chaver replies: "Indeed, you have found the point of my embarrassment, King of the Kazars! Truthfully it is because of this sin that the Second Beit Hamikdash never reached its intended potential, for God was prepared to dwell among the people as in the past had they answered the call to return to Eretz Yisrael with great desire. But only a small segment of the population answered to the call and the majority and the leaders of the people stayed in Babel accepting upon themselves Galut and slavery, and the words 'Kol Dodi Dofek' refer to the call that God called out to return to Eretz Yisrael. 'Pashateti Et Kutanti' hints to their laziness to adhere to the call to return to Eretz Yisrael." (Sefer Hakuzari Ma'amar 2)

The knocking of the "Dod" is not merely to remind us that the creation of the State of Israel is a positive development, one for which we should rejoice and insert a prayer in the Siddur. The knocking cries out and says, "Come back! Your Dod that you have desired for so strongly and for so long wants you back. Come back to Eretz Yisrael."

An additional point must be made here. There exists a distinction within Religious Zionism between those who believe that the birth of the State of Israel can be positively identified as the beginning of the final Ge'ulah from which there is no turning back, and those who say that it has potential, but nothing is for sure and all can be lost.

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Becoming What You Hate

Yossi Mandelbaum

I am not among those who collect all sorts of junk memorabilia, I do not memorize all manner of useless trivia about the Jedi knights, and I do not try to speak like Yoda, but every time I see *Return of the Jedi* I cannot help but be entranced by certain scenes. One in particular: in the climactic scene, Luke watches the Rebel fleet as all of his friends are being killed in an ambush, while his father, the loyal servant to the Emperor, along with the Emperor himself, try to force Luke to give into his anger; to use the "Dark Side" of the Force to lash out at them, thus becoming evil himself. At one point Darth Vader pushes Luke over the edge, Luke loses control of his anger and begins to lash out against his father. Light sabers flash, and in one final slash, Luke slices off Vader's right arm.

What is striking about this scene is what happens next. Luke looks down at his own arm: it too is robotic, like his father's (since his father had cut it off in the previous movie). It is then that Luke realizes that he has come full circle, he has become what he dreaded, hated, and feared most: he had become Darth Vader. Luke's reaction to this realization is even more intriguing. He throws down his weapon and refuses to fight the Emperor. He would rather be killed than be turned to the Dark Side.

"Mo'adam L'simcha! Did you hear he's dead!" was the excited greeting I received from a friend I ran into only moments after Yitzchak Rabin was assassinated. Other students were shocked, but remained happy that it had occurred. Those who were happy hid behind many excuses: "I'm happy that he died but I am sorry that another Jew died." As time wore on people began to concoct all sorts of rationalizations why the assassination was not so bad, and perhaps, even good. One told

me, citing a certain popular Rabbi, that the assassination had occurred on the yahrtzeit (anniversary of death) of Rachel Imainu, and the next territory to be given over to the Palestinian Authority was the territory with her grave in it, so it must be that Rachel Imainu could not tolerate such a disgrace to her grave. Others argued that the fact that it happened demonstrated that God willed it to happen. Others appealed to various codes in the Torah, which - if read in a certain way - would show that Rabin's death was good. Still others subscribed to one of many conspiracy theories, theories which abound to this day.

We might compare for a moment the two reactions side by side: on the one hand Luke Skywalker, and on the other, the overwhelming majority of people I was in contact with while in Israel. Luke, when faced with the horrifying reality that he had used the Dark Side of the Force, threw down his weapon and was willing to die. On the other hand, when faced with the hard reality that we had produced and even supported a person so deluded as to kill the Prime Minister in the name of God, we flinched, we came up with excuses, rationales, and justifications, and when those proved insufficient, we blamed everyone but ourselves.

I would not dredge all of this up again if I did not think that it is still pertinent. Since the assassination more events have occurred and people have run for precisely the same intellectual bomb shelters. When something happens which would point to an internal problem, people still come up with a plethora of baseless excuses rooted in the notion that we have nothing to regret or examine; that no contrition is necessary.

At the very beginning of 1997, Noam Friedman opened fire on Arab civilians in Hev'ron in an effort to stop the withdrawal. Before there were any facts about the event itself or of Noam Friedman himself, Arutz Sheva proclaimed: "The act that was committed today is truly a normal and reasonable act, when measured in terms

of the Middle East."¹ Perhaps what is most telling is that it is now known that Noam Friedman had a long history of mental illness. It amazes me that the acts of the mentally ill are considered "normal" and to that degree justified by Arutz Sheva. It seems that their reaction was to first justify and defend those actions and only later worry about the facts. Of course if we rush to defend these types of things, then when can we entertain the notion that perhaps there is no justification?

Less than two months later, another Jewish fanatic made the front pages of the New York Times. Apparently this Y.U. graduate and former rabbinical student decided to kill Shimon Peres in Florida. This person planted a home-made bomb, and then, claiming to be from "the American fringe of Islamic Jihad," informed the authorities of the bomb. The bomb was not found for another week. Fortunately, no one was hurt.²

As I see it, these two stories illustrate a single trend: hatred of non-Jews, and hatred of Jews, buttressed by an unwillingness to undergo communal self-examination. This past year has been especially rich in stories which illustrate these points.

On the *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred) front, many front page headlines leap to mind. Who can forget what happened at the Kotel on Tish'a B'Av? A group of Jews showed up at the Kotel for an egalitarian prayer, provoking a small riot. Since the group did not get the proper permits to allow them to pray there, they were forcibly moved by police. What should be obvious and sad to everyone is not just that, for all sides involved, this was another ugly and very public display of *sinat chinam*, but rather that at the very spot that the Temple was destroyed, indeed on the very day which we mourn its destruction due to this very *sinat chinam*, we display that very same trait two thousand years later.³

Unfortunately, this story is worse than it would appear. It seems that for the Orthodox Jews involved, this was considered to be a display of restraint. It seems that a

few months before, on Shavuot, there was a similar incident at the very same location, only that time, when the egalitarian congregation showed up, the Orthodox Jews threw chairs and human excrement at them.⁴ The theory goes that if at one point in time they were throwing chairs and then at a later time the violent reaction was not as bad, this is progress. True, but that rather small bit of progress, at that place, and at that time, is of very little comfort.

Earlier this year a Reform kindergarten in Mevasseret Zion (a small suburb of Jerusalem) was torched the night before it was supposed to open.⁵ Before the fire, certain people living in Mevasseret, specifically those from the religious Shas party, warned the officials of the school that they would be "burnt out." Shas, however, claimed that perhaps the Reform Jews themselves caused the fire in order to make Shas look bad. If there was any evidence for this accusation, if it even made sense, perhaps I could understand it, but that's not what was being done here. Rather than rolling up their sleeves and doing some real searching, like trying to find out who made the threats, and rather than trying to search out their own ranks for the perpetrators, Shas simply turned away and blamed someone else; they blamed their political antagonists. Is this a healthy response? Is this the response of people who are genuinely bothered about arson?

This is not the only attack on the Reform establishment in Israel this year. In fact, during the Asseret Yimei T'shuvah (ten days of repentance between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur), of all times, there were two more attacks on Reform synagogues. In the first incident, the assailants drew swastikas on the synagogue.⁶ The second incident, which occurred on Yom Kippur, involved rocks being thrown through the windows of another Reform synagogue, and its mezuzah being torn off the front door post.⁷

It seems that Haredi leaders have also been keeping with the general trend, namely, blaming everyone but themselves

for the misdeeds of the members of their respective communities. Haredi leaders from the Bar Ilan Avenue area in Jerusalem claim that a lot of the rock throwing and general rioting which had been occurring at that time (Yom Ha'Zikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut) had "been carried out largely by what they call 'Avishai Raviv-style' planted agents."⁸ Rather than taking responsibility for rioting, rock throwing, flag burning, and what generally passes for Yom Ha'atzmaut "celebrations" in the Haredi community, these leaders have chosen to blame others for their own flaws.

It seems that the lessons learned (or not learned) two years ago are returning to haunt us. The mainstream media has documented a shocking amount of political rhetoric from all sides which parallels, if not exceeds, the levels of invective used prior to the assassination. In October of 1997, one of the weekly cabinet meetings addressed the distressing issue of inciting material being disseminated against Netanyahu. At that particular meeting they addressed no fewer than eleven instances of highly inciting signs and graffiti, all calling for Netanyahu to resign, or threatening his life.⁹ Not to be outdone, the right wing has since then joined the left in the threats to Netanyahu's life. Itamar Ben Gvir, spokesman for the Ideological Front, an ultra right wing movement, has distributed dozens of posters depicting Netanyahu wearing a keffiyeh (Arab headdress) with the word "liar" on the bottom of every poster. Meanwhile, members of the Knesset from both sides have begun receiving threatening letters with bullets enclosed.¹⁰

One may think that all this is simply the work of the fringe fanatics on both sides of the political spectrum. In fact, a recent survey featured in an article for the Jerusalem Post has determined that as many as three-hundred thousand Israeli adults can support and justify political assassinations. A second group of Israelis, one hundred-eighty thousand strong, can

justify and support harming political leaders (it should also be noted that this same group justifies Yitzhak Rabin's assassination). Finally, a third group of Israelis, some forty-five thousand, openly support "political murder." Included in this group are approximately one thousand Israelis who would be willing to commit the murder themselves.

And who are the targets? Political "leaders who either support or might implement a policy of returning territories as part of a peace agreement with the Palestinians." Bibi Netanyahu, Yossi Sarid, Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak, and Shulamit Aloni top the list, yet, it could be any leader who has a hand, willing or not, in giving land to the Palestinians.¹¹

As I shift my focus towards the other form of hatred that I referred to earlier, let me remark that I am making no comment whatsoever about the peace process. I realize that the various Arab-Israeli conflicts are, to say the least, highly complex and emotionally charged. My goal is only to bring to light certain actions taken by the few, actions which in my opinion seem warped, dangerous, and most importantly, unexamined by the larger Jewish community.

Recently, a bomb squad policeman was lightly injured while removing a home-made explosive from the doorway to an apartment in West Jerusalem. This time the bomb was planted by a Jewish terrorist at the home of three Arab women who are currently students at Hebrew University. In fact, this was the third such attack these women have endured at this residence. First, a firebombing, and then, six weeks later, a small explosive device went off outside their door.¹²

Late in December 1997 two Jewish extremists were arrested for plotting to "throw a pig's head into the Temple Mount complex during the month of Ramadan." The alleged purpose was "to bring about clashes between Arabs and Jews," according to a police spokesman.

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The Muslim Conquest of Israel

Elka Weber

With the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East, the current struggles between Israel and her Arab neighbors are increasingly cast as a struggle between Israel and Islam as a whole. Because of this, examining how Muslims came to the Holy Land in the first place may shed some light on the current situation.

The religion of Islam was born in the Arabian peninsula (in what is now Saudi Arabia) at the beginning of the seventh century. Led by Muhammad, the small band quickly emerged from the desert to become a superpower. First, though, it would have to contend with the two superpowers of the day. In the east was the Persian empire, crumbling from within but sustained in part by memories of its earlier power. In the west was the Greek Byzantine world. Led by the emperor Heraclius, the Christian Byzantines fought the Persians almost nonstop in the first decades of the seventh century. The Middle East was right between these two powers, serving alternately as buffer zone and battlefield.

During the course of these wars, the Persians took Jerusalem from Byzantium in 614. When the Byzantines regained it in 628 they unleashed anti-Jewish persecution. Both Christian and Muslim sources tell of edicts intended to force Jews to convert to Christianity. The Coptic Church, in fact, instituted a fast day to be divine pardon for Heraclius for his evil deed of permitting the slaughter of Jews in Jerusalem at the time of conquest.

Meanwhile, Muslims were beginning to move out of the Arabian peninsula. They were wildly successful

in their early military campaigns, partly because the Byzantine army was weak and disorganized and partly because the Muslim armies had the military power that comes from being united behind the vision of an ideal society. The armies moved northwest against Byzantium and northeast against the Persians.

The area they were planning to conquer was not entirely new to them. Muhammad's great-grandfather had died in Gaza while there on a business trip, and Muhammad's father did business there as well. Also, farmers from Palestine¹ used to come to the Arabian city of Medina to sell their wares. In fact, conversations with these farmers may have led the Muslims to realize the extent of Byzantine vulnerability.

So in the late summer of 629, Muhammad sent a reconnaissance raid into Palestine. It was a complete failure - all the men but one were killed by Bedouin tribesmen loyal to the Byzantines. The one survivor, who had been left for dead, reported back to Muhammad that perhaps conditions were not yet ripe.

The second emissary from Muhammad to Palestine was killed in 629 by a tribe loyal to the Byzantines, so Muhammad sent 3,000 troops, who advanced a bit through an area they referred to as Moab but withdrew after reaching "Mu'ta"² because they heard that the Byzantine army was sending in 100,000 men.

For two months in the fall of 630, Muhammad went on an expedition northward to Palestine, despite the fact that some of his followers did not like the idea of starting up with the Byzantine empire. For whatever reason, the Byzantine emperor chose not to attack, so the Muslims withdrew. But during this campaign, Muhammad sent out letters of protection. For example, his letter to the people of Eilat informs them that

I have no intention of fighting you before writing to you. Thou hast to accept Islam, or pay the tax, and obey Allah and his Messenger and the messengers of his Messenger... Therefore if you obey my messengers, you will have the protection of Allah and of Muhammad and all that stand at his side.³

In May 632, suffering from the illness that would kill him, Muhammad ordered a new raid. He died on the day the forces were preparing to leave, but his successor, his father-law Abu Bakr, continued the job as soon as he was able. In 634 Abu Bakr sent two forces to Palestine - one through Eilat, one into the region of Moab. The Muslims did well, partly because the Byzantines could no longer afford to protect some of the Bedouin tribes that had been fighting for them.

So far these victories would get them some of southern Palestine, but if they wanted all of *al-sham* (Syria and Palestine together) they needed to really strike at the Byzantine army, so Abu Bakr called troops away from Persian front to come fight on the Byzantine front. This was an extraordinarily risky move. Not only did it weaken the fight on the Persian front, but soldiers would be going across a dry desert directly from one campaign to another. Despite the logistical difficulties, this force reached the Galilee in May of 634. The new arrivals, together with the two other forces that had come from Arabia, meant that there were some 40,000 Muslims massed against approximately 100,000 Byzantines. The two armies met on July 30, 634 at a place the Muslim sources refer to as "Ijnadayn"⁴ The Muslim troops won decisively, and went on to conquer Gaza,

i v e r s a r y S e c t i o n

Nablus (Shechem), Lod, Yavne, and Jaffa, among others.

Abu Bakr died at the end of this period of conquest, leaving the rest of the job to his successor, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. Although the Muslim controlled the cities of the coastal plain, they still did not control Jerusalem. Even so, Muslim presence in the countryside was enough to keep Christian pilgrims from venturing out of the city for their traditional Christmas day visit to Bethlehem. Meanwhile, the Byzantine army concentrated in the Jordan valley and tried to keep the Muslims from advancing north and east by damming off irrigation canals, so that the Muslim cavalry would get stuck in mud. Despite losing some horses, Muslim troops broke through in January 635 and took in quick order Tiberias, Bet She'an, all of the Golan, Tyre, Zippori, and the Syrian city of Hims. In March of that year, Muslim forces lay siege to Damascus, finally taking it in September.

The Muslim conquest of Damascus was the last straw, and the Byzantine emperor Heraclius gathered a huge army (generally estimated at 100,000, though some sources claim as many as 200,000) against some 24,000 Muslims. According to one of the Muslim historians of the event, the Muslim army withdrew from southern Syria and returned the protection money it had taken from the people of Hims, saying that it could not guarantee their safety. The people of Hims replied:

Your protection and sense of justice are preferable to injustice and violence; therefore we shall stand together with your leader and protect the town from Heraclius' armies. The Jews of Hims even swore on the Torah that they would not permit Heraclius' governor to

enter Hims, and even locked the gates of the city, placing a guard at the gates.

Given the Byzantines' earlier treatment of the Jews, this alliance with the Muslim armies is entirely credible.⁵

In late July or August 636, the Muslim army soundly defeated the main Byzantine force at the Battle of Yarmuk. The Byzantines, coming from the north, were blinded by a sandstorm coming up from the south. Now the Muslims controlled Hims, Damascus, and all the cities of Syria.

The two main cities still not in Muslim hands were Jerusalem and Caesarea, but Muslim control of the surrounding territory meant that the cities were completely isolated from other Christian areas. Caesarea had a port and fortifications with a standing army, so the Muslim armies left it alone for a few years. But Jerusalem they besieged for about two years. The inhabitants apparently refused to surrender to anyone but the caliph, the religious and political leader of the Muslims. So in 638 'Umar ibn al-Khattab arrived in Jerusalem riding on a camel and dressed in a Bedouin cloak of camel-hair. His followers begged him to ride a horse and wear fine linen clothes so that he would look more regal. After much discussion he agreed to wear the linen clothes, but just while his own were being washed.

There are no eyewitness accounts of 'Umar's visit to the city, but a tenth-century historian tells us that 'Umar wrote a pact with the Christian inhabitants of the city, promising them protection of their property and freedom of worship in exchange for taxes. One of the clauses of the treaty was that no Jew will be authorized to live in Jerusalem. However, we know from Muslim, Christian and Jewish sources that Jews in fact did

move into Jerusalem after the Muslim conquest. Perhaps 'Umar realized that having a city full of Christians loyal to the Byzantines might not be strategically wise, and allowed the Jews to move in. Jews had more or less consistently been denied the right to settle in Jerusalem for the past 500 years (from 135 to 638) and seem to have moved right in as soon as they were able.

'Umar had the Temple Mount, which the Byzantines had used as a garbage dump, cleaned up. According to some sources, he even cleared some of the dirt with his own hands.

Given the contrast with Byzantine rule, it is not surprising that the Jews welcomed the new conquerors. For example, the author of *Mysteries of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai* writes that "The second king who will rise from Ishmael [presumably 'Umar ibn al-Khattab] will be a lover of Israel and will repair their cracks and the cracks of the Temple."

By 645, the fifteen-year Muslim conquest was coming to an end, and a new era in the history of Israel had begun.



Notes

1 "Palestine" is the term used by medievals to refer to the area; it has no political connotations here.

2 Scholars have not been able to identify the place to which the Muslim historians refer.

3 As quoted in Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 28. (Published in Hebrew, 1983)

4 This place has not been positively identified, though some suggest Megiddo.

5 Gil, p.46.

The Merchant of Texas

Ari Mermelstein

A bearded old man, garbed in a large black hat and long silk coat, mercilessly cracks the edge of the whip on the Negro's back. The remainder of the African livestock on the Southern plantation shrinks back in horror as they witness this most edifying scene: don't mess with their owner, the Jew. Thus Jews, on the road towards self-liberation and respectability, though originally wretched and penniless in various foreign countries, played a central role in the African slave trade. So the Nation of Islam would like you to believe.

Their utterly meretricious work, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, purports to establish that the Jews "dominated the slave trade" (Nation 29), "used ... Africans disproportionately more than any other ... group in the New World" (Nation 90), and generally functioned as "key operatives in the enterprise" (Nation 178). Despite these outlandish suggestions, a disclaimer in the Editor's Note seeks to portray the authors as interested solely in divulging the truth while attempting to remove all suspicion that anti-Semitism drives these theses (Nation vi). Inflammatory language and disreputable sources, however, undermine the supposed innocence and pure-heartedness of the anonymous authors.

To begin with, irresponsible diction and sarcasm reflect the authors' tacit agenda. For example, references to the Jews as "chosen people" throughout the book carry with them the implied irony that God's nation sank to the lowest depths of human depravity (Nation 69, 213). In addition, the book refers to those Jews

who, while working as sheriffs, issued warrants for the capture of runaways, as "Nazis" (Nation 207).

A central flaw in the Nation of Islam's argument stems from their use of disreputable or amateurish sources, scholarly infractions compounded by the authors' affinity for misquotations. As Harold Brackman indicates, many "authorities" upon which *The Secret Relationship* relies distinguished themselves not as preeminent historians but as novice storytellers. For example, the book cites Peter M. Wiernik to support the exaggerated role which the Jews played in the slave trade (Nation 56, 57, 64, 65, 69). The Nation of Islam credits him with the assertion that Jews "were among the pioneers of sugar planting" in the Caribbean, a scathing indictment of the Jews from a man whose forte lay more in the realm of popular fiction (Brackman 54, Conlon 40).

A number of the historians quoted have established themselves as reliable authorities, but *The Secret Relationship* often distorts their opinions through selective citations. For example, Jacob Marcus, a distinguished historian, concludes that overall the Jews played a "minimal" role in the slave trade. Despite this conclusive opinion, the book quotes him 27 times in support of the opposite thesis (Brackman 52, Conlon 41).

Not only does *The Secret Relationship* rely on flawed scholarship, the inaccuracy of its conclusions also raises historical eyebrows. Whereas the Nation of Islam claims that the Jews functioned as the ringleaders of the slave trade, Dr. Bertram Wallace Korn, reflecting mainstream opinion, asserts

that "the history of slavery would not have differed one whit from historic reality if no single Jew had been resident in the South" (68).

Korn's mainstream viewpoint buttresses its refutation of heavy Jewish involvement with telling statistics. Most studies reveal that twenty five percent of Southern Jews owned slaves, the same proportion as Christian Southerners (Korn 26, Brackman 75). Nonetheless, a census taken in 1830 found that thirty six percent of Southerners owned slaves, while over seventy five percent of 322 Jewish families possessed Negroes (Brackman 75, Nation 180). Although *The Secret Relationship* cites this source as demonstrating the norm within the Jewish community, in truth, most of these Jews were considered "urban smallholders" who owned no more than one or two slaves at a time (Brackman 75). Hence, in 1830, only 120 Jews appeared among a group of 45,000 Southerners who owned twenty or more slaves. The Jews, then, accounted for approximately one quarter of one percent of major slaveholders (Davis 16).

Not only did Jews fail to carve a major niche for themselves in the world of slave ownership, they also did not make inroads into the slave trading profession. For example, Korn identifies three Richmond Jews among the seventy major traders in that city. Based on his findings, he concluded that "probably all of the Jewish slave traders in all of the Southern cities and towns combined did not buy and sell as many slaves as did the firm of Franklin and Armfield, the largest Negro traders in the South" (45,



Brackman 75). Even the career of Aaron Lopez, Newport, Rhode Island's highest profile Jewish merchant shipper in a city of shipping tycoons, spanned only one decade of the century between 1709 and 1807 in which Newport achieved international notoriety as America's leading slave trade center. Overall, responsible historians hold the Jews accountable for less than two percent of this country's slave imports (Brackman 73).

The proportion of Jews in Latin America entrenched in the slave system as owners and traders differed little from the numbers in the United States. From the outset, Spain outlawed Jewish settlement in its colonies, and in 1654, the Portuguese followed suit (Conlon 41). By contrast, Holland welcomed the Jews to the Dutch stake in the New World, and the Jews responded in droves, occupying one third of Dutch-occupied Brazil. Nevertheless, despite this ideal scenario for the Jews, they owned only six percent of the plantations on the island, failing to breach the Christian monopoly on slavery (Brackman 70).

Only one settlement in the entire New World distinguished itself as a haven for slave-owning Jews. The colony of Surinam, under the auspices of the Dutch, blossomed into the site of a more concentrated Jewish undertaking in the slave business. The fields of *Joden Savanne* (Savannah of the Jews), the Jewish section of Surinam, accounted for twenty eight percent of the sugar plantations in Surinam during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Chyet and Marcus 56).

One additional noteworthy exception of Jews gaining access to an exclusively non-Jewish portion of the slave system occurred in Holland proper. Until 1658, Jewish investment in the Dutch West India Company, a Dutch shipping venture devoted primarily to the slave trade, amounted to nearly nothing. However, between that time and 1674, their stock in the company rose as high as ten percent

(Davis 15).

Although the mainstream approach to Jewish slave ownership dismisses the unusually high proportions in Surinam and the Dutch West India Company as aberrant statistics, sources point towards a compelling common denominator: a lack of ill will towards the Jews. The Dutch acquired a reputation as committed Judaeophiles, while the Surinamese Jews, also under Dutch auspices, enjoyed unparalleled equality. According to David Nassy, a citizen and local historian of Surinam in the 18th century, "the Portuguese Jews [driven out of Portuguese colonies] settled in [Dutch] Surinam on a happier and more favorable basis than in any other place in the universe. In a word, they were placed in the rank of the colonists of the Protestant religion, without distinction" (Chyet and Marcus 36). With a tribunal of civil justice and a governing body, the Jews of Joden Savanne enjoyed near autonomy in Surinam (Chyet and Marcus 56).

Not only did the Surinamese government bestow virtual sovereignty upon their Jewish tenants, the Jewish community also won the affection of the general public (Chyet and Marcus 56). Hence, Van Sommelsdyck, a high ranking Surinamese official, reported to his government in 1684 that "I must bear testimony to the extreme contentment which the docility, industry, the friendly disposition and the honesty with which the Jewish nation acts here has given me, and continues to give me daily; and I wish I could say a quarter as much of our Christians" (Cohen 21).

In the United States, by contrast, anti-Semitism emerged as a societal norm. This prejudice permeated the entire country; in the 1820's, German immigrant Joseph Marx wrote that "the majority of the Jews in this country now are Europeans ... [who] labor still under the humbled feelings of early oppression" (Berman 98). Until 1826, Maryland had a law in force prohibit-

ing Jews from holding state office or practicing law (Schappes 140). The town of Thomasville, Georgia exceeded that stifling legislation with the expulsion of its Jews in 1862 (Proctor and Schmier 2). Following Thomasville's example, the townspeople of nearby Valdosta shunned the Jews upon their arrival there (Proctor and Schmier 3).

This anti-Semitic climate continued through the Civil War. For example, in 1862, General Grant issued Order No. 11, designed to terminate illegal trade between Northern speculators and Southerners. It reads: "The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department ... are hereby expelled from the department" (Schappes 472). Grant characterized his motivation for the order as a desire to dispose of that "intolerable nuisance," the Jew. Anti-Semitism existed and flourished within the rank and file of the army as well. For example, in a letter to General Butler of the Union army, a German recruit named Max Glass comments that "I was abused for reasons that I never understood. It may have been because ... I am a Jew" (Schappes 494).

In this atmosphere of hostility, the Jews found it difficult to establish themselves as planters and major slaveholders. In the words of the historian Eli Evans: "No one crossed the Southerner in his native land. The Jew was conditioned to fear authority ... he knew his place- the perpetual visitor, tentative and unaccepted, his primary concern to remain and survive (42)." Consequently, not wishing to encroach on the American's territory, the Jew directed his attention away from the more prestigious planter class.

As time passed, Christian anti-Semitism discouraged not only Jewish slave ownership, but also a clear Jewish stance on its legality. For instance, in 1853, a prominent abolitionist, Lewis Tappan, denounced the

American Jewish community for their passive stance on the slavery issue, contrasting them to "the [Christian] friends of universal freedom" (Brackman 86, Schappes 333). However, contemporary scholars point to Christian extremism as the force that hindered a collective Jewish response to the entreaties of the abolitionists (Brackman 87, Whiteman 26). For example, a large constituency of the movement advocated Christianizing the constitution, hoping that a Christian nation would help ease the sectional strife (Whiteman 27). Such a position must have alienated many Jews. As a result, it made sense for them to sever all ties with a largely Christian, often anti-Semitic movement.

Instances of more overt antagonism on the part of the abolitionists abound. For example, Frederick Law Olmsted, a popular author, general secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission, and staunch advocate of abolitionism, described the Jews of South Carolina and Georgia as men without character, and the Jews of Texas as profiteers who preyed on fugitive slaves. This viewpoint accurately depicts the sentiments of many abolitionists (Whiteman 28).

Clearly, Christian animosity adversely affected the Jews' desire and opportunity to integrate themselves into an unwelcoming society. Sensitive to the increasingly frigid manner with which Christian Southerners conducted themselves towards the Jews, Peter Still, a freed slave, relates in his memoirs: "Such was the judgment pronounced upon the noblehearted Jew by men and women who had bought and sold, and beaten, and oppressed the poor until their cry had gone up to heaven ... these were their rights under the Constitution; but for a Jew to have such powers over a choice old servant was quite too bad" (Prickard 228). The Jew, cognizant of the contempt with which the general society regarded him and his

presence in the institution of slavery, proceeded to look for other ways to contribute in his new environment.

Evidence for the role of anti-Semitism as the deterrent for an increased Jewish participation in the slave trade comes from Surinam, whose

"Not only does *The Secret Relationship* rely on flawed scholarship, the inaccuracy of its conclusions also raises historical eyebrows."

number of Jewish owned estates dwindled from 115 to 46 by 1788 (Cohen 23). Although at least partially the result of poor agricultural conditions, the Jewish "downsizing" conveniently coincided with a growing antipathy for the Surinamese Jewish community (Faber 11). According to David Nassy, as time went on, "the Christians attached a sort of baseness to having familiarity with the Jews" (Chyet and Marcus 104). Thereafter, without the necessary Christian economic and moral support, the Jewish plantation infrastructure withered.

Anti-Semitism inhibited Jewish opportunity to enter the slave trade in other Latin American colonies as well. For instance, in Barbados and Jamaica, English merchants, fearing Jewish competition, insured the preservation of their monopoly by initiating unequal taxation for Jews and Christians. Their animosity also resulted in legislation that, until 1705, restricted the number of slaves Jews could own (Faber 11).

Until now we have confined the discussion to the extent of Jewish culpability for the execution of the slave trade and a comparison of what historical fact bears out to the claims made in *The Secret Relationship*. However, we must begin to analyze the attitude with which Jews regarded the blacks brought in the slave trade. Without broaching this issue, *The Secret Relationship* asserts that the Jews played a "dominant role" in

the "Black Holocaust" (Nation 29). With this unsupported *a priori* assumption, the Nation of Islam supposedly acquaints the reader with the cold, hard facts of Jewish dominance. However, the book does not first provide a motive underlying their oppressive behavior.

To establish the source of the pathology that drove Jews to exploit and hate Negroes, *The Secret Relationship* dusts off one of the most ancient of anti-Semitic stereotypes. According to the Nation of Islam, "for

the first time, Jews settled into an environment amenable to their economic and social interests with the freedom to pursue opportunities" (Nation 119). Apparently, the Nation of Islam not only ignores the considerable evidence for anti-Semitism in early America, but also singles out avarice as the root of the Jewish affinity for the slave system. The editors proceed to conclude that because the businessmen regarded the blacks as animated merchandise, they suffered from a prototypical case of racism.

Like the Nation of Islam, Southern Christians did not vacillate before suspecting their Jewish neighbors of selfish motives. Recognizing this, Peter Still, sold to a Jew, portrays the reaction of a Christian Southerner when she learned of the unfortunate transaction: "The young mistress did not want him sold; especially to a Jew, who had no higher wish than to make money" (Prickard 221).

However, based on the historical reality that the Jews mostly shied away from the slave trade, we can suggest an alternative outlook on the Jewish attitude towards the blacks. Throughout history, in countless cultures, the Jew has mastered the unwanted role of the eternal foreigner. Upon his arrival in the United States, as elsewhere, he wanted to cease his interminable wandering and integrate into his new surroundings. As Korn phrased it, "the Jews wanted to



acclimate themselves in every way to their environment" (26). However, this ambition could only come to fruition through adopting the predominant customs of the land, which in the Southern United States included an unwavering devotion to the institution of slavery.

Basing our historical analyses on this perspective, we can expand on our earlier treatment of the findings of the 1830 census that identified seventy five percent of 322 Southern Jews as slave owners. Their motivation for purchasing the few slaves they owned did not stem from racism or greed, as the Nation of Islam claims, but rather from an overwhelming desire to belong. Along the same lines, Monsieur Isaac De Pinto related that "the Jew is a chameleon who everywhere takes on the colors of the various climates in which he lives" (Chyet and Marcus 74). To the Jew, then, the blacks did not embody an inferior race, but rather represented a Jewish opportunity for integration.

Although conformity generally prevailed, Jewish displays of individuality did occur. In one example, the Friedman brothers of Alabama purchased Peter Still with the intention of releasing him, which they later did, after a period of service. Nonetheless, most Southern Jews embraced the slave system-much as whites did.

Admittedly, Jews pledged allegiance to the institution of slavery. However, advocates of an approach which cites a desire to belong as their sole motive overlook a blatant problem: if the majority of the Southern Jewish community sought integration, why did relatively few join the ranks of the planter class? Apparently, despite Jewish resolve to blend into society, Christian antipathy prevented them from successfully reaching its upper echelons.

This modified outlook on Jewish entry into slave-owning society suggests a third vantage point from which we

can view slavery. If Southern Christians inhibited Jewish opportunities through anti-Semitism, then the Jew used the "peculiar institution" as "a social lightning rod absorbing bolts of animosity that might otherwise have struck them" (Proctor and Schmier 3). For the Jew, blacks functioned as convenient buffers; as the Southerner imposed the brunt of his ill will on the Negro, the Jew managed to slowly ascend the social strata. As Korn put it, "the Jews gained in status and security from the very presence of this large mass of defenseless victims who were compelled to absorb all of the prejudices which might otherwise have been expressed more frequently in anti-Jewish sentiment" (67).

Given the mutual history of blacks and Jews in America, how will it influence our increasingly divided futures? Addressing this question, Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, characterized the motivation for writing *The Secret Relationship* as the desire to "rearrange a relationship" that "has been detrimental to us" (Gates A15). To Farrakhan, the time had come to sever all ties with parasitic, racist Jews.

Rather than ignore his comments as the ranting of a lunatic, contemporary Jews should use his vilifying words

"As time passed, Christian anti-Semitism discouraged not only Jewish slave ownership, but also a clear Jewish stance on its legality."

as a backdrop against which to examine elements of our common past. Such an introspection would require Jewish leaders to publicly condemn past Jewish involvement in the slave trade, albeit minimal, as a way of assuring concerned African-Americans that the Jewish community decries the bearded plantation owner as well.

However, we should not place the

onus of reconciliation solely on the backs of Jews. Although many Jews have failed to acknowledge past misdeeds, Blacks also share the blame for largely ignoring the anti-Semitism in their community. As a result of African-American silence, the Nation of Islam maintains its influence over a segment of the Black population. Hence, the Black community must distance itself from such fringe groups in its society to succeed in thawing the deep-freeze in Jewish-Black relations.

Additionally, the Black and Jewish communities should co-sponsor educational forums to demonstrate their "intersecting histories as oppressed minorities ... [which] should be common ground enough for a constructive dialogue" (Brackman 100). These forums would underscore the small niche that Jews occupied in the slave trade and the cooperation of the two races in later years. Moreover, these meetings would function as outlets for dealing with pain, thereby repairing the schism exacerbated by the Nation of Islam.

If the two races wish to reduce the scalding heat of prejudice, they must look beyond past prejudices and practices while refraining from stoking the fire. "History is too valuable to leave to the historians." Better the historians, though, than a hatemonger in a bowtie.

Notes

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2. Brackman, Harold. Ministry of Lies: the Truth Behind the Nation of Islam's "The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews". New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1994.

3. Chyet, Stanley F., ed., and Marcus, Jacob R., ed. Historical Essay on the Colony of Surinam, 1788. New York:

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Comparing the Building of the First and Second Batei Mikdash

David Gottlieb

Much of ancient Jewish history revolves about the two Holy Temples. Not their mere presence alone, but even the process through which they came into being had a meaningful impact upon the lives of the people. It is not surprising, therefore, that *Tanakh* provides extensive accounts of the building of the two *Batei Mikdash*. There are many similarities and differences between the two accounts. Our belief in the divine nature of the Bible mandates that we perceive each story to contain an eternal message, a central theme relevant *le'dorot*. In light of the parallel accounts, we intend to analyze the differences in hope that they provide the keys to unlocking the unique themes inherent in each of the Temples.

Analysis of the Biblical texts which relate to the building of the Temples reveals differences in both structure and detail. In terms of the structure, the texts regarding the building of *Bayit Rishon* can be divided into nine sections:

1. preparing to build, *Divrei Ha'Yamim* II (Chapter 2);
2. building the Temple, *D.H.* (Ch. 3-4), *Melakhim* I (Ch. 6:1-10);
3. message from God, *Mel.* (Ch. 6:11-13);
4. completion of the building, *Mel.* (Ch. 6:14-38);
5. building of Solomon's palace, *Mel.* (Ch. 7);
6. dedicating the Temple, *Mel.* (Ch. 8:1-14);
7. Solomon's prayer, *Mel.* (Ch. 8:15-64), *D.H.* (Ch. 6);
8. God's response, *D.H.* (Ch. 7:1-3, 12-22);
9. celebrating Sukkot, *Mel.* (Ch. 8:65-66), *D.H.* (Ch. 7:8-11).

The texts relating to the building of the second Temple can also be divided into nine sections, albeit with slight variation in content:

1. permission to return to Israel, *Ezra* (Ch. 1);
2. listing the returnees, *Ez.* (Ch. 2);
3. celebrating *Sukkot*, *Ez.* (Ch. 3:1-6);
4. beginning to build, *Ez.* (Ch. 3:3-17);
5. problems with neighbors / stoppage of building, *Ez.* (Ch. 4);

6. continuation of building, *Ez.* (Ch. 5);
7. edict of Darius, *Ez.* (Ch. 6:1-12);
8. completion and dedication of the Temple, *Ez.* (Ch. 6:13-18);
9. celebrating *Pesab*, *Ez.* (Ch. 6:19-22).

While the basic theme of these stories is basically the same — the building of the Temple — there are several obvious and significant structural differences between the two stories. The building of the second Temple is preceded by two chapters of introduction, including an entire chapter dedicated to the names of the participants. Regarding the first Temple, the text relates lengthy detail concerning the measurements of the Temple. The building of the second Temple is interrupted for a significant amount of time. Following the dedication of the first Temple, Solomon offers a very lengthy and meaningful prayer to God. And finally, the story of the first Temple culminates with a powerful statement from God. In all of these instances, there is no parallel occurrence in the building of the other Temple. It would seem that such structural anomalies point to a divergence in focus and message.

It seems that the message of the building of the first Temple is twofold. First, the *Torah* is articulating the *hiddush* of the very idea of a House of God, what the purpose of the *Bait Ha'Mikdash* would be, and the way in which it would completely transform *avodat ba-Shem*. Second, the story is meant to be a confirmation of and a commitment to *malkhut beit David*. The theme of the building of the second Temple, on the other hand, actually seems to be the return of the Jews to Israel and the resumption of a healthy, thriving, and vibrant Jewish community. Towards this end, the *bitryan ba-bayit* plays a very important role since its completion signifies a complete return. Thus emerges a sharp con-

trast: the Temple per se and the Davidic dynasty, on the one hand, and the return and rebuilding of Israel, including the Temple, on the other hand.

These themes are not merely implied by the structure of the respective stories, but seem to be confirmed by numerous literary and exegetical inferences within the text.

In the story of the first Temple, we are immediately alerted to the centrality of the actual house by the many verses which are dedicated to relating the precise measurements of all of the different components of the Temple.¹ Immediately following this account, God appears to Solomon and makes and makes the conditions of His presence in the Temple very clear,

(Concerning) this house which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, and execute My ordinances, and keep all of My commandments to walk in them; then I will establish My word with you . . . and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people, Israel (*Melakhim*, 6:12-13).²

This is a completely new form of religious worship and God needs to instruct the people about the rules of this new relationship. At this point, though, the very idea of a permanent and contained House of God was difficult to comprehend. As Solomon remarks, "But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You; much less this Temple which I have erected (*Ibid.*, 8:27)."^{3,4} Solomon concludes the dedication with a long prayer, primarily concerned with the hope that God will for-



ever listen to his people's prayers. In the midst of this emotional plea, Solomon continually describes God's role as, "You shall hear from Your abode, from heaven" (II *Divrei Ha'Yamim*, 6:21).⁵ Incredibly, within his prayer, Solomon repeats this phrase eight times!⁶ Despite the magnificent House of God which has just been built, Solomon makes clear that God is not contained in that House and that the House is not a manifestation of God. Is He in the Temple or is He in Heaven? Therein lies the enigma of the *Belt Ha'Mikdash*.⁷

The second theme of *Bayit Risbon* is the confirmation of the Davidic dynasty. The first hint of this comes from God Himself, in His introductory message to Solomon. In outlining the conditions of the Temple, God interjects references to His relationship with *David Ha'Melekh*, though they seem out of place; "(Concerning) this house which you are building . . . then I will establish My word with you, which I spoke to David your father" (I *Melakhim*, 6:12). We see *David* mentioned again as the text goes out of its way to tell us that Solomon brought into the finished Temple "all the things that *David* his father had dedicated. . ." (Ibid., 7:51).⁸

The House of David actually becomes the dominating theme by the time Solomon offers his prayer to God. Solomon starts by invoking the memory of his father, and the latter's wish to build the Temple.⁹ While God did not grant David this privilege, He did promise that the Temple would be built by *David's* child.¹⁰ This becomes one of the central themes of the entire Temple - namely, that God's commitment to David has been confirmed, His promise affirmed and His faithfulness secured. This theme is clearly a part of Solomon's celebration.¹¹ He has been fortunate to merit not merely to build the Temple, but also to fulfill what had been promised to his father and to thereby confirm God's investment in the Davidic dynasty. Solomon then proceeds to transform this subject of his thanksgiving (*shevakh ve'boda'ab*)¹² into a prayer of request (*bakasha*):

And now, Lord, the God of Israel, keep with your servant, David my father that which You spoke to him, saying, "There shall not fail you a man before me to sit on the throne of Israel if only your children take heed to their way. . . And now, God of Israel, please let Your word come true, which You spoke to your servant David, my father" (I *Melakhim*, 8:25-26).¹³

As if to punctuate its centrality, Solomon concludes his entire prayer, one in which the text dedicates 32 verses to pleading with God to hear the prayer of the people, with a final reference to his heritage: "O Lord God, do not turn back the face of your anointed one; remember the kind deeds of David Your servant" (II *Divrei Ha'Yamim*, 6:42).

God's response to Solomon similarly reflects this dual purpose. God promises to heed the prayer of His people in times of distress — the communal, Temple oriented theme — and subsequently responds directly to Solomon's private prayer, promising to sustain him and to perpetuate the Davidic dynasty, so long as he follows the ways of God.¹⁴ God concludes by unifying the admonition of what will happen if "*atem*" does not follow the Law.¹⁵ The intentionally vague "you" may constitute a reference to both the Jewish people and the House of David.

This explanation might elucidate two other points in the story. Immediately after Solomon finishes the Temple, which took him seven years,¹⁶ we are told, in detail, about the construction of his palace. Its placement in the text - subsequent to the completion of the Temple but prior to its dedication — and the depth with which the text elaborates upon its dimensions (the entire seventh chapter), as well as the fact that it took him thirteen years to complete,¹⁷ are difficult to understand. But if our analysis is correct, the detail of the text is no longer bothersome and its timing is perfect. Before Solomon dedicated the Temple he first needed to complete his palace as a means of solidifying his rule,

for that was one of the major themes of the entire Temple building process.

This might also illuminate as to why this entire process lacks a single mention of the High Priest. At first glance, this omission seems problematic. From the times of Moses and Aaron, the Jewish people had been subject to dual leadership; especially for the building of the Temple, THE religious centerpiece, the complete absence of the *kohen gadol* seems puzzling to say the least! Our approach may shed light on this perplexing omission. Solomon *had* to dominate, Solomon *had* to lead the building of the Temple because its building wasn't purely a means to enable ensuing religious worship; it was a means of confirming the sovereignty of the Davidic dynasty.

The thrust of the text which relates the building of the second Temple is completely different. In *Ezra*, the story seems to revolve around the "bigger" picture of the Jewish return to the Holy Land, with the rebuilding of the Temple being a mere constituent piece of that puzzle. These impressions are often strengthened when set in contrast to the building of the first Temple.

The story begins with Cyrus's edict to allow the Jews to return to Israel. It is interesting that from the outset, his vision seems to be focused on the Jews rebuilding the Temple.¹⁸ Despite this unbelievable kindness, not all of the Jews returned; many chose to remain behind in Babylonia. This might explain why the text devotes the entire second chapter to the listing of the names of those who were committed enough to return — the real story is their decision and mission to return. Not only are the people mentioned, but even their slaves and cattle, as they are reacquiring the land and reestablishing the Jewish presence in Israel. For this purpose, every person and even every animal contributed, because it was their very presence which not only resanctified the land, but invested it with eternal sanctity, *kedusha sheniah kidsha le'atid lavo*.¹⁹

The text then proceeds to tell us about the construction of the altar.²⁰ Interestingly, the text . . . out of its way

to preface the building of the altar with the suggestion that its impetus was the people, not their leaders, "and the people gathered like one man to Jerusalem" (*Ez.*, 3:1).²¹ Unlike the story of the first Temple, which is really the story of a leader, the building of the second Temple is a story of the people. The altar is mentioned completely independent of any reference to the Temple because the building of the altar wasn't the first step in the rebuilding of the Temple but rather an attempt to enable a sacrificial service to God as a means of proceeding with the return; it is the next step and part of the *bazaka*. The text also seems to lay an inordinate amount of stress on the foundation on the Temple, in contrast to the first Temple, in which it is not mentioned at all. Here we are told that despite the resumption of a sacrificial service, "the foundation of the Temple was not yet laid" (*Ibid.*, v. 6). We are then told of a two year lapse, after which "the builders laid the foundation" (*Ibid.*, v. 10). At this point we are told of an incredible celebration that took place. What was the purpose of the celebration? Had the Temple been built? It is in this regard that we find to the most critical verses of the whole story, the ones that prove that something was amiss: "And many of the (people) . . . who had seen the first Temple when its foundation was laid . . . were weeping with a loud voice . . . for the people were shouting a great shout. . ." (*Ibid.* v. 12-13).

Why were they crying? And why does the text emphasize that what caused them to cry was the contrast to the laying of the foundation of the first Temple? It is due precisely to the fact that the laying of the foundation of the first Temple wasn't a big deal. There was no celebration, and the event isn't even mentioned by the text. The people's celebration in *Ezra*, coupled with their focus on the foundation, makes it clear that the Temple's significance was merely symbolic; it meant that they were home. This is a far cry from the attitude with regard to the first Temple; at this point, the Temple per se didn't excite the people. The idea of a Temple was no longer new.

This is why there is no statement of purpose nor any expression of wonderment about the possibility for a House of God as is manifest in the account of the building of the first Temple.

The text proceeds to tell of the interruption of the building of the Temple. Significant is that the text intertwines this interruption with that of the building of the walls of Jerusalem, despite their lack of chronological proximity.²² To the Jews at the time, these interruptions were of equal significance in that both delayed the "Return." For this reason, the text combines the celebration of the Temple with a celebration for the walls upon their completion.²³

In truth, one might ask why the text even mentions the entire episode of the interruption. Why not just tell about the building of the Temple, by whom, when, how, etc. . . ? It is precisely because this text is devoted to telling the story not of the building of the second Temple but of the return to Israel, and for that story, the people's relationship with their neighbors and its resulting implications for both the Temple and the walls is very significant.

The building of the second Temple was a great accomplishment and cause for great celebration, but it was a celebration of an entirely different focus from the building of the first Temple; it was an exuberance which resulted from a recognition that the Jews had indeed succeeded in their return. The "return" is no small matter; on the contrary, it granted the Land of Israel eternal holiness. There wasn't an expression of appreciation for the magnitude of the Temple per se as there had been for the first Temple; in this case, the Temple did not define the story but played a role in determining its outcome.



Notes

1 *Melakhim* I (6:1-10, 14-38), *Divrei Ha'Yamim* (Chapters 3-4)

2 All translations are taken from *Judaica Press: Melakhim*, trans. R. Reuven Hochberg and R. Abraham J. Rosenberg (New York, 1980).

3 See also *Divrei Ha'Yamim* (2:5)

4 Compounding Solomon's confusion may have been his sensitivity to the misguided intention and disastrous results of the Golden Calf, which was similarly to be an ever-present physical manifestation of God. See R. Yehuda Halevi, *Kuzari* (1:97) and R. Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *Bett Ha'Levi*, s.v. *Ki Tisa* who both similarly explain that the Jews built the "Golden Calf," not in rejection of God, but as a physical manifestation and representation of God. C.F., however, Nahmanides, *Exodus* (32:1).

5 Translations from *Judaica Press: II Divrei Ha'Yamim*, trans. R. Abraham J. Rosenberg (New York, 1992).

6 *Ibid.*, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 33, 35, 39.

7 See *Rashi*, v. 19, who relates to the tension in Solomon's prayer.

8 See also II *Divrei Ha'Yamim* (5:1).

9 See I *Melakhim* (8:15-17) and II *Divrei Ha'Yamim* (6:4-8).

10 *Ibid.*, v. 18-19 and *Ibid.*, v. 8-9.

11 *Ibid.*, v. 20 and *Ibid.*, v. 10.

12 *Ibid.*, v. 23-24 and *Ibid.*, v. 14-15.

13 See also II *Divrei Hayamim* (6:16-17).

14 *Ibid.*, v. 7:17-18.

15 *Ibid.*, v. 19.

16 I *Melakhim*, (6:38).

17 See *Rashi*, I *Melakhim* (7:1) s.v. *va'et* who tries to explain the lengthy time it took to build the palace as praiseworthy of Solomon. This does not appear to be the simple implication of the text.

18 *Ezra* (Chapt. 1).

19 See *Rambam*, *Hilkhot Bett Ha'Behirah* (6:16) and *Hilkhot Terumat* (1:5). For an explanation as to why *kedusha al yedat chazaka* is superior, see *Tosaphot Yom Tov*, *Eduyot* (8:6). I am indebted to Rabbi Shalom Carmy for this reference.

20 *Ezra* (3:2).

21 All translations come from *Judaica Press: Ezra*, trans. R. Abraham J. Rosenberg (New York, 1991).

22 *Ibid.* (4:7-23)

23 *Ibid.* (6:14).



The Prohibitions Against Nitinim

Benjamin Resnick

Descendants of the Givonim, one of the seven Canaanite nations, converted *en masse* in the days of Yehoshua, who made restrictions and "gave them" (*natan*) prohibitions (*issurim*), bringing about the name Nitinim (Yehoshua 9). Even a cursory look at the sources shows the presence of both *issurei dioreita* and *issurei dirabanan* against marrying Nitinim. At the beginning of the third chapter of Ketubot (29a), the mishna includes the Nitinim in the list of those who must undergo the standard punishments for rape, even though the relationship itself was forbidden. Similarly, the Gemara in Makot (13a) says that one who has relations with a Natin is given the punishment of lashes — an indication of an *issur dioreita*. In Yevamot (76a) an actual source is quoted — *lo titchaten bam*, do not marry them (Deut. 7:3). However, further on in Yevamot (79b) there is a debate between Rebbe and Rav Yocahnan regarding the possibility of dissolving the *issur* of marrying the Nitinim by releasing them from their slave status. This implies that the *issur* has to do with their status as slaves - it is forbidden to marry slaves, as it says *vilo yihiyeh kadesh*, do not be a *kadesh* by marrying slaves (Deut. 23:18). The Gemara in Yevamot (78b-79a) states that Moshe, Yehoshua and David each made *gizeirot* regarding the Nitinim. This may indicate an *issur dirabanan*. We will try to identify the root of the *issur* of the Torah

and of the *rabanan* and define their particulars according to the Gemara and *Risbonim*.

The *Issur Dioreita*

Lo Titchaten Bam

The argument between Rava and Rav Sheshet with regards to when *lo titchaten* applies, reveals their feelings about the reasoning behind the prohibition (Yevamot 76a). Rava thinks that there is no problem for a sterile individual to marry outside of the religion since he believes that the root of this *issur* is a *ruchani* one. Marrying non-Jews is *assur* only because it presents a serious threat to the religious stability of any resulting children. Rav Sheshet, however, feels that even one who can not have children still can not marry a non-Jew because there is an element of *kedusbat yisrael* involved, an element which marriage would violate.

Following Rava's line of reasoning, it makes sense that this *issur* would apply to all non-Jews, since the spiritual danger is present as long as one parent is anything but Jewish. In Avodah Zarah (36b), Rav Shimon posits that the *issur* of *lo titchaten* applies to all non-Jews. Rambam agrees that it is *assur* to marry any non-Jew (*Issurei Biah* 12:5,14). He then takes this *halacha* to its logical conclusion by stating that the prohibition against marrying non-Jews extends only until their conversion, since after converting they would encourage their children to follow the

Jewish path. One who is a totally committed Jew would not be a spiritual threat.

Rav Sheshet's belief that the *issur* is a racial issue leads to the conclusion that it is only *assur* to marry the members of the seven Canaanite nations, among them the Nitinim (Avodah Zara 36b). The *Risbonim*, though, are split as to how long this *issur* extends. Meiri (Ketubot 29a) and Rashi (Yevamot 45a) believe that the *issur* applies only until a full conversion to Judaism. After conversion, the Nitinim would be Jews, eliminating any problem of *kedusba*. Ritva (Ketubot 29a) and Ra'avad (quoted in Ramban Yevamot 78b) believe that since they were born as Nitinim even after conversion there would be a prohibition against marriage. However, one could marry the children of converts as they would be conceived *b'kedusba*. Rabbeinu Tam, however, believes that the prohibition lasts forever (Yevamot 79a). The problem of *kedusba* is so great that one can never marry a descendant of one of the seven Canaanite nations.

Vilo Yihiyeh Kadesh

Tosafot (Ketubot 29a), and Ramban (Yevamot 78b) state that the root of the prohibition against marrying Nitinim could be the *issur* of *lo yihiyeh kadesh*. We see that after their conversion Yehoshua says, "You are cursed, and there shall not cease to be of you slaves and woodcutters and drawers of water for the house of the Lord my God," (Yehoshia 9:23). It

is also recorded that "Yehoshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, to this day, in the place where he [Gód] shall choose," (9:27). Their status then invokes the prohibition against marrying slaves. This *issur* lasts as long as their slavery, which is, itself, a matter of dispute in Yevamot (79b). Rebbe Yochanan believes that the slavery to the congregation lasts forever, although, it could theoretically be annulled by the Sanhedrin. Slavery to the altar, however, lasts forever and can not be annulled. Rebbe agrees that the slavery to the congregation can be annulled, but also believes that their slavery to the altar is limited to the time when the altar is standing. As the *Gemara* states, the *nafka mina* between Rebbe and Rebbe Yochanan is whether a release of the Nitinim from the obligation to the community would then permit marriage with a Jew. Since they would still be slaves to the altar, R' Yochanan is not of the opinion that this would help. On the other hand, Rebbe would permit marrying them since their slavery to the congregation had been annulled, and servitude to the altar had dissolved with its destruction.

Nafka Mina

There is a possible *nafka mina* whether the *issur* is one of *lo titchaten bam* or *vilo yibiyeh kadesh*. That is, although one *may* not marry a Natin, *can* one practically? If one tried to marry a Natin would it work - would *kiddushin* be *tofes*? The slave status inherent in the *issur* of *lo yibiyeh kadesh* would prevent *kiddushin* — one was prevented from marrying both on a theoretical and an actual level (Kiddushin 66b). On the other hand, *lo titchaten bam*, like any nor-

mal *issur*, does not prevent that actual marriage and one would be able to marry a Natin, although one would be engaging in an unlawful act. This is how the Mishna *paskens* when it includes Nitinim in the category of cases where "there is *kiddushin* and there is an *aveira*," (3:12) However, in *Kiddushin lo titchaten bam* is explained as implying that there shall be no concept of marriage with Nitinim and that *kiddushin* would not be *tofes* (68b). This explanation would remove the *nafka mina*, because in either case *kiddushin* would not be *tofes*.

The Issur Dirabanan

Issur

It is possible that the *issur dirabanan* is a totally new *issur*. Rambam (Issurei Biah 12:23) and Rashi (Yevamot 78b) believe that once the Nitinim converted there would no longer have been any *issur* against marrying them, however, the *issur dirabanan* made it *assur* once again. Similarly, Meiri says that even if a Natin were to convert a second time the *issur dirabanan* would still prevent a Jew from marrying them (Ketubot 29a). Rambam explains that extreme insolence and cruelty were to be found among the Nitinim (Issurei Biah 12:24). Therefore, though their service to the altar was restricted to the time when it stood, the Rabbis decreed an everlasting prohibition against marrying them.

Tosafot have a different understanding of Rashi (Ketubot 29a). In order to avoid certain problems with his apparent explanation, they state that he believes that there was a formal declaration of slavery proclaimed upon the Nitinim. Rashi cannot say that this was actually *bona fide* slavery,

for, he believes that after conversion the only *issur* is *dirabanan*, while actual slavery would activate the *issur dioreita* of *kadesh*. Similarly, Ritva states that the *rabanan* made it *assur* to marry the Nitinim *ki'ein dioreita*, modeled after the Torah's prohibition against marrying slaves (Yevamot 78b).

Geder

Since Rabbeinu Tam believes the *issur* of *lo titchaten bam* to be everlasting, making it always *assur* to marry a Natin, a *gezeira dirabanan* that restated the *issur* would be redundant (Yevamot 79a). He believes that the Jews began marrying the Nitinim despite the *issur*, and simply adding another *issur* would not result in further discouraging the people. Therefore, the rabbis made the Nitinim into slaves. Why would this *issur* apply only to the Nitinim and not to the other six nations to which *lo titchaten bam* also applies? Why was there concern about the Nitinim in specific? One possibility is that the Jews would only marry the Nitinim because they viewed them as social equals, they were enslaved in order to force the Jews to look down on them. Alternatively, it could be that when an individual would convert from one of the Canaanite tribes everyone would know that it is *assur* to marry them. When the entire nation of Givon converted, however, people mistakenly believed that it was permissible to marry them.

Takana

Alternatively, the rabbinical proclamations placed upon the Nitinim could have simply been restrictions on their conversion. The validity of their conversion is a matter of debate.

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The Academy of Shem and Eber: Beginning a Tradition

Meir Lewis

The Academy of Shem and Eber, the legendary first yeshiva in the world, began what has developed into a 4,000 year history of continuous Jewish education. Although the Torah never explicitly mentions the Academy of Shem and Eber, many commentaries maintain the tradition that such an academy existed, and they invoke its presence to resolve various textual questions that arise throughout Sefer Beraishit. For instance, Yitzchak's sudden disappearance after the Akedah, as well as the fourteen "missing" years of Yaakov's life before arriving at the house of Lavan are both explained through an appeal to the Academy of Shem and Eber. However, while some commentaries use the Academy of Shem and Eber to supplement gaps in the Biblical plot, rarely do they mention any details pertaining to what curriculum Shem and Eber actually studied or to what educational goal they aspired.

Two sources, however, through a trail they leave in Sefer Beraishit, offer suggestions for the purpose of the Academy of Shem and Eber. The first is the commentary which emerges from Yonatan ben-Uziel's translation of the Torah from Hebrew to Aramaic. The second is a collection of statements of Chazal, scattered throughout the Midrash and Gemarah; while no one statement of the Midrash can represent all of Chazal, a pattern of several statements united by a common theme may pro-

vide a fair assessment of their opinion.

Yonatan ben-Uziel, functioning beyond his role as a mere translator, incorporates in his work many details that go unmentioned in the text of the Torah. Regarding our topic, he provides information detailing the interactions that Yitzchak, Rivkah, Yaakov, and Yosef had with the Academy of Shem and Eber. In short, he incorporates the Academy of Shem and Eber into the plot of Sefer Beraishit more than any other commentator does.

In striking contrast to those Rishonim who smooth over the conspicuous disappearance of Yitzchak after the Akedah (Beraishit 22:19) and throughout his mother Sarah's death and burial, Yonatan ben-Uziel asserts that angels took Yitzchak to study with Shem (Eber had not yet attained independent recognition) for three years after the Akedah (Beraishit 22:19). Before Yitzchak re-enters the narrative to meet his new bride Rivkah, Yonatan ben-Uziel introduces him as returning from his studies with Shem, in which "the One who sees but is not seen" (Ibid. 24:62) had been revealed to him. This experience of religious epiphany appropriately precedes Rivkah's first impression of Yitzchak "conversing in the field" (Ibid. 24:63), absorbed in meditative prayer.

Rivkah, as explained by Yonatan ben-Uziel, follows Yitzchak's precedent, for she too seeks Shem's advice.

While pregnant with Yaakov and Esav and experiencing unusual birth-pangs, she traveled to the house of Shem to "request mercy from G-d." (Yonatan ben-Uziel on Beraishit 25:22). Knowing full well that she could have addressed G-d from anywhere, she still chose the house of Shem as the place that would most inspire her urgent prayer.

Like his parents, Yaakov also utilized the resources of Shem and Eber. However, unlike his father Yitzchak, who came to study with Shem charged with the spiritual and emotional momentum of the Akedah and his mother's death, and unlike his mother Rivkah, who came to Shem with a specific need, Yaakov began his studies with Shem and Eber before any of the major events of his life. Drawn by his investigative curiosity, he sought to define his personal relationship with God through the Academy of Shem and Eber. On the passage that identifies Yaakov as "a dweller of tents" (Ibid 25:27), Yonatan ben-Uziel explains that these tents were "the houses of study of Shem and Eber where Yaakov served while seeking instruction from God."

Thus, unlike his parents, Yaakov took advantage of the resources of Shem and Eber *before* embarking on the adventures of his life. He abandoned his studies only once it became necessary to flee his brother Esav and leave home for twenty two years, undertaking the challenge of living in the house of his uncle, Lavan.

Based on chronology, we can determine that Shem and Eber died during the early years of Yaakov's life, and no evidence suggests that their institution lingered after their demise. However, Yonatan ben-Uziel asserts that when Yaakov arrived in Sukkot after finally resolving his feud with Esav, he established his own house of study (Ibid. 33:17), a symbolic gesture over Esav who had initially forced him to abandon his studies with Shem and Eber. Additionally, this represented the best way for Yaakov to promote his own style of education among his children.

Yosef particularly followed his father Yaakov's educational pattern and experienced an ironically parallel sequence of events. Immediately before the confrontation with his brothers that forced Yosef away from his family for twenty two years, Yonatan ben-Uziel inserts that Yosef had been in the Beit Midrash (Ibid 37:2). Yosef, like Yaakov, invested his youth in absorbing as much of the available education as possible before being cast into the turbulent, unpredictable plot of his life.

Finally, Yonatan ben-Uziel comments that when the budding Jewish nation migrated to Egypt and reunited with Yosef, they established a house of study within the Jewish settlement in Goshen (Ibid. 47:27), endeavoring to preserve the facility that had hitherto provided guidance and fostered religious growth for their founding members. Thus, we see that Yonatan ben-Uziel threads the presence of the Academy of Shem and Eber and its legacy through the major events and characters of Sefer Bereishit.

Chazal's statements scattered through the Midrash and Gemarah sketch a somewhat different picture

of the Academy of Shem and Eber. Given the small world population, and even smaller theistically aware population, during the time period in which Shem and Eber lived, various sources in Chazal use Shem and Eber in the role of pre-Jewish guardians of religious tradition.

This aspect of Shem and Eber primarily manifests itself in early Jewish legal tradition. Several statements in Chazal allude to a court led by Shem and Eber that presided over legal matters regarding the seven Noahite laws. One such allusion claims that Esav did not dare kill Yaakov immediately after finding out that his brother had attained Yitzchak's blessing because he feared the judgement of Shem and Eber, knowing that murder constituted one of the seven Noahite laws (Midrash Rabbah 67:8).

Similarly, the Gemarah Avodah Zara 36b claims that the court of Shem and Eber presided over the trial of Tamar after Yehudah accused her of sexual promiscuity. Rashi indicates that since both Shem and Eber died before Yehudah's birth, it is impossible that Shem and Eber were actually present; therefore, Rashi concludes that the court of Shem and Eber persisted long after the deaths of its founders, and it continued to enforce people's adherence to the Noahite laws (Makkot 23b).

According to Chazal, in addition to overseeing the early legal system, Shem also maintained an early form of priesthood. The most famous source for this tradition is the Midrash, cited by Rashi, that identifies Shem with the priest Malki-Zedek (Midrash Rabbah 43:6). Other later sources in fact delineate a chain of priests from Adam to Aaron, with Shem/Malki-Zedek as a critical link in the continuity from Noah to

Avraham. Furthermore, although contrary to what Halacha eventually deems the appropriate role of priests, some statements in Chazal depict Shem and Eber as responsible for maintaining the sacred burial grounds. Specifically, after Avraham died, a statement of the Midrash claims that Shem and Eber secured him a plot in the *Ma'arat Hamachpela* next to his wife Sarah (Ibid. 62:3).

Whether or not Chazal intended all these statements to represent the literal intent of the Torah, the consistent theme that runs through them serves as evidence for their general impression of the purpose of Shem and Eber's institution. From these references to Shem and Eber, we see an emerging trend that depicts Shem and Eber as preservers of an early religious-legal tradition. Shem and Eber functioned in these various situations as a temporary but necessary link in the transmission of early laws and culture to later generations.

Hand in hand with Chazal's tendency to depict Shem and Eber as guardians of legal tradition come sources that minimize their spiritual element. Regarding Rivkah's prayer for mercy from God that she performed while visiting with Shem and Eber, a Midrash suggests that, based on inconsistencies with the number of prophetesses in Tanach, she must not have actually communicated with God, but rather sought advice from the wise scholar Shem. This Midrash then suggests that the lesson the Torah hopes to transmit through the phrase "Rivkah sought to confront G-d" (Ibid 25:22) is that "when someone meets with an elder scholar, it is as if he meets with God (Midrash

continued on page 25

Becoming What You Hate, *continued from page 9*



One of the people arrested, Avigdor Eskin, had been busy, being that he was just sentenced to four months in prison for putting a curse on the late Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin one month before the assassination. He was also charged for organizing another "cursing," this time targeting Shimon Peres.¹³ In many respects, these sort of people are hard to take seriously, but what would have happened had these men accomplished their goal and started armed clashes? In reality it is dangerous for us to ignore these people being that they can strongly affect and directly influence the events in the Mid-East.

But perhaps this next example is the most perverse anti-Arab story here. In an effort to "fuel anti-Palestinian sentiment during Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to Israel" in September of 1997, Yaacov Schwartz staged his own kidnapping. He was found two days after he had "disappeared" tied up with minor bruises and burns in an abandoned building in Ashkelon. While he was "missing," his wife made a televised appeal to Albright and to Arafat for help. He confessed his story to police when confronted with evidence which contradicted his story. He claimed that he did it to "unite the nation around a common aim."¹⁴

At the beginning of this article I wrote about a person who unwittingly had been turned into the very thing he was trying to fight. With the above three stories in mind, I would now like to pose two questions aimed as much at myself as at everyone reading these words. What have we become? And secondly, slightly more frightening: where are we headed? ❖

Notes

1 Let's Hope We're Not Becoming Normal, by Uri Elitzur, aired on Arutz-7 on Jan. 1 1997

2 Kevin Sack, "Florida Man Put Bomb at Peres Speech, Police Say" New York Times 26th Feb. 1997, A1, A14.

3 Joel Greenberg, "Israeli Melee as Women Pray With Men at the Western Wall," New York Times, 12th Aug. 1997, A2.

4 Serge Schmemmann, "Orthodox Israelis Assault Jews Praying at Western Wall," New York Times 13th Jun. 1997, A2.

5 Aryeh Dean Cohen, "Arsonists Destroy Reform Kindergarten" Jerusalem Post 2nd Sept. 1997, Jerusalem Post Online.

6 "Assailants Defile Reform Synagogue" the Mid-east Dispatch, 8th Oct.

1997, online email account: arutz@www.iipub.com

7 Haim Shapiro "Conservative Synagogue vandalized on Yom Kippur" Jerusalem Post, 13th Oct. 1997

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9 "Inciting Maternal Against Netanyahu" the Mid-east Dispatch, Oct. 29th 1997, online access: <http://www.iipub.com>

10 "More Threatening Letters for MKs," the Mid-east Dispatch, Nov. 21st 1997, "Left Wing Extremists Issue Death Threats," the Mid-east Dispatch, Nov. 13th 1997, "Right-wing MKs Receive Death Threats" the Mid-east Dispatch, Nov. 18th 1997, online access: <http://www.iipub.com>

11 Michal Yudelman, "Poll: Hundreds of thousands justify political assassination," Jerusalem Post, 30th Oct. 1997

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The Merchant of Texas - Notes, *continued from page 15*

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14. The Nation of Islam, Historical Research Department. *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Lattimer Associates, 1992. (Cited in text as Nation)

15. Whiteman, Maxwell. "Introduction" to *The Kidnapped and the Ransomed: Jews in the Antislavery Movement*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1995.

know that the three tendrils represented three days, as opposed to three weeks, months, or years? Ibn Ezra answers that Yom Huledet Paroah was three days away, so he assumed this was what was being hinted at by the number three. Later Mefarshim, beginning with Radak, say that the extremely rapidly paced development of the vine sprouting tendrils, flowering and producing mature grapes hinted at the proximity of the fulfillment. Daat Sofrim suggests that Yosef felt the number three to be significant, as it is an unusually small number of tendrils to be on a vine. Similarly, a question that surfaces in the dream of the Sar Haofim is how Yosef knew that his corpse would be hanged. Radak answers that hanging provided the occasion for birds to eat his flesh. Hence, inference and assumption also play a part in the interpretation of dreams.

When Yosef interpreted Paroah's

dream, he added a codicil to its contents. He suggested that Paroah appoint someone to collect and store grain during the years of plenty. Although this was not part of the dream, Yosef added it to his interpretation. Why? Sforno answers that this was so Paroah would take advantage of his dreams. This exemplifies the ability of a Poter Chalomot to take the initiative and add to the interpretation.

Similarly, in interpreting the Nevuchadnetzar's first dream, Daniel began with an interesting comment. He said that the dream was not humanly explicable (Daniel 2:27). Malbim and Alshich comment that Daniel was trying to justify the inability of the Babylonian sages to interpret the dream. Why would he do this? One possibility is that as his fellow captives also were included in the death sentence, it was them he was trying to save. Another possibility is that he wished to save the Babylonian sorcerers,

as otherwise he would be forced to do all of the necromancing, which would be inappropriate for a good Jew.

In addressing the second dream, Daniel ignores some details in his explanation. Nevuchadnetzar had mentioned some details of the tree. It had beautiful branches and plentiful fruit, and gave much food. Wild beasts took shelter in its shade and birds perched in its branches (Daniel 4:9). Daniel quoted this but did not explain the significance (Daniel 4:18). Mefarshim offer various explanations, though. Abravanel suggests that the branches were nobles, the leaves were armies of defense, and the fruits were the benefits of Nevuchadnetzar's rule. Saadiyah Gaon explains the branches as governors and the tree's visibility as the legions. According to his view, its fruits were the general populace. The wild animals, then, were the nations of the world and the birds were the Jewish people. [see also Rashi on Brit Bein

HaBetarim (Breishit 15:10 "v'et hatzippor lo vatar") for another instance of animals being taken as symbol of the nations of the world and birds as symbolic of the Jewish people] Despite the significances in the details, though, Daniel chose to convey only what he believed to be the main idea.

The figure of Poter Chalomot, then, was assigned great power and significance in the Biblical world. It is assumed (except according to Ibn Ezra's interpretation) that their predictions will necessarily occur. They are presumed to be individuals of unique wisdom and insight who, through their interpretations and clarifications of others' dreams, are expected to persuade. They have great stature in their own rights and thus play an important role in Biblical character and plot development.

Netinim, *continued from page 20*

Ra'avad (Ramban Yevamot 78b) and Meiri (Ketubot 29a) agree that the conversion of the Nitinim was not a valid conversion, but disagree with the nature of the proclamation concerning them. Meiri believes that the only decree was that the Nitinim convert again, fully, at which point it would be permissible to marry them. Ra'avad believes the rabbinical mandate was more far reaching, rendering all Nitinim unfit for conversion. Since they can no longer convert, it is never permissible to marry a Natin.

The Final Picture

When push comes to shove, when does one think that marriage to the Nitinim is possible or assured? Rabbenu Tam believes that one can never marry a Natin. Rashi and Ramban say that one would have been able to marry a Natin once converted but the rabbis forbade it. Rava believes that it would have been permissible to marry the children of Nitinim who converted were it not for the *issur de'abotayem*. Ra'avad says that we could theoretically marry a Natin who converted but since we no longer accept conversions of Nitinim it is still *assur* to marry them. Tosafot and Ramban believe that since they are slaves it is *assur* to marry them though if their slavery ended by some means it would be permissible. Rashi seems to say that once a *Netin* converts a *Netin* (that is, a second time), it is still *assur* to marry a Natin.



Answering the Call, *continued from page 7*

For some reason, those who have adopted the latter position take a more relaxed attitude toward the need for Jews to return to Eretz Yisrael. They do not see the urgency. It is specifically to those Jews who think we can lose what we have gained that the Dod knocks the loudest. Why the complacency? Why the apathy? Why the laziness? How can one sit by idly if the Jewish Nation can lose what it has achieved if it is within their power to make a difference? How could the latter position have become the one that fails to encourage Aliyah to Eretz Yisrael if, according to it, the possibility of "Dodi Chamak Avar," the Dod turning away and leaving yet again, looms large as a possibility?

But besides the call to physically return to Eretz Yisrael, the period of Shivat Tzion and the potential Ge'ulah on the horizon calls upon us, perhaps even louder, to reorient ourselves to a national religion. Our nation is not just the sum of its component parts. Knesset Yisrael has a collective purpose in the world. It is not just to get each and every Jew into his or her own personal Olam Habah, but it is to spread the word of Hashem to the entire world. Not Hashem of the four volumes of Shulchan Aruch, but Hashem of all of the Six Sidrei Mishnah which can only be fulfilled in Eretz Yisrael, and Hashem that reveals himself to His servants the prophets and to His entire Nation in the Beit Hamikdash. The Dod cries out to us to think about these ideals as applicable to us. How will we understand the lives that we will live when Mashiach comes if the reorientation process does not begin now? How will we develop the desire to return to Eretz Yisrael if we do not see Eretz Yisrael as the only place where the Jewish Nation can reveal God in His full glory to the entire world and not merely as another Mitzvah like respecting one's parents?

Fifty years have passed, many more since the beginning of Shivat Tzion.

How many more Chasdei Hashem do we have to see to be convinced? How many more opportunities must be lost before we realize what is at stake? As 1948 and 1967 slowly slip out of our memory and our collec-

tive consciousness, the Dod's knocking becomes more and more inaudible. Chevron is virtually gone. What about Yerushalayim? When will we answer the call? ❖

Shem and Eber, *continued from page 22*

Rabbah 63:6." Thus we find a conspicuous minimization of Rivkah's spirituality coupled with an elevation of the stature of elder scholars. Furthermore, regarding Yaakov's learning experience with Shem and Eber, a Midrash claims that later on Yaakov transmitted to his son Yosef all the *laws* he had learned from Shem and Eber (Ibid. 84:8), thereby following the general trend of Chazal to classify the curriculum of Shem and Eber as legal knowledge.

Although Yonatan ben-Uziel and Chazal may diverge in their versions of the Academy of Shem and Eber, they overlap in their common goal of resolving what constituted the pre-Sinai Jewish tradition. Neither is ready to claim that Shem and Eber knew all 613 mitzvot or learned Gemarah with Brisker Chakiroth, but they both want to suggest how Judaism was defined before the formalization of its culture at Sinai. Yonatan ben-Uziel portrays the academy as an institute that fostered spiritual growth and provided personal guidance. In contrast, the theme running through the Midrash depicts Shem and Eber as preservers of traditional law and ritual at a time when no one else was available to bear this mantle.

This discrepancy in opinion over what services were provided by the first center of Jewish education is still a familiar debate to us today. Determined students at some point try to evaluate the strengths of the learning institu-

tions that span our socio-religious spectrum to decide where they would most prosper in their religious endeavor.

One such example that comes to mind of a student standing on the cusp between these two options is Rav Schneur Zalman of Liady. When, at the age of twenty, this aspiring young scholar decided to leave his home town Liady in search of a teacher and guide, two centers of learning beckoned his attention. One was Vilna, the Lithuanian capital and center of Talmudic scholarship. The other was Mezrich, the home of the "Maggid of Mezrich", heir to Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, the leader of the then-young Hasidic movement. Much to the chagrin of his father-in-law, Shneur Zalman opted not to attend the academy of Vilna for which he was slated. He instead departed for Mezrich. When prompted to explain his action, Rabbi Shneur Zalman responded, "In the Yeshiva of Vilna, I would further my Talmudic knowledge. In the Yeshiva of Mezrich I will learn how to pray (Likkutei Dibburim III)." Although not necessarily the appropriate choice for everyone, that decision surely changed the course of his life. From the interpretations and explanations offered by Yonatan ben-Uziel and Chazal, we find evidence that this dichotomy between law and emotional spirituality has always been a part of our national and religious history. ❖

Message from the Editor

Rachel Leiser

It is difficult to conceive of another American college campus with as much Jewish identity as Yeshiva University. It would be ridiculous to attempt a list of religious activities on campus, for by its very nature YU fosters a heightened Jewish consciousness on the part of its students. Yet, there is one aspect of Jewish cultural life that many students feel has been neglected by the YU administration and student governments alike; that is, an appropriate commemoration of Yom haShoah v'haGvurah. Two years ago, outraged by the fact that there had been no official ceremony on campus, a number of students from SCW and YC decided to revive the previously defunct Zachor Club in hopes of remedying the situation in years to come. Over the past two years Zachor has enjoyed a large measure of success, is funded by the various student councils as well as the President's Circle, and successfully planned a program for this year's Yom haShoah v'haGvurah.

Those students who are in favor of such a ceremony tend to refer to it simply as the Yom haShoa program, leaving out the last half of the phrase. Yet, this last half is crucial to the understanding of the real significance of the day. Created in the fifties by the Israeli government, Yom haShoah v'haGvurah is arguably less about Holocaust remembrance and more about the "new Jew's" attempt to reconcile himself with the action of the "old" European Jewry. The language used by the Israelis is that of definitive action, of resistance and

"bravery" - language that reflects their desires if not the reality. It is no coincidence that the official memorial day is on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, a sequence of events that typified the sort of defiant action deemed by Israel to symbolize the courage of the Jew.

The past few years have seen two interesting and important trends develop in Jewish intellectual circles. The first is the arrival of the so-called "new historians" - historians willing to confront the realities of Zionism's past without necessarily abandoning a pro Israel stance. The second is the rejection of the use of the Holocaust as a basis for a new religion. No moral person denies that the memory of the atrocities perpetrated against the Jews by Hitler and his sympathizers should be passed on to subsequent generations. Yet, there is a crucial difference between honoring the victims (those who fought actively, those who fought passively, and those who did not fight at all) and turning the Holocaust into the pivotal aspect of Jewish identity. Perhaps it is too early to draw historical parallels, perhaps it does them a disservice to glean moral absolutes from their fates.

If Yeshiva University students wish to attend ceremonies on Yom haShoah v'haGvurah, that is their prerogative. If they wish to plan events on campus and solicit funds, I wish them luck. All that I ask in return is that respect be given to the other side as well, that guilt be left out of all equations and arguments. Just because one chooses not to attend such a ceremony does not mean that one is a Holocaust denier, or even that one is an apathetic Jew. It is possible to remember the Holocaust all year round.

Torah L'Maddah

Joshua Abraham

Yeshiva University is a veritable island. Around it, and in fact through it, the local Hispanic community shuffles and swarms—but it is largely ignored. This phenomenon is astonishing. During the day, I walk by just as many Dominicans as I do students, yet I pay them absolutely no heed. They are invisible. They completely escape my regard, and I think nothing of them. Interestingly, however, they have not escaped the notice of those who administrate the Yeshiva University Library Museum. Almost every day, as I wait for the next elevator in the library's austere lobby, I notice a large pack of youngsters, gleefully creating modest works of art, or acting out some sort of dramatic scene. This arrangement is odd. For some unfathomable reason an effort of cultural exchange has been initiated. How strange indeed! "The Forces That Be," divining their schemes deep within this bulwark of an institution, have invited the local community to partake of our Yeshiva. Sounds a bit suspect, doesn't it? After all, isn't Judaism about intense Torah study, faithful adherence to mitzvot, and a complete lack of concern for the outside world? This problem looms large upon the Y.U. student.

Let me clarify. As an institution and an ideological movement, Yeshiva University preaches the value of Torah U'Maddah. What does Torah U'Maddah mean to the modicum of students who actually subscribe to its tenets? In its basic conception, Torah U'Maddah maintains that Judaism has the potential to be enriched by other



cultures and philosophies. The Jew is revitalized with an infusion of foreign knowledge, thus engendering a grand synthesis. In short, Torah U'Maddah represents the confluence of the greatest ideas in secular and Jewish thinking, and what emerges is a form of Judaism better understood and closer to ultimate truth. This is the focus in Yeshiva University, and indeed it represents the closest and most liberal stance that normative Judaism is willing to take regarding secular culture. While I wholeheartedly follow the Torah U'Maddah cult and submissively offer myself upon its altar, I believe that more is needed—but in the opposite direction. It is high time that we moved beyond Torah U'Maddah. I thus declare the Torah L'Maddah revolution!

What is Torah L'Maddah? It is best understood in contrast to Torah U'Maddah.

Torah U'Maddah takes from other cultures. Torah L'Maddah gives. Torah U'Maddah believes that Judaism ultimately benefits from the historic advances of other nations. Torah L'Maddah, however, places the Jewish people at the vanguard of world history, and asks the Jewish people to be cognizant of that status. The focus of Torah U'Maddah is inward. Its tacit question is, how can the outside world enrich Jewish society? Torah L'Maddah, on the other hand, espouses that Judaism ultimately must affect the very fabric of the historical and cultural landscape that is shared by Jews and Gentiles alike.

The central tenet of Torah L'Maddah is that it is the responsibility of every Jew to incorporate gentiles, other nations, and other cultures into his consciousness. Torah L'Maddah, at the very least, asks the Jew to cultivate some sort of feeling

for other peoples and to recognize that we are all part of the same historical drama. Its eschatological dream is that one day all the nations of the world will recognize the primacy of the Jewish God and will apprehend the true meaning of God's word. Thus, Judaism must be seen by its practitioners as exhibiting a positive affect on other cultures and peoples, either as a result of direct intervention or by means of a latent and indirect influence.

The Torah L'Maddah directive finds its origin in divine command and represents the driving force behind Jewish dogma and praxis. The naive reader, probing the Tanach for some indication of Jewish teleology, encounters God commanding Abraham to leave his home, venture towards a distant land, and enter into a Divine covenant—the purpose being “and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). This is the mandate of Judaism. In its inception, Judaism was to serve a universal purpose. All of our commandments complement this very idea. Even seemingly particularistic commandments such as *mitzvat yishuv ba'aretz* have a universalistic intent. We are to settle the land and keep God's commandments so that the nations of the world recognize that “Surely this nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great that has God so near to them” (Deut. 4:7). We move to Israel not only to fill our spiritual lacunae (and to eat a lot of Burger King), but to be a part of a model nation—a nation whose example beckons the nations of the world to follow.

So, does Torah L'Maddah sound familiar? The Tanach and our liturgy are pregnant with its message. Nevertheless, given the gravity and centrality of the concept, it is both shocking

and upsetting that it seldom plays a prominent role in our Jewish consciousness. Our Judaism is barren of Torah L'Maddah, and at best, Torah L'Maddah enters peripherally into our Jewish education.

For the sake of argument, I would now like to appeal to the introspective powers of my readers. What do you *really* think about that guy sitting next to you on the subway? Does he play any role in your understanding of Judaism? Is he entirely absent from your world view and completely removed from your fundamental religious concerns? Sadly, a rampant lack of Torah L'Maddah awareness inheres in our university and is further buttressed by those faint voices of opposition that echo through the haunts and recesses of Y.U. Most have yet to inculcate the message that those kids in the university's library lobby represent.

Torah L'Maddah is not Southern-Baptist-style missionary work, nor is it the Jewish response to Hare Krishna. Rather, it is the resurgence of normative trends in Judaism that have, perplexingly, long been suppressed and forgotten. Torah L'Maddah does not ask the Jewish student to forgo his Torah study, move out of his Jewish community, and dedicate his formative years to distributing neon-colored propaganda in Times Square. Rather, Torah L'Maddah asks the Jew simply to be cognizant of Judaism's historical mission and to ingrain that understanding into his core set of beliefs. Thus, Torah L'Maddah represents the infusion of global concerns into the consciousness of every Jew. Finally, it espouses the hope that one day, “Hashem will be for a king on the entire land, and on that day Hashem will be one and His name one.”

Hakarat HaTov - An Open Letter

The school year has a way of flying by. Midterms sneak up on us, we breathe a quick sigh of relief, and then finals are here again. In all the rush, it's sometimes difficult to find the time, heart, and determination to focus our energies on anything other than the task at hand. It's with this understanding that we thank each and every person who volunteered for Hamevaser this year. We appreciate and admire your dedication; more importantly, we value your friendship. Those who spent time in our office, at our meetings, and doing the little things that go into publishing a journal can fully appreciate the progress and achievements of the past year. So, to each of you, thank you.

Rachel Leiser Yossi Ziffer
Editors - in - Chief



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