



# The Observer

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF STERN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

Thursday October 17, 1974

No. 144

New York City

Volume XVII, No. 1

## Beis Hamedrash Sessions Restructured



Girls begin work for Beis Hamedrash program.

As a result of demands on the part of Stern students for a more intense *Limudei Kodesh* program, the *Bais Medrash* program will resume this semester. This study program will take place on Monday and Wednesday nights in the dormitory from 7:15 to 9:45 P.M.

This year marks the start of the new *Shanah* program, which allows women from other universities to come to Stern College for a full year to devote their time to pursuing intensive *Judaic Studies* courses. All those participating on the *Shanah* program are required to be part of the *Bais Medrash*, as it is included

in their schedule.

A new dimension has been added to the *Bais Medrash* program. Students interested can register for up to four credits as part of their academic pursuits or independent of the everyday curriculum. It will count as 1 *Judaic Studies* course. For all students not eager to join the *Bais Medrash* for the credit offered, there will be an advisor on hand for those who come to learn *Torah L'Shma*. On the advanced level, a two hour *shiur* will be offered and four hours of *chevrus* learning is being offered.

## Kahane Pleads For Aliyah

by Beth Dauber

On Wednesday, September 11th, during club hour, SCW was honored by the presence of guest speaker, Rabbi Meir Kahane. He was introduced by Karen Taylor, a graduate of Stern. She began by urging her audience to accept Rabbi Kahane with an open mind. However, as those who attended the lecture will readily admit, her fears were groundless. The Rabbi quickly won over the audience with his dynamic style, accentuating his message.

Rabbi Kahane spoke forcefully and with great conviction, frequently banging on the lectern for emphasis and raising his clenched right fist in a subconscious "Never Again" position. Yet, he did not hesitate to use a quick quip when the situation called for one. His humor was more of a light-hearted seriousness that pained the listener as soon as he became aware of the truth behind the jest. Rabbi Kahane's own face mirrored the deep-rooted sorrow and anguish that he felt over the condition of today's Jews and the dire need for *Aliyah*.

Rabbi Kahane stated many valid reasons for American Jews to go on *Aliyah*, attacking the issue from every standpoint. He began with the widely held concept of "the beginning of the redemption," naming some of the many miracles associated with the rebirth of the State of Israel. He proceeded from there to the phrase, "in its time, I will hurry it," referring to the *Geulah*. Rabbi Kahane explained the obvious contradiction with the traditional response that "if the Jews deserve the redemption, G-d will hurry it; if not, then He will first bring it in its proper time."

The question remains, "What do we, today's Jews, merit?" Furthermore, to what do we owe the existence of the State? Rabbi Kahane offered two possibilities. Firstly, the *Neturei Karta* response, that we don't deserve Israel, therefore we don't have to obey the

rules and regulations of the state. Then he gave us his retort based on Ezekiel, "And when they came onto the nations wither they came they profaned my Holy name." The profanity is not found in the lack of *yeshivoh* or Jewish communities, for there are many throughout the United States. The profanity lies in the persistency of the nations to ask, "Where is G-d?" Ezekiel quotes the nations as saying, "These are the people of G-d and they have been exiled from their land." It follows, therefore, that if the profanity of G-d's name must be the existence of the State, G-d will redeem us, not for our own sake, but rather to glorify His own name. G-d will end the *galuth* for the sake of His purity and sanctity. What right do we have to remain in *galuth* and desecrate His holy name?

Why don't American Jews go on *Aliyah*? Rabbi Kahane quoted a few of the cliched excuses and rapidly pointed their inherent fallacies. For example, there are those who say that the State isn't "frum" enough, but since when has Queens banned bus service on *Shabbat*?

One fact that we must realize is that we are our fathers' children. Just as the generation of the wilderness was willing to forego their future for the sake of the garlics of Egypt, so are we, today, willing to give up *mitzvos yishuv haaretz* for the materialistic benefits of America. At this point he discussed the importance of this *mitzvah*, mentioning how most Rabbinic sources consider it a duty of every Jew to make *Aliyah*. However, many "Orthodox" Jews are "machmir" with regard to every *mitzvah* except for this one.

Part of the blame for our weaknesses lies in our blind faith in the *Goyim*, claims Kahane. He alluded to the fact that this was characteristic of American Jewry during the Holocaust and is still prevalent among today's Jews. Unfortunately, we have too much confidence in American goodwill. Many of Kahane's attacks were



Rabbi Meir Kahane addresses student body.

directed against Henry Kissinger, whom he called "the refugee." The former Israeli government was also criticized because of the weakness they showed in the course of the Israeli-Syrian prisoner trade talks.

Rabbi Kahane expounded on the laws concerning the return of Israeli occupied land. He pointed out that it is a Biblical prohibition to sell Israeli land to any other nation. How much more does this prohibition apply to returning the land ex-gratis?

In conclusion, the Rabbi made an appeal to all Jews that they should realize that the Arabs want all of Israel at any cost. He urged us to send correspondence to influential people and to attend rallies. His message came across loud and clear — The *Geulah* depends on us!

## BA/MSW Program Instituted

A new program, this time in the field of Social Work, will become a part of the Stern College curriculum for the Spring Semester. A joint program involving Wurzweiler School of Social Work will permit a Stern undergraduate to apply courses at that graduate center towards B.A. and the M.S.W. requirements, thereby making it possible to complete studies for a Master's in Social Work in five years as opposed to six.

There will be no rigid, pre-planned program. Professor Steven Donschick of the Wurzweiler School of Social Work will be the liaison with Stern College. He will be at the College every Wednesday to speak

with individual students who are interested in pursuing their studies in this field. He will evaluate Stern courses and determine how well they correlate with courses given at WSSW.

If interested in this program, the Stern student will have two options. First, the shaped major, in which case Professor Donschick will review the students program. All students who are interested are requested to make an appointment with the Professor through the Office of the Dean. The second option is a professional option whereby the student applies to Wurzweiler in her junior year and begins her studies towards an MSW at that time.

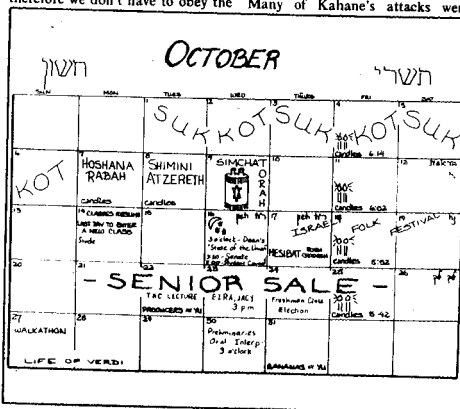
## Student Council Initiates Activity



Student Council resumes.

## Finch Courses Available to SCW Students

The Office of the Dean has finally disclosed the fact that SCW students can now take courses at Finch College as part of their regular programs, and at no additional charge. This program should lessen considerably the financial burden of those who are taking shaped majors. Stern students will be in a position to take advantage of theatre, art and language courses offered at Finch, while Finch students participating in this exchange program are expected to make use of Stern's wide variety of *Judaic Studies* and Science courses. Listings of Finch courses are available in both the Registrar's and Dean's office at SCW. The home school reserves the right to deny permission to the student. Registration for this program took place before *Yom Kippur*, therefore few students will have the opportunity to take advantage of this program this semester. More information is available at the Office of the Registrar.



## A Missing Link

By our junior year at Stern, most of us have chosen a major area of study. At this time, we would hope for the opportunity to have a voice in the planning of courses within various departments.

In the past, the English Department has had a student representative participate in its departmental meetings. The representative is chosen by the English majors and acts as a liaison between the students and the faculty of the Department. She is in a position to communicate the thoughts of the students to the faculty, and with them can help develop the goals and courses in the major.

We feel that this role of a student representative to the department is a valuable and constructive role which should be extended to each department in the school.

All girls in a major can elect a representative to act as their liaison between the teachers and the students. In that way, the system will facilitate efficient communication that will lead to the development of more cohesive and fulfilling areas of major study.

## A Need For Teshuva

It has always been Stern's responsibility to promote a warm **Shabbat** atmosphere. This usually includes importing a **minyan** for services held in the auditorium, organizing group discussions or lectures on **Parashat Hashavua** or related topics, and providing the availability of a place to eat, sing and share together in the joy of **Shabbat**. The latter component has, for years, been found in the cafeteria. A system has evolved of reserving meals for **Shabbat**, and unless the cafeteria is open, there is no organized **minyan**. Thus, a proper **Shabbat** atmosphere at Stern, in a collective sense, is dependent upon the cafeteria's being open.

It is unfortunate that the first **Shabbat** of the New Year has become a bad memory for many Stern girls. Numerous girls had returned from **Rosh Hashanah** vacation for the three-day interval of classes prior to the two week vacation, only to find the cafeteria closed for **Shabbat**. The fact that it was **Shabbat Shuvah** intensified the unfortunate situation. A **Shabbat** which should have been especially meaningful at Stern was, in fact, characterized by confusion, disappointment and isolation for many. Had there been some foresight and general cooperation, perhaps this predicament might never have occurred.

The basic problem in this case was simply a lack of coordination between the cafeteria and the dorm. Most girls waited until Friday, September 20, the first day of classes after **Rosh Hashanah** vacation, to purchase meal tickets. The cafeteria had never officially determined on their calendar or verbally whether or not the cafeteria would remain open, until that Friday morning. The result was total confusion and frustration for everyone concerned. The cafeteria quickly ran out of chicken for take-out orders, thus making accessibility of food for **Shabbat** an additional problem. Likewise, work-study girls who had planned to be waitresses were unable to serve.

A request has been made for an official statement concerning the cafeteria's **Shabbat** schedule. We urge immediate action on this important issue. Students must be informed of the cafeteria's schedule in ample time to make alternate plans. Likewise, greater consideration should be applied in determining whether or not the cafeteria should remain open. In this case, the closing of the cafeteria was inexcusable. Girls who were asked to return for three days of classes should not have been suddenly deprived of **Shabbat** meals as well as of a **Shabbat** atmosphere. It is hoped that certain people will do **teshuvah** for last **Shabbat Shuvah**, and that a sense of cooperation and coordination will characterize upcoming **Shabbatot**.

## Biblical Vacuum

Since this is the beginning of both a new Jewish year and a new school year, there are certain resolutions that must be made. It is the overwhelming desire of the student body that more Tanach courses be introduced into the school's curriculum. This request is all the more urgent due to the increased size of the freshman class, and in view of the fact that one of the Tanach teachers is on sabbatical.

The administration had already taken steps in improving many areas in both secular and Judaic studies. We urge them to continue this policy with regard to the Tanach department. We are convinced that our request will not go unheeded.

## Changing of the Guard

As we settle into the 74-75 academic school year we become more aware of the many new and not-so-new faces that we see everyday in school. It didn't take us much time to realize that Mrs. Shirley Shimoff, former head of Student Services, did not return to Stern this year. We would like to take this opportunity, to wish her a hearty "Yashar Koach" for the fine work she did while she was a member of the Stern faculty, and to thank her for being there when we needed her. At the same time, we'd like to wish Mrs. Esther Zuroff, former placement co-ordinator, "Hatzlacha Rabba" as she replaces Mrs. Shimoff, and the same to Mrs. Winter as she fills in for Mrs. Zuroff.

## Welcome!!!

Now that the class of 78 has settled down from the first few hectic days, we would like to officially welcome you to **Stern College for Women**.

The road ahead entails much. You will find it to be a unique experience encompassing responsibility learning, friendship and growing.

As the largest freshman class of over two hundred students, we hope that you will take advantage of the best that Stern College has to offer. While you are here we wish you **hatzlacha** in your studies and extracurricular activities.

## Kol Hakavod!

The horrifying experiences which are so often connected with freshman registration were noticeably absent this year. In view of this, we wish to commend the Office of the Registrar for a job well done. Registration did not seem to be hampered by the unusually large number of incoming students, a factor which could potentially have worsened the situation considerably. The system employed this year whereby each student registered for each course separately was a great improvement over our old system. Runners who were necessary for the old system were no longer needed and could work as registration aides thereby making registration faster and smoother. This year's registration was marked by a very minimal amount of tears and complaints, and for us, this in itself is adequate proof of its success.

Stern College for Women is a pluralistic community in a **Halachik** and sociological sense. Its faculty as well as its student body are committed to different **Halachik** authorities and come from a broad variety of social and cultural backgrounds.

Certain standards must be maintained to give positive expression to our concern for the religious quality of the academic experience as a whole, as well as to avoid possible violations of **Halacha** and offense to the religious sensitivities of members of our community.

The dress code outlined below as to proper dress within the academic center is guided by the following two principles. Firstly, the **Halachik** requirement of modesty in dress is not only a factor in shaping the religious personality, but is also a means of creating the religious environment

necessary for the total learning experience. Secondly, the **Halachik** prohibition against the wearing of men's garb by women may be evaluated in the perspective of accepted mores of dress.

In light of the above, students may:

1. Not wear sleeveless clothing.
2. Not wear shorts or other garb of immodest length.
3. Not wear clothes that by color and design were intended to be work clothes.

Moreover, since part of the positive educational experience at our institution is the variety of interpretation and expressions within the structure of **Halacha**, the students have expressed their willingness to adhere to the individual preferences of their instructors with regard to dress.

## the observer

Published by Stern College, an undergraduate division of Yeshiva University  
First Class Rating Printed by KC Automated Printing Systems, Inc.  
Published Every Two Weeks - Subscription \$3.50 per year

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A journalist is a grumbler, a censurer, a giver of advice, a regent of sovereigns, a tutor of nations. Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.

Napoleon I

## Punch and Judy

### Distorted Perspectives

by Judy Altshul

"You've come a long way, baby!" Terrific! Now you can smoke Virginia Slims and burn unmentionables. No longer do you come to Stern to become a part-time Hebrew teacher, but to be a doctor or lawyer. This increased specialization has, in many cases, distorted our perspective.

Many of us are falling into the "I'm taking this course because I have to" syndrome. Required courses develop a stigma and we lose our incentive to learn. We must begin to take maximum advantage of ALL courses offered at Stern. Perhaps we do not realize the importance of our education at the college. The lack of awareness has resulted in loss of identity and high percentages of intermarriage in the American Jewish Community. Our continued existence as Am Yisrael demands that we, the young educated religious Jews, assume a more active leadership role within our communities.

In the wake of the Yom Kippur War, the mood of the Jewish population is one of frustration and depression. We no longer have the complex of "Super Jew" that followed our victory in the Six Day War. Now there is a need to cultivate Jewish pride in both the committed and the non-committed. Through education and action, we can achieve this goal.

The meeting and training of Jewish students at Yeshiva University could provide the potential leadership for Klal Yisrael. Whether it be in America, England, Australia or Israel, it is time for both administration and student body of the university to face the fact that the Jewish community is depending on us. This is propaganda speech number 613.

# Roots of Yom Kippur Ritual Examined

by Ivy Kaufman

One of the most fascinating customs we observe during the year is the **Kapparot** ritual. In its present form, this custom is observed by most Jews on Erev Yom Kippur. It involves the taking of either a fowl or its monetary value equivalent, reciting several verses from the Scriptures (**Psalms** 107: 10, 14, 17-21 and **Job** 33: 23-24), and afterwards swinging the fowl around the head while pronouncing: "This is my change, this is my redemption. This rooster is going to be killed, and I shall be admitted and allowed to a long, happy and peaceful life."

Some suggest that there is indirect reference to **Kapparot** in the **Gemarah**. (1) The first explicit mention of the custom, however, is in the literature of the **Gaonim**. One source quoted by the **R'ASHI**, the **Tur**, and other scholars is a responsum of **Rav Hai Gaon** (**Sha'arei Teshuvah** 299). In it, **Rav Hai** establishes that there is a custom of **Kapparot** which is observed on **Erev Yom Kippur**. He then discusses the purpose of the custom and the proper animal to be used (fowl vs. rams and the like) in addition to an explanation of the prescribed procedure: the swinging of the chicken, the recitation of the proper formula, the laying of the hands, and the slaughter of the animal.

**Rashi** quotes another **Gaonic** source which refers to the custom of **Kapparot**. The **Gemarah** (**Shabbat** 81b) discusses the question of what constitutes uprooting on **Shabbat**. One of the objects which come up for discussion is "**Parpisa**." **Rashi** defines "**Parpisa**" as a perforated pot made out of "**Parpisa**" based on a **Gaonic** responsum be found. Unfortunately, **Rashi** and all subsequent authorities who quote him give no citation. Apparently there was a practice of taking specially prepared "**Parpisa**" on **Erev Rosh Hashanah**, swinging it around the head several times while reciting "This is my change, this is my redemption," and subsequently throwing it into a river.

These then are the first two sources which discuss the custom of **Kapparot**. The custom seems to have originated as a model of or a substitute for the scapegoat ritual which took place on **Yom Kippur** during the time of the **Mishkan** and the **Beit HaMikdash**. (2) Upon analysis of the description of the scapegoat ritual in **Vayikra** 16, it is apparent that there are similarities between this sacrifice and **Kapparot**. At the least, this applies to the **Kapparot** ritual described by **Rav Hai Gaon**. The similarities are found in the laying of the hands, the confessional prayers, and the corresponding roles of the High Priest and the **Shalakh Tzibur**, as well as in the underlying purpose of atonement and in the mitigation of punishment. **Rashi** cites another variation of **Kapparot** which is a practice observed on **Erev Rosh Hashanah**, using plants which are afterwards thrown into a river. There is enough of a resemblance between the custom of **Rav Hai Gaon** and that of **Rashi** to conclude that they are not two separate customs but that they are somehow

related. Just how similar they are, however, is unclear.

Based on the halakhic sources which make reference to the **Kapparot** ritual, it is possible to formulate the following hypothesis. **Kapparot** originated from the scapegoat sacrifice sometime after the destruction of the **Beit HaMikdash**. Its original form was that recorded by **Rav Hai Gaon**. There then arose a group who felt that **Kapparot** should not resemble the original scapegoat sacrifice so closely since a model of or a remembrance of a sacrifice should never come to be confused with the original. They therefore made great changes in the original form of the custom: a switch to **Erev Rosh Hashanah** and the use of plants to name the two major changes. (This is comparable to the conflicting customs of eating versus not eating roasted meat at the **Pesach** **Sedarim**). The only missing piece of information is the source of the

**Gaonic Responsum** which **Rashi** cites. It is possible that the variation mentioned there pre-dated **Rav Hai Gaon's**. While this theory, if true, would destroy the analysis of the chronological development of the custom, the distinction between the two philosophies behind the variations and the subsequent rift it created in later forms of **Kapparot** would still remain.

There later arose yet another group who declared that the custom of **Kapparot** should be abolished altogether since it had originated as or had degenerated to **Darkel Emori** (pagan practice). Apparently, with ideas based on the **Kabbalistic** view of **Kapparot**, (3) people came to believe that the performance of the **Kapparot** ritual itself, with no accompanying acts of repentance, achieved a kind of mystical transference of guilt and punishment. This, many of **Chazal** have claimed, is a pagan ritual notion and is

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## Australian Seminar Heightens American's Awareness

by Rachayl Eckstein

Upon returning from a fulfilling and most profitable summer in the "Land down Under," I was besieged with questions about the Australian experience. I do not wish to give a factual account of this past summer. I prefer, rather, to convey what I personally gained from the experience.

As one of fifteen participants from America, I have developed a greater awareness of and sensitivity to the issue of Jewish education. The necessity to explain specific aspects of Judaism has provided many of us with a greater insight into what

relationships with individuals and groups of seminarians. Each of these roles not only benefited the participants religiously, intellectually, and emotionally, but they proved to be tremendous growing and learning experiences for us "Yanks" as well.

Sometimes we can become callous to Jewish activities around us, and we don't always appreciate the inherent value of the treasure we have. It often takes the freshness of seeing people experience a seminar such as this for the first time to reawaken our sensitivities.

When the first group of



Yeshiva students go to "Land Down Under."

Jewish education today involves. At the same time, I have developed my own religious beliefs, thereby adding greater significance to what were once routine religious observances. Despite the fact that such gains on the part of everyone involved are not unique to an Australian seminar experience, they were more characteristic and noticeable due to the nature and intensity of our approach in this case.

The American contingent was small in proportion to the number of Australian participants in our programs. Each of us, therefore, was engaged in various activities, including serving as part-time faculty and advisors, giving sessions, planning night activities, **chugim** and recreation, and leading morning **tefillah** groups. Of course, every one of us had an additional obligation of establishing personal

relationships with individuals and groups of seminarians. Each of these roles not only benefited the participants religiously, intellectually, and emotionally, but they proved to be tremendous growing and learning experiences for us "Yanks" as well.

Sometimes we can become callous to Jewish activities around us, and we don't always appreciate the inherent value of the treasure we have. It often takes the freshness of seeing people experience a seminar such as this for the first time to reawaken our sensitivities.

Gradually, during the course of time we spent together at each seminar, a complete reversal of attitude occurred among the Australian Jews. This does not

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## Hail to the Chief

# The Demise of the Liberal Arts Education

by Jennifer Rubin

A commonly overheard conversation between students: Student 1—Thank goodness, I'm finally finished with French. All these requirements; it only goes to show the archaic policies of Stern. I don't know one school that still maintains a list of required courses. I'm a bio major and certainly will have little or no use for French. Student 2—I really feel sorry for you. I haven't taken any requirements because I'm planning to leave after two years anyway. I'm trying to get into a physical therapy training program at home. Student 3—Requirements are a real hassle. Who cares about Milton and his lost paradise and that ancient epic called **Beowulf**... forget it. It certainly won't help me get a job; they'll tell me I'm overeducated.

Tragically, these are the attitudes of many students today. "Relevance" is the catchword. If a particular course of study does not relate to my future job or will not significantly increase my potential in the job market, such a course is termed useless, archaic and out of step with modern society. Why, questions the student, should she be compelled to sit through a very dull class, complete homework assignments and take exams, when she knows for sure that she won't gain anything from the course. What kind of 'gain' is she referring to? Must all things we do result in tangible consequences? Are we forgetting 'ourselves' in our haste to accumulate fame and wealth? True, the vicissitudes of our social and financial spheres do impel one to procure some forms of 'security,' but must one procure security at the expense of humanism?

What exactly is the root of this

emphasis on vocational training in college? If something does not 'pay off' in immediate visible dividends do we then discredit its existence within society? Are we to assume that pragmatism is the guide to our lives?

Our years of formal education are usually concurrent with signs of relief and freedom. I suggest rather that relief should not be the emotive action we feel. Rather one of sorrow and fear. Sorrow because we have left formally the world of minds and fear that for our many years after school we will not lose that distinct human ability to think. But college has a built-in safeguard that many students are unaware of—yes, I'm referring to requirements. The tools and priming that we receive in college can be the foundation of our continued growth as a thinking, aware and productive member of society. The catchword rather is perspective. A liberal arts education is a very selfish sort of education for its function fulfills our need as individuals. The ultimate goal, I believe, which we must work at to achieve is the ability one gains to 'see' an apparently discordant world into an integrated entity and furthermore on a personal level to allow us to become well-integrated beings—multi-faceted persons not necessarily free-minded, but intelligent enough to see two sides to a question. If we are 'selfish' enough to demand our right to perceive, understand and appreciate the world around us, then a liberal arts education is our answer. If we are not, then vocational training programs must assume prominence. The options present themselves, but think hard, can we really be sure that we are not compromising our minds for our pockets with our choice?

## Insight Into Life In Russia

by Chaya Hilsenrath

One often finds him or herself confronted with vast amounts of statistics concerning the number of Jews leaving Russia. These statistics cannot, however, express the experiences of these particular individuals. Alla Avrutin, a new student at Stern College, is one of these 'statistics'. She, of course, is more important and more expressive than any 'statistic.' Alla was born in Moscow and resided in her father (a popular film producer), mother and younger brother and sister. During our conversation, Alla vividly related her lifestyle and a few of the ordeals involving her departure.

Alla made it clear that she still loved her mother country, but in order to openly express herself as a Jew, she had to leave. This obviously answers why she and many other Jews of Russia have left. As a child Alla remembers being constantly

taunted because she was a Jew.

In Russia, passports are stamped with the individual's nationality, which implies one's religious status. Alla's was stamped Jew, which presented problems in applying for jobs. She told of how she applied for jobs through the telephone and was told to come for an interview. Once the interviewer examined Alla's passport, he gave the excuse that the job was taken, only moments ago.

Alla claims that the Russian government, since the 1967 Israeli Six Day War, has called the Israelis the aggressors of war. At this time Alla was attending a Pioneer camp, a communist youth group. She had heard from friends, teachers and the radio that Israel had begun the war. Totally confused, Alla called her grandparents for clarification as to who really were the aggressors. The government since has focused on Jews, enough to cause the stir of anti-Semitism. Jews began to have

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# Russia

(Continued from Page 3) difficulties in applying for various positions and decided to leave.

Alla's family, six months ago, finally decided to apply for their visas. The waiting time for a visa is five months, but the waiting is an exasperating experience. During this time Alla's family was not sure if they would receive the permission to leave. Alla explained that the decisions depended on where members of the family had worked. Those who do have difficulty in obtaining a visa are the minority, perhaps five per cent. (Alla had the impression that these outside of Russia make the percentage larger than it really is.) The permission was finally granted to the Avrutin family and one month's time was given to prepare for their departure. Alla stated that this had been the shortest month in her life.

The day came and at the airport all friends and relatives of the family were present to say their good-byes. Alla remarked that this was a most trying time. Tears were flowing freely—even as I spoke with Alla. Her parents were prepared to start their "third life." Alla continued to explain. Their first life started at birth, the second after World War II and the third life was to begin in America.

The family's luggage was checked numerous times in the dark departure rooms of the Russian airport. They went through a final room which led them to the bus transporting passengers to the plane. Alla said that her eyes were blinded by the brilliance of the sudden sunlight. It reminded her of a new world, now full of sunlight which had replaced her darkened past. Once aboard the plane, her family, with mixed emotions, left their Russian citizenship behind.

The first stop for the Avrutin family was Vienna, Austria. They were taken to a Red Cross transient camp. For security reasons, Alla explained that the camp was surrounded by three barbed wire fences and armed guards. It was here that the Avrutin family was approached by the Jewish Agency, encouraging them to go to Israel. Promised to the family was housing, jobs and schooling. The family had already investigated this question and felt that greater opportunity awaited them in America. Alla has never been to Israel but would like to go, in spite of the difficulties for many other Russian families.

After one day, the family was given money by the Hebrew Immigrant Society for food expenses and left for Rome by train. The family, as part of the immigrant adjustment plan, remained in Rome for two months. Eventually the Avrutins moved from an immigrant pension into an apartment. Alla obtained a job with HIAS and thoroughly enjoyed her stay in Rome. She was beginning to experience a new type of freedom and such things as large markets, with inexpensive fruit, were overwhelming.

Following these two months, Alla's family left for America. As the plane landed, the Avrutin family, along with other Russian Jews, could not restrain themselves from clapping loudly, as a sign of relief and happiness. Along with other families, the Avrutins were

taken to a welfare hotel in Manhattan. Alla explained that conditions were not the best, but they eventually moved into an apartment.

Through certain resources, Alla is presently a student at Stern and would like to pursue further in the field of engineering. Alla was attending the Institute of Engineering and Electronics before she left Russia. Her father would like to improve his English before he reenters the field of producing films. Alla's brother attends Ramaz High School and her sister attends City College; she would like to enter the field of architecture.

Alla has not found it difficult adjusting to the American way of life, and New York is just as she had imagined it to be. She does find that American men and women are similar to those of Russia, friendly and open. Perhaps, she admits, the Russian people are more open in their own special ways.

Alla's non-Jewish friends do not answer her letters, though she continues to write. They are angry with her for they do not understand how she, once a member and leader of the Pioneer Communist youth group, could leave Russia. Alla feels that those outside of Russia do not know enough about the country. The outside world often hears from angry people such as Solzhnitsyn and that impression is mostly negative. In this respect, Alla is sorry for leaving her homeland, for she feels it is a land of beauty.

Among the Jewish youth of Russia, Shabbat afternoon was the only opportunity for gathering together as Jews. Personally, Alla feels that religion and being a Jew are different and there are numerous ways to express Judaism. Perhaps, Alla continued, through time she will have greater opportunity to understand the religious aspects of Judaism. Presently, Alla is very happy just being a free Jew.

## Seminar

(Continued from Page 3) necessarily mean they left seminar with intentions of following *kol haTorah koolah*, but rather, that they were awakened for the first time to the positive side of Judaism—the beauty of our practices and traditions, and the awareness that being a Jew involves more than a love for Israel and a feeling of Jewish pride. All this was achieved by a group of people who for one summer dedicated themselves and concentrated their efforts towards the goal of sharing their beliefs and practices with a group of people not so knowledgeable as themselves.

The beauty and power of Jewish tradition, presented for the first time in a manner befitting its very essence was, in actuality, what turned the seminars around. The realization for me personally was that it does not necessarily take great scholars to favourably present Judaism as a full and enriching way of life. One must additionally combine commitment, the will to work hard, idealism and sharing in order to convey a total Jewish experience.

The problems we faced in Australia are not unique to that country. While not quite as glorified as a trip "down under," the same type of undertakings are urgently

# Kapparot

(Continued from Page 3) absolutely contrary to Jewish thought. (4) Actually, the roots of this third group can be found in the Gaonic period. The BACH [O.H. 605] analyses Rav Hai Gaon's responsum as an answer to those who claimed that Kapparot was a form of pagan sorcery. The argument then resurfaces among the *Rishonim*. Rashi accepts the custom as set forth by Rav Hai Gaon [Sefer Ha-Orah], while Rabeinu Tam violently opposes it [Sefer Ha-Yashar].

From this time on, the lines drawn geographically, with the Ashkenazim practicing Kapparot and the Sefardim advocating its abolition because of its pagan character. Even the Ashkenazim were slightly uncomfortable with the notion that the Kapparot ritual in and of itself has the power of atonement. They emphasized the fact that the ritual was merely a symbol which prompted one to repent, (5) and many shifted the mitigating power of Kapparot to the act of giving of the chicken or its monetary equivalent to *tzedakah*, which constitutes an overt act of repentance. (6)

There are, of course, many notable exceptions to the above geographical analysis. Among the Sefardim, the Tur stands out as the single major authority who supports the custom of Kapparot, or at least does not oppose it. The Rambam makes no mention of Kapparot at all, but this could indicate that he did not consider it to be a valid custom. However, it is clear from a number of sources that during different periods, Kapparot was performed as a ritual in some Sefardic communities. (7)

On the other side of the map, some Ashkenazic authorities of the late 19th and 20th centuries began

to re-evaluate the propriety of Kapparot, not because they felt it was a pagan practice, but because the large numbers of slaughters which had to be performed on Erev Yom Kippur caused a great laxity in the observance of the laws of animal slaughter. They tangentially mention a cautionary note that the public has come to value the custom of Kapparot and its observance to the last detail too highly. (8)

Even among those who accepted Kapparot as a valid custom, there are many significant differences in the variations they accepted. As we mentioned previously, some leaned toward a custom closely resembling the scapegoat sacrifice, and others wished to make the differentiation between the two rituals clearer. The result was a series of changes until we remained with Kapparot in its present form, with a kind of compromise between the two original versions, which represents the culmination of the input of over 1,000 years of Rabbinic thought.

### FOOTNOTES

(1) See Chulin, 83, 95, 110; Ketubot 5. Also R'ASH, Yoma 8:23 and Otzar HaTefilot.

(2) See Machzor Vitri 373, Siddur Kol Ya'akov.

(3) See the ART in Siddur Kol Ya'akov.

(4) See Sefer Bi'er Sheva as quoted by S'dei Chemed 353.

(5) See Mishnah Brurah 605. (6) Mor'kecal, Tur, SHA'KH, N'gid U'Mitzvah, Mishnah Brurah, Knaif Rinanah.

(7) See RASHBA Responsum No. 395, Sefer Nahar Mitzrayim, and SHA'HAL.

(8) See S'dei Chemed 353, Arukh HaShulchan, Chaye Adam.

required here, in the United States. No Jew should ever feel too preoccupied or unequipped to be useful in educating someone else, since everyone has something to offer.

The thrill and exhilaration of the whole summer is slightly tempered for me by the realization that, in effect, the work has only begun. I now have a heightened awareness of the problems and situations confronting Jewish communities the world over, and I realize now, more than ever before, the necessity to devote one's efforts to Jewish education—in whatever manner possible.

Every Monday and Wednesday, 3:45-4:15 and Tuesday and Thursday 1:15-1:45 Mincha services are taking place at the Beit Hamedrash. Come to daven b'tzibur. Learn, learn, daven, daven... in Room 319.

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# Clark Proposes Plan

by Rachel Shapiro

"I dream of things as they can be, not as they are"—Bernard Shaw

With this introduction Ramsey Clark, the former Attorney General introduced his proposal for peace in the Middle East. The tall, lanky candidate for U.S. Senate described his plan as an effort "to create the possibility of peace" by breaking the cycle of war and destruction.

To establish a lasting peace, Mr. Clark advocates going beyond a military solution. Instead, he proposed the creation of a Mideast Development Authority to attack the multiple social and economic problems in that area. This organization would be a multinational one, working ideally through the U.N. and involving the participation of "western Europe, oil rich Arab states, the Soviet Union, and international monetary organizations." Each nation would give direct economic aid to the region and supplement "a plan to purchase, at market value, any military equipment... a Mideast nation chooses to sell."

Moreover, the region would unite economically to form an organization similar to the European Economic Community. This Mideast Common Market would provide a beneficial trade network by encouraging Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel to open markets "for each others' manufactured goods and agricultural commodities." Likewise, these nations would learn to cooperate on the social level when dealing with "energy policy, water conservation, regional transportation, rural electrification, housing development, and health care." As Mr. Clark stressed, "Peace is made more secure when each nation has a stake in the other."

Is this plan realistic? Will the nations of the world cooperate? The democratic candidate believes that urging total cooperation between Mideast countries is the most practical way to create peace. Mr. Clark feels that now is the time to implement such a program despite the threat of inflation and recession. Nations must learn to curtail their defense budgets and shift these monies into peaceful endeavors. The United States, as a world leader, must show "the vision and foresight" to demand such steps and, if necessary, embarrass powers such as the USSR into cooperating. If we fail to take this initiative and "wait around for the next war, only G-d knows what can happen."

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