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RAMAH ACADEMY

Of The University of Judaism



SEVEN SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKENDS

PLUS SEVEN "IN-TOWN" LECTURES

A NEW DIMENSION

Commencing this season, participation in the 1982-83 Ramah Academy will be available only through MEMBERSHIP.

Ramah Academy members only may attend...
A choice of seven Scholar-in-Residence Weekends in Ojai, California.

PLUS AN IMPORTANT NEW FEATURE! "IN-TOWN" LECTURES...

Ramah Academy membership includes a series of private evening lectures given by each of the seven scholars in the intimacy of the University of Judaism campus on Mulholland Drive in Los Angeles.

Ramah Academy is an educational outreach program of the University of Judaism.

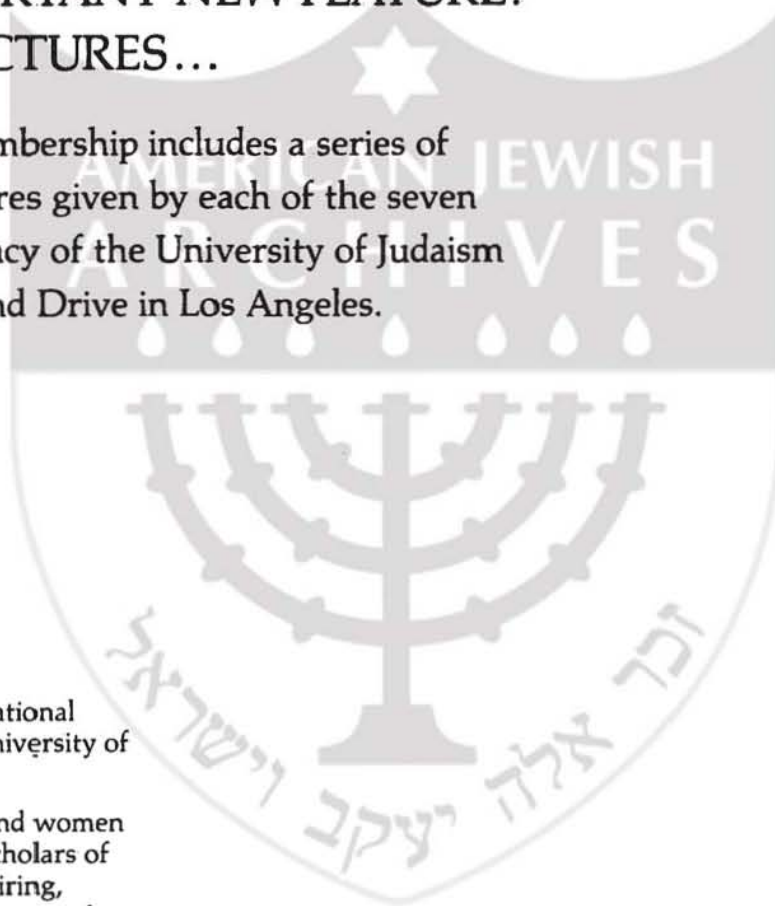
The Academy brings men and women together with the leading scholars of our time to share in an inspiring, profound and Jewishly-alive atmosphere.

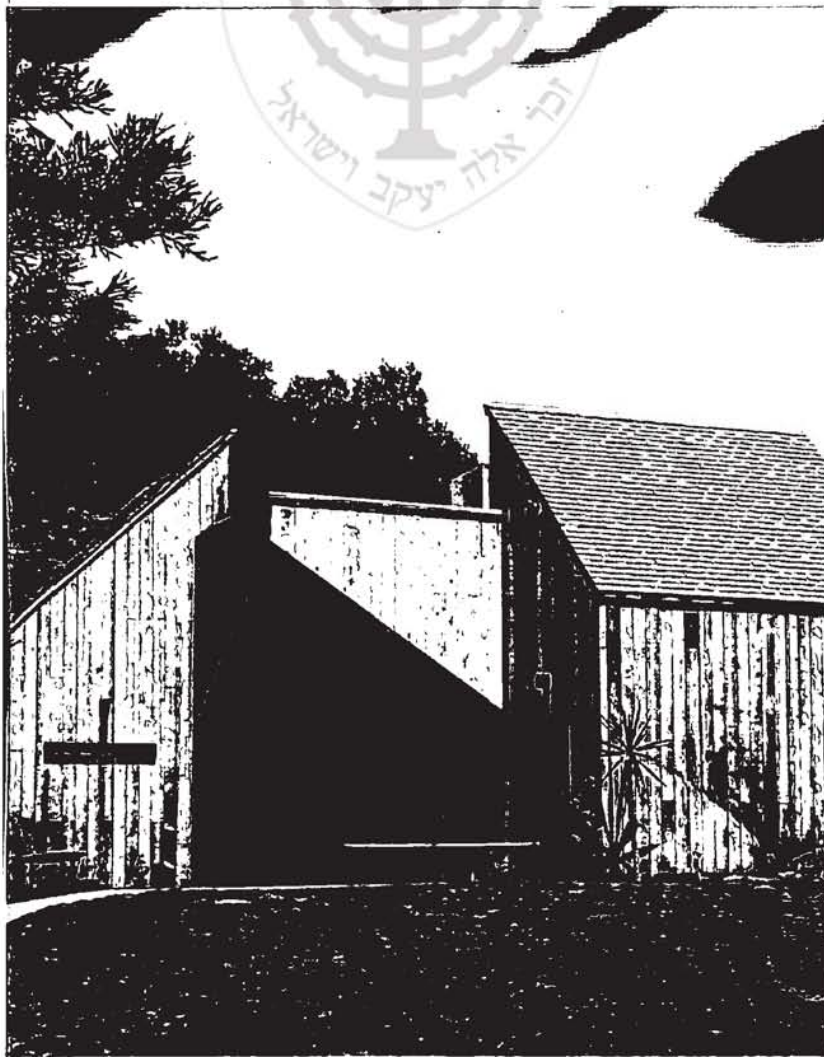
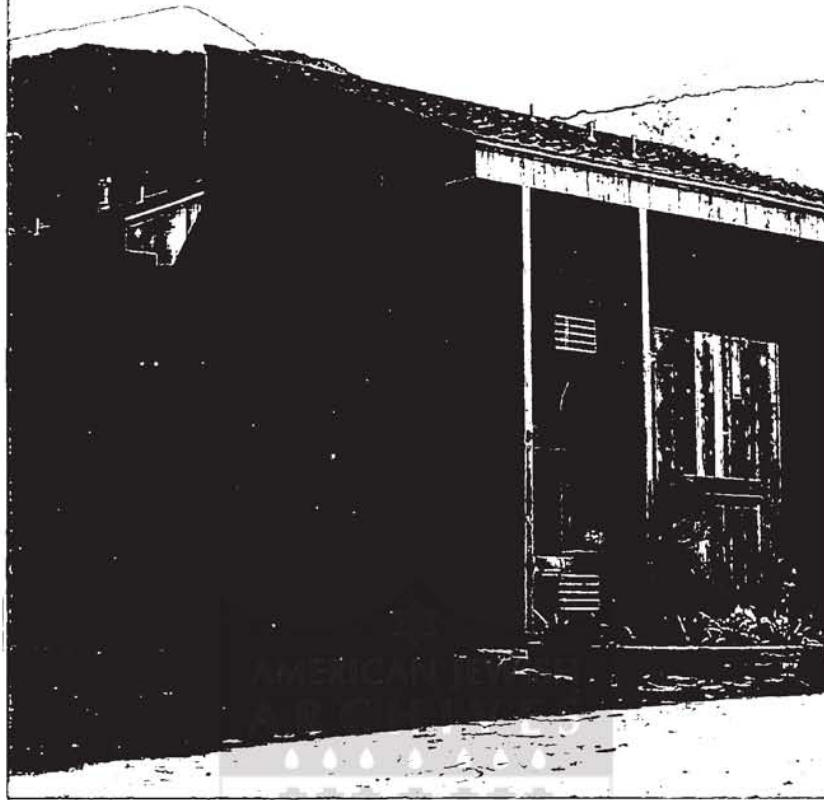
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RAMAH ACADEMY COORDINATORS

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PRESIDENT, RAMAH BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Alvin Mars
RAMAH ACADEMY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR







SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKENDS

LOCATION

The University of Judaism's magnificent Max and Pauline Zimmer Conference Center is in the beautiful Ojai Valley, just 65 pleasurable miles from the University of Judaism. Transportation arrangements are available.

TIMING

Each of the seven weekends commences Friday afternoon prior to the beginning of Shabbat, and continues, with uninterrupted tranquility, until concluding at noon Sunday.

SETTING

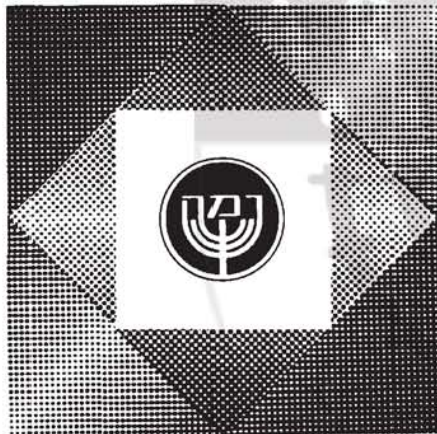
Every weekend blends a learning experience with the celebration of Shabbat, while providing ample time for relaxation and enjoyment of the surroundings.

UNIQUENESS

Because of the intimacy of the environment and the limited number of participants, Ramah Academy members attending the Academy experience a thrilling, intellectual and emotional rapport with one another and with the distinguished scholar-in-residence.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Modern guest housing affords the finest in comfort and convenience. Each double-occupancy room has private bath, heating and air conditioning. Spacious lounges and meeting areas, recreation facilities, hiking, swimming and tennis provide the opportunity for warm and relaxed comradery among attendees. The beautiful dining room features outstanding kosher cuisine.



"IN-TOWN" LECTURE SERIES

A series of private lectures for Ramah Academy members—given by each of the seven weekend scholars—in the intellectually stimulating surroundings of the University of Judaism, conveniently located on Mulholland Drive in Los Angeles.



GRANDMA KATZ

SEVEN SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKENDS
PLUS SEVEN "IN-TOWN" LECTURES...



VELVEL PASTERNAK

November 19-21, 1982

A Shabbat of Jewish Music: A Joyous Celebration

A musicologist of "rave notice" distinction, Mr. Pasternak has an impressive array of articles, recordings and publications to his credit. Educated at Yeshiva University, Columbia University, the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Juilliard School of Music, he was until recently Associate Professor of Jewish Music at Touro College. Currently Mr. Pasternak is editor of Tara Publications and Music Director of Brandeis-Bardin Institute in Southern California.

"In-town" Lecture: Thursday, November 18, 1982



ELIE WIESEL

December 3-5, 1982

The Book of Job: The Eternal Dilemma of Life

Internationally acclaimed as a gifted writer, storyteller, chronicler, lecturer and teacher, Mr. Wiesel mirrors the universal Jewish soul. A recipient of numerous literary honors, his more than twenty books include novels, plays, essays and memoirs such as *Night*, *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, *The Jews of Silence*, *Zalman, or the Madness of God* and *Souls on Fire*. His most recent works are *A Jew Today*, *Five Biblical Portraits* and *The Testament*, which in the original French won the 1980 Prix Inter in Paris. Mr. Wiesel is the Andrew Mellon Professor of the Humanities at Boston University and serves as Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

"In-town" Lecture: Sunday, December 5, 1982



DR. HAROLD SCHULWEIS AND MALKAH SCHULWEIS

January 21-23, 1983

Letting Go and Holding On: The Jewish and Psychological Wisdom in Parent-Child Relationships

A nationally known and highly respected member of the clergy, Rabbi Schulweis is a sought after scholar and lecturer. He is on the faculty of both the University of Judaism and the Hebrew Union College. An accomplished writer, Dr. Schulweis is Contributing Editor to *The Reconstructionist*, *Sh'ma*, and *Moment* magazines. His literary contributions have appeared in other leading publications including *Commentary*, *Conservative Judaism*, *National Jewish Monthly* and *The Jewish Spectator*. Harold Schulweis is Rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California.

Admired for both her personal role-model and professional accomplishments, Malkah Schulweis has the distinction of being described by Rabbi Harold Schulweis as HIS Rebbe. The mother of three children and the grandmother of two, Mrs. Schulweis taught literature and writing at California State University, Northridge, and conducted adult education classes for UCLA Extension and the University of Judaism. Imparting on a career change in 1977, she is soon to receive her doctorate in Clinical Psychology and plans to establish a private practice.

"In-town" Lecture: Sunday, January 23, 1983



RABBI MARC TANENBAUM

Regents' Weekend

February 11-13, 1983

Tikkun Olam: The Jews' Task of Repairing a Broken World

A pioneering leader and thinker in ecumenical relations and social justice movements during the past thirty years, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum is national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee. *Newsweek* magazine has described him as "the American Jewish community's foremost apostle to the gentiles ... who has been able to solicit support from all factions of the Jewish community." Rabbi Tanenbaum has served as a religious spokesman at numerous White House conferences ranging from the Camp David "summit" meetings in 1979, to energy and conservation, and the problems of aging. He is a member of the Advisory Committee of the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

"In-town" Lecture: Sunday, February 13, 1983



DR. IRVING GREENBERG

March 4-6, 1983

Molding the Real Into the Ideal: The Model of Israel Salanter

An ordained Orthodox Rabbi, Dr. Greenberg stresses a Jewish lifestyle which blends the traditional and modern approaches. He emphasizes the need for Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and secular Jews to bridge the ideological differences that separate them. Dr. Greenberg is an eminent educator and creative thinker in the field of Holocaust studies and has served as Director of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. He has been in the vanguard of organizations such as Yavneh, Center for Russian Jewry, and the Association for Jewish Studies. A co-founder of the National Jewish Conference Center, he also founded and was a professor in the Department of Jewish Studies at City College, NY.

"In-town" Lecture: Sunday, March 6, 1983



ALBERT VORSPAN

April 8-10, 1983

Jewish Issues of Conscience

In the social action arena, Mr. Vorspan is an influential and respected advocate. Both as a private citizen and in his capacity as vice-president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism he has participated in the civil rights struggle, the peace movement and interfaith activities. Mr. Vorspan is a writer of diversified scope. He is Executive Editor of *Reform Judaism*. His articles on intergroup relations have appeared in *Time*, *Saturday Review*, *The Christian Century* and *Present Tense*. His latest book is *Great Jewish Debates and Dilemmas*. Among his books on humorous subjects are *"You Packed the Cat in the Suitcase?!"*, *So the Kids are Revolting...?* and *I'm OK, You're a Pain in the Neck*.

"In-town" Lecture: Sunday, April 10, 1983



DR. CHAIM POTOK

May 6-8, 1983

Mysticism in the Jewish Tradition

Described by Mark Van Doren as "The most powerful storyteller living, in this or any other country," Chaim Potok's books are international best-sellers and contemporary classics. Author of *The Chosen*, *The Promise*, *My Name is Asher Lev*, *In The Beginning*, *Wanderings* and *The Book of Lights*, Dr. Potok has won critical as well as popular acclaim. Artist, teacher, lecturer and Rabbi, he made a cameo acting appearance in the recently released movie version of *The Chosen*. Dr. Potok served as Director of Camp Ramah in California from 1957 to 1959.

"In-town" Lecture: Sunday, May 8, 1983

1982-83 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FORM

PARTICIPATION IN 1982-83 RAMAH ACADEMY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IS BY MEMBERSHIP.



Mail to:
RAMAH ACADEMY University of Judaism
15600 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90077 • (213) 476-8571 • (213) 476-9777

RAMAH ACADEMY MEMBER: \$450 per couple, \$225 per person (based on double occupancy) includes:

- Choice of one scholar-in-residence weekend
- Series of seven "in-town" private evening lectures by Academy scholars at the University of Judaism campus
- Additional scholar-in-residence weekends available as space permits at \$300 per couple, \$150 per person (based on double occupancy)

RAMAH ACADEMY REGENT/MEMBER: \$1,000 Endowment includes:

- Special REGENTS' WEEKEND, February 11-13, 1983, featuring RABBI MARC TANENBAUM
- Priority selection of additional weekends at \$300 per couple, \$150 per person (based on double occupancy)
- Series of seven "in-town" private evening lectures by Academy scholars at the University of Judaism campus
- Listing as a 1982-83 Regent on Academy letterhead and announcements

1982-83 RESERVATIONS

Reservations will be accepted in the order in which membership payment is received. Full payment must accompany each Membership Subscription Form. Check should be payable to Ramah Academy. Please enroll us(me) for 1982-83 membership in Ramah Academy. (Check appropriate box)

RAMAH ACADEMY MEMBER

_____ \$ _____
Indicate choice of Scholar-in-Residence Weekend and Date

RAMAH ACADEMY REGENT/MEMBER

Special REGENTS' WEEKEND
RABBI MARC TANENBAUM February 11-13, 1983 _____ \$ 1,000

As space permits we(I) would like to attend the following additional scholar-in-residence weekend(s):

- VELVEL PASTERNAK / November 19-21, 1982 _____ \$ _____
- ELIE WIESEL / December 3-5, 1982 _____ \$ _____
- DR. HAROLD SCHULWEIS and MALKAH SCHULWEIS / January 21-23, 1983 _____ \$ _____
- DR. IRVING GREENBERG / March 4-6, 1983 _____ \$ _____
- ALBERT VORSPAN / April 8-10, 1983 _____ \$ _____
- DR. CHAIM POTOK / May 6-8, 1983 _____ \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Last Name _____ First Name _____ Spouse's Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: Home () _____ Business () _____

Guest Room Preference: Upstairs Downstairs No Preference Check here if transportation is needed:

Please indicate any special dietary or personal needs.

1982-83 Ramah Academy membership fees, along with funds paid for additional weekend selections are non-refundable.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: DATE RECEIVED _____ MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION NUMBER _____

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

1982-83 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS, Two to choose from:

RAMAH ACADEMY MEMBER: \$450 per couple, \$225 per person (based on double occupancy) includes:

- Choice of one scholar-in-residence weekend
- Series of seven "in-town" private evening lectures by Academy scholars at the University of Judaism campus
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- Series of seven "in-town" private evening lectures by Academy scholars at the University of Judaism campus
- Listing as a 1982-83 Regent on Academy letterhead and announcements

Ramah Academy Weekends at the University of Judaism Max and Pauline Zimmer Conference Center, Ojai, and the private lecture series on the Mulholland campus will be available only through Ramah Academy membership subscription.

1982-83 RAMAH ACADEMY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKENDS

1. VELVEL PASTERNAK / November 19-21, 1982
2. ELIE WIESEL / December 3-5, 1982
3. DR. HAROLD SCHULWEIS
and MALKAH SCHULWEIS / January 21-23, 1983
4. RABBI MARC TANENBAUM
REGENTS' WEEKEND* / February 11-13, 1983
5. DR. IRVING GREENBERG / March 4-6, 1983
6. ALBERT VORSPAN / April 8-10, 1983
7. DR. CHAIM POTOK / May 6-8, 1983

*1982-83 Regents' Endowment: \$1,000.

"IN-TOWN" LECTURE SERIES

- VELVEL PASTERNAK / Thursday, November 18, 1982
ELIE WIESEL / Sunday, December 5, 1982
DR. HAROLD SCHULWEIS
and MALKAH SCHULWEIS / Sunday, January 23, 1983
RABBI MARC TANENBAUM / Sunday, February 13, 1983
DR. IRVING GREENBERG / Sunday, March 6, 1983
ALBERT VORSPAN / Sunday, April 10, 1983
DR. CHAIM POTOK / Sunday, May 8, 1983

1982-83 RESERVATIONS

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKENDS

Guest facilities at each Ramah Academy weekend are limited to 70 people.

Reservations will be accepted in the order in which membership payment is received.

Full payment must accompany each membership subscription. Check should be payable to Ramah Academy.

Ramah Academy Member: \$450 per couple,
\$225 per person (based on double occupancy).

Ramah Academy Regent/Member: \$1,000 Endowment

Additional scholar-in-residence weekends, available as space permits: \$300 per couple, \$150 per person (based on double occupancy).

Ramah Academy weekends are held at the University of Judaism's Max and Pauline Zimmer Conference Center, Ojai, California.

"IN-TOWN" LECTURE SERIES

Conveniently located at the campus of the University of Judaism on Mulholland Drive in Los Angeles, each of the seven weekend scholars will give a private lecture with attendance limited to the membership of Ramah Academy.

Reminder notices will be mailed to Ramah Academy members three weeks prior to every private lecture. For assured seating, attendance must be confirmed NO LATER THAN FIVE DAYS before each scheduled lecture.

1982-83 Ramah Academy membership fees, along with funds paid for additional weekend selections are non-refundable.



RAMAH ACADEMY University of Judaism
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(213) 476-8571 • (213) 476-9777

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AMERICAN JEWISH
PARASHAT MISHPATIM
ARCHIVES

EXODUS: 21:1-24:18



CONTRIBUTORS • *Iwing Brott*
Peter and Evonne Grant
Charlotte Kamenir

BRIEF SUMMARY OF PARASHAT MISHPATIM

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

By

ROBERT & SALLY SHAFTON: COORDINATORS

LIMUD TORAH PROJECT OF THE RAMAH ACADEMY

This parasha expands and details the rules and regulations of the Ten Commandments. It instructs the Israelites how the laws can become a part of their everyday social, moral and judicial lives. The laws are all encompassing, from laws pertaining to personal rights and remedies and injuries to persons and property to the Sabbatical year to kashruth to the people's conduct regarding idolatry and observance of appointed seasons and festivals.

An overriding and important theme of this parasha is the Israelites' ratification of the Covenant. It shows that the people willingly took on the responsibility of being a "light unto the nations" by their communal acceptance of a body of laws that would greatly bind and restrict them in their future behavior. It meant that they would be living in the future in a much different way than they lived in the past, and that they jointly and individually accepted this responsibility without duress and of their own free will. We must look to the depth and breath of the laws in this parasha even today in fulfilling our responsibility and commitment as Jews.

If you will delve into the reading of the parasha you will find much material that is both challenging and inspiring. Much of it is the standard by which we live today, and much of it is open to question and interpretation. Open your Bible and dig a little deeper.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Page numbers refer to the Hertz Commentary.

1. P.321, 24:1-3,7. If you were standing at Mount Sinai when the Decalogue and the civil laws were given, how would you have felt? Would you have readily ratified such a Covenant, or might the obligation to follow all of these new and unfamiliar laws have frightened you? Why was the Israelite's response in 24:3 and 7 so unique (Naaseh V'nishmah)?
2. P.306, 21:2 and p.309, 21:26 and note on V.26. Although the Torah's attitude towards slavery is revolutionary in this time and place, why is a slave still allowed to be bought and sold at all, even with restrictions? Do you think the difference in treatment of the Hebrew and heathen slave is just? Why do you think this difference is tolerated?
3. P.307, 21:7 and note on V.7. Why can a daughter be sold? Do you think the Torah is responding here to the Abraham-Sarah-Hagar situation (Genesis 16 and 21)? How would Torah law have dictated a different response in that situation?
4. P.307, 21:8-11. Jewish law throughout the ages is considered to have been singularly supportive of women's social and economic rights. How does this passage seem to further protection of women?
5. P.308, 21:13 and note on V.13. Should God or man be accountable for murder that is unintentional? The Torah assumes that if there was no intention on the part of the murderer, it was God's will that murder

Questions for discussion.... continued

be committed. If this is so, then when are we and when are we not responsible? How does this tie in with today's question of the insanity defense? How do the cities of refuge established in the Torah elevate the whole society above what it could have become?

6. If the Jewish system of Justice is based upon the belief that man is created in the image of God, should we be merciful, or just, or both? In 23:3, the parasha states that a judge should not favor the poor or the weak nor should he favor the powerful; how does this make the system fair? Is it consistent with 23:6 which protects the poor?

7. God required Moses to repeat all of the laws and asked that people follow Moses in ratifying the Covenant between God and Israel. What psychological, legal and sociological purpose is there to such a ratification ceremony?

8. P.316, 23:4-5 and notes VV.4 and 5. How does this practical behavior differ from the Christian concept of loving one's enemy? How do these verses rely on concern for animals or societal order rather than an "idealistic" concept? How do you feel about each motivation? Is one more "moral" than the other?

PARASHAT MISHPATIM

Exodus: 21:1-24:18

by

IRVING BROTT

Mishpatim introduces a fundamental body of legislation radically different from any system of jurisprudence theretofore known to man. Students of history will be quick to call attention to the law code of Hammurabi which was enacted before that of Moses. These two systems originated in fundamentally different ways: The code of Hammurabi is the product of the royal edict of King Hammurabi of Sumaria, while the legislation of the Torah is the product of divine edict: "Now these are the ordinances which thou (Moses) shalt set before them (the people)" (21:1).

The divine origin of Jewish law separates it from other legal systems. Whereas another legal system would view a violation of its laws as an offense against the State and the victim, Jewish law would view such a violation as a transgression against God and His people Israel, partners in the Covenant. Jewish law is the direct product of a covenantal relationship consisting of mutual obligations between God and the Jewish people, both of whom voluntarily accepted the Covenant at the time it was offered.

Jewish law throughout its existence has been called upon to respond to new legal and social problems. Within the framework of the divinely revealed law, our halakhic scholars were constantly put to the task of shaping and developing the law which gave direction to the daily realities of the life of its people. This task was carried out with

IRVING BROTT: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

concern for the continued creativity and evolution of the halakha, tempered by the heavy responsibility not to do violence to its spirit, objective and continuity.

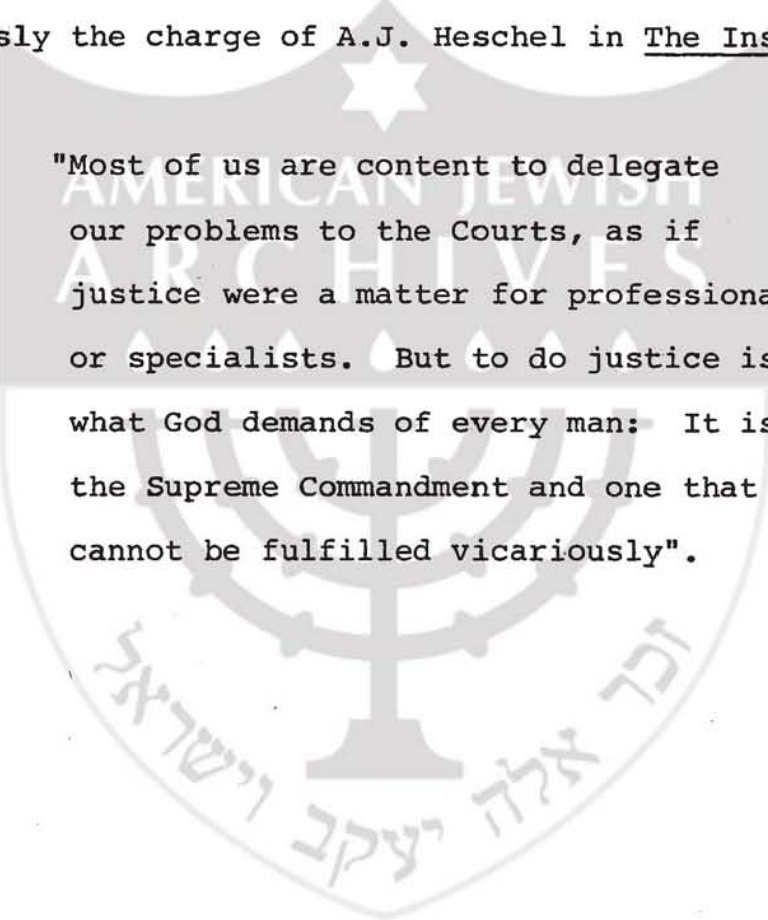
The authority to interpret the law is delegated to the halakhic scholars of each succeeding generation in Deuteronomy 17:8-11, where the resolution of problems and disputes arising from time to time is entrusted to the teachers and judges in each generation. This process continues today, although the diverse Jewish communities of the modern world do not recognize a single halakhic authority.

Following immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments, Mishpatim emphasizes the centrality of justice as the constitution of a newly formed community. The precepts of Mishpatim, as expanded in the remainder of the laws of the Torah, leave the Torah without parallel in ancient times. As time wore on, the concepts of justice and morality as embodied in the Torah evolved and were incorporated into the halakha which had practical bearing upon the public and private affairs of the Jewish people. For example, in time, slavery disappeared in the Jewish community. The selling of Hebrews as slaves became unlawful as did servitude itself. One who sold himself into slavery regained his freedom in the seventh year of his servitude. A non-Hebrew slave who was ill-treated by his master was set free. Murder of a slave whether he was Hebrew or non Hebrew called for the appropriate punishment.

Contemporary Jewish communities throughout the world, especially in the United States and Israel, are faced with unprecedented social,

IRVING BROTT: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

economic and moral realities which cry out for guidance and direction. The laws of the Torah are as relevant today as they ever were. Our halakhic scholars, by using traditional methods and precepts of the Torah can provide moral and ethical leadership in a world where it is so desperately needed. Then we can offer our support in this task by taking seriously the charge of A.J. Heschel in The Insecurity of Freedom:



"Most of us are content to delegate our problems to the Courts, as if justice were a matter for professionals or specialists. But to do justice is what God demands of every man: It is the Supreme Commandment and one that cannot be fulfilled vicariously".

PARASHAT MISHPATIM

Exodus: 21:1-24:18

by

PETER & EVONNE GRANT

The laws set down in our parasha, Mishpatim, elevate mankind to ever-higher ethical relationships. Doing Justice is the principle God demands his people adopt. It is a fragile concept, one which must be held in balance continuously in order to maintain the equilibrium of the community.

Equal treatment under law is a lofty ethical principle ordained by the Torah. Protection must be provided equally for poor and rich, weak and strong, citizen and alien. No one individual or group has a monopoly on justice, neither Jew nor non-Jew.

The parasha delineates laws for treatment of slaves, murder, assault and battery, personal injury, stealing, negligence, as well as laws to protect the poor and the weak. Premeditated murder, kidnapping and selling the victim into slavery and witchcraft are crimes punishable by death.

However, a code of justice requires that there be a means of compensation for wrongs committed which is less severe and ultimate than surrendering one's life. The "talionic" concept of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth", was explicitly designed to limit the scope of damage payment. It was not intended as an actual exchange of limb for limb. Rather, it meant equal and fair compensation for the wrong committed. Otherwise, both would suffer and the victim would

PETER & EVONNE GRANT: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

not have redress. Justice is served only when the law punishes the offender and compensates the one who has suffered a loss. Our Rabbis quickly interpreted this concept to mean monetary compensation. Many insurance policies today listing specific payments for bodily harm as well as jury awards for damages for pain, suffering and loss of earning powers, indicate the adoption of this rabbinic concept.

Punishment of offenders and compensation of victims were at the core of this system of justice. Thus, if a Jew stole property from another and could not return or repay it with added penalties, he was sold as a slave for a maximum of six years. In the seventh year, he was freed and the money paid for his work was used to repay the victim. If the criminal were freed earlier because of the Jubilee Year (every 50 years), then his own property would be returned to him so he would have money to repay the victim.

Protection of the poor and the weak is underscored by the injunction not to charge the poor man interest. It is a religious duty not a business opportunity, for it is written that "you shall not behave towards him as a creditor".

In promulgating these laws, the Torah recognizes that man is frail, that he may not abide by the rules of conduct set down and may err even when he tries to abide by them. Therefore, the Torah supports the dignity of man. It requires punishment, fairness, understanding, and above all, justice.

PARASHAT MISHPATIM

Exodus: 21:1-24:18

by

CHARLOTTE KAMENIR

Mishpatim, also known as the "Book of the Covenant" (which actually encompasses Exodus 20:9-23:33) is one of the earliest codifications of law still extant. It dates back some 3500 years and was revealed concurrently with and, in the text, immediately follows the Decalogue. It covers the rights and obligations both among persons within the newly formed Israelite community and between the individual Israelite and God.

Tradition holds, and many believe, that these laws, along with the oral law (Mishnah) were originally transmitted physically from God to Moses and through him to the people Israel. Others believe that the laws were the work of men who attributed them to God to lend dignity and authority to a concept whose time had come, while still others believe they were written by man with some sort of divine inspiration. It really makes little difference how one rationalizes the origin of these momentous ideas: The contribution to mankind's development ranks with the foremost gifts to civilization.

It is important to bear in mind that the subject matter and the value judgements spoken of in Mishpatim represent the expressions of civilized man of more than 3000 years ago. Considered in that context, it is surprising how enlightened they were for their time and some of them are still incorporated in the laws of the modern

CHARLOTTE KAMENIR: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

world. A few examples will serve to illustrate the point.

Slavery was the fact of life of the time and, although it would be nice to think that the Torah outlawed slavery, it did not. But it did humanize the institution by limiting the slave owner's powers over his slave. For example, if a slave's owner injures the slave by destroying the slave's eye (a severe injury) or even his tooth (less severe), the slave is to go free. If a master strikes the slave and the slave dies on the spot, the slave must be avenged. These two instances, as well as other rules imposed elsewhere in the Torah, represent advances over other codes, for example, the law code of Hammurabi, where a slave was treated merely as the property of an owner, property which could be disposed of at and according to the owner's will.

A series of laws covers damages to persons and property indirectly caused by another. If a person's ox gores and kills another person, the animal alone is held "liable" and is to be destroyed. However, if the ox was wont to gore, and the owner has been warned, the owner is held liable for the killing, for he has not guarded his dangerous beast. A person is, in the same vein, held liable for damages to persons or property caused by his negligence in properly controlling his "possessions", e.g., if his livestock grazes in another's garden, if a fire of his making spreads to destroy his neighbor's fields, or if he uncovers or digs a hole and does not protect persons or livestock from this hazard he has created. Another series of rules governs the care of property one

CHARLOTTE KAMENIR: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

has borrowed or which he has agreed to guard.

People are to be treated in all respects equitably and with dignity. Those mentioned especially are the stranger, the widow and orphan, and the debtor, persons particularly in need of protection. In the law courts, in the extreme, one must not conspire to commit perjury, but equally important, one must not favor either the powerful because of his power or the poor man because of his poverty. Judges are forbidden to accept bribes, and all are warned against spreading false rumors, bringing false charges or convicting the innocent.

In addition to the laws between man, this parasha includes certain obligations between the Israelites and God: The seventh day, to rest man and beast, and the seventh year, to rest the land itself. The three pilgrimage festivals are enumerated, although the details of their observance are left for later. The first fruits belong to God as do one's firstborn child and the firstborn of one's livestock. Also in this parasha are the beginnings of the laws of Kashruth, not to eat the flesh of a beast torn by beasts in the fields, and not to seethe a kid in its mother's milk.

The parasha closes with God promising the people that his angel will travel before the Israelites to guide them and to annihilate their enemies. Some of the laws in this parasha forbid the worship of other gods and this is repeated here, along with promises of a wonderful future. The people accepted the Covenant with unanimity,

CHARLOTTE KAMENIR: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

and their representatives, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders, ascended the mountain to seal the agreement. All the representatives returned to the people except Moses, who remained on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

The parasha's first topic deals not just with man's relationship to man but with his relationship to a special class of man; his slave. This sensitivity to servitude is understandable because the Israelites had recently been freed from servitude in Egypt themselves and remembered the harsh treatment they suffered. Indeed, 22:20 specifically mentions this as the reason: "And a stranger shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt". It might be appropriate to relate this special concern for strangers to the trying times and emotional upheaval which exists in present day Israel concerning the Palestinians, for if the Palestinians are to be considered "resident aliens", then it is a biblical injunction to do them no wrong and not to oppress them. Are the Israelis, then, to strive diligently toward providing a permanent homeland for all displaced refugees, including those whom they consider their enemies?

There is another apparent contradiction which lends itself to discussion: Chapter 22:27 states, "Thou shalt not revile God nor curse the ruler of thy people"; while 23:2 warns, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou bear witness in a cause to turn aside after a multitude and pervert justice". The question then arises:

CHARLOTTE KAMENIR: Parashat Mishpatim continued.

"Are the acts of an unjust ruler to be blindly obeyed"? The Haftorah for Mishpatim (Jeremiah 34:8-22) seems to answer "No", for the Prophets dared to defy authority when they felt justice was being perverted.

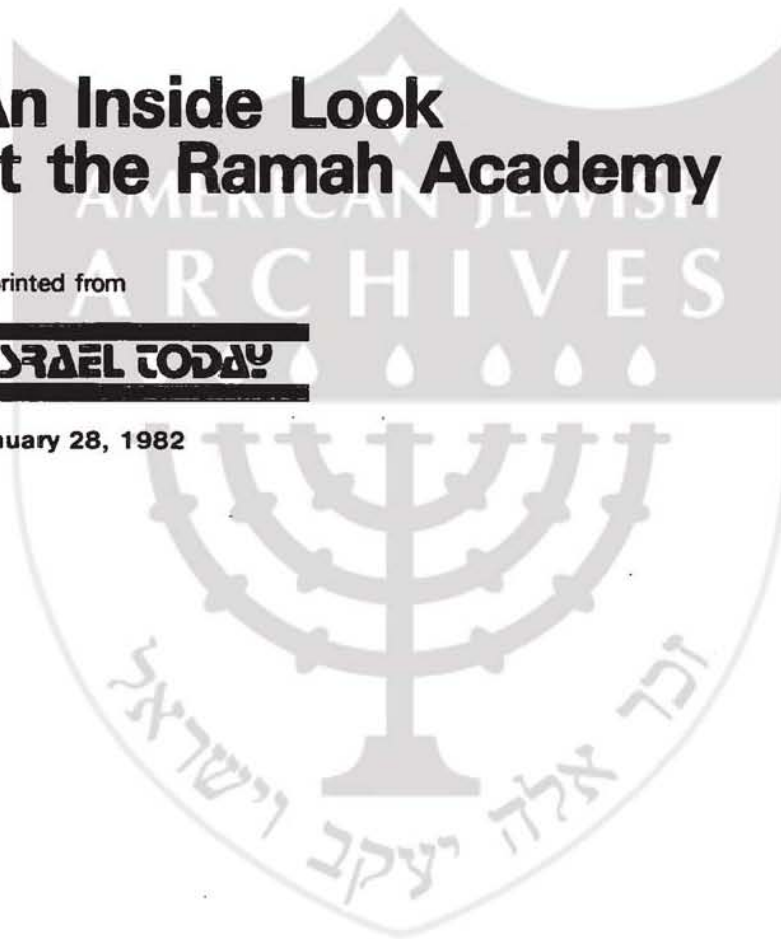


An Inside Look at the Ramah Academy

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Islam on Shabbat

Fire laps about a black potbellied stove in the center of the lobby. Trays of cookies and polished red apples beckon as steaming cups of coffee are poured. Casually-clad people are being introduced to one another. Some are young, others are not. Some have accents, others do not. Some are extroverted, others are shy. There are two bonds which link some 64 people from different places in the Los Angeles area: they are Jews, and they are interested in learning about the Islamic religion. They are going to spend Shabbat together in worship, song, and the study of Islam on Camp Ramah's 70 sprawling acres near Ojai, California.

The view from my room at the top of the stairs is exquisitely serene. Pines and palms stretch upward. A myriad of flowers cling to the edge of the walkways. The horizon of azure sky and emerald slopes seems endless. I've only been here for one-half hour and the anxiety and urgency which engulf me in the city have emptied from my body. My soul is quiet and at peace.

Before dark I meet with other women in the chapel and we each of us light two candles and say our own Shabbat prayers. Even the chapel is special with its many glass doors facing the four corners of the earth and bringing all G-d's living things, it seems, inside this house of worship.

Later at a brief service we are asked to give our names, nicknames, place of birth, and where we now reside. One by one we begin the exciting process of learning about the strangers sitting around us. We share intimate nicknames and details of our backgrounds. We share ourselves with each other and a bond is begun.

Rabbi Ron Levine, also a clinical psychologist, is the resident Rabbi for the weekend. He is a dynamic young man who has brought his wife, Joyce, and 17-month-old daughter, Aviva. Later, as he leads us in song, the baby toddles to his side and wraps her chubby arms about his leg, gurgling to be picked up. He is not flustered at all. With prayer book in one hand and Aviva in the other, he continues. There is a feeling of, not only oneness but, closeness.

Dinner is sumptuous, enhanced by getting to know the other seven people at the table, a comfortable exchange of dialogue and delectables. Israel and Rhoda, from Santa Ana, have brought her mother along. A pleasant older lady with thick glasses, a love for Israeli dancing, and a verve to match. Rabbi Svi Dershowitz' daughter, Toby, sits next to me. She has just returned from the American University in Cairo and we swap feelings and stories about Egypt. We say 'he after-dinner prayers as friends—no longer strangers.

At 9:30 p.m. we assemble in the lounge (with yet more food) to hear the first lecture given by the scholar in residence, Dr. William Zev Brinner. He is an Orientalist and scholar in Islam who has traveled to many Arab countries; he reads and speaks Arabic fluently.

"Islam is based on shame; Judaism is based on guilt. Islam is non-questioning; Judaism is all questioning. Islam is fatalistic and its congregants follow it to a 'T.'" (Look at Iran!) We are told that the three most important languages in Judaism are 1) Hebrew; 2) Aramaic; and 3) Arabic. These comprise most of the Jewish writings and teachings. He then outlines what his topics will be for the next two days.

Saturday morning Toby Dershowitz softly knocks on all doors saying "Shabbat Shalom." Imagine—awakening to an unblemished cobalt sky with sunshine spilling onto shrubs and verdant trees, touching everything with warmth . . . the quietude of G-d's land observing the Sabbath, a day of rest and contemplation. A time for study and discourse. The rabbi is jogging, clad in shorts, and his breath makes puffs of steam. Others are jogging or walking briskly. I stretch and yawn, relishing an almost-forgotten laziness. I feel rested, happy, and most of all content.

Eight-thirty finds all the weekenders commenting on the tranquility and beauty of Ramah's retreat. Inside the dining room an Israeli-type buffet awaits us. Cereals, fresh-baked bread, fruits and vegetables, trays of herring and cheese and as much of any-

thing as you desire. (I recall my son, Greg, saying about Ramah, "The best thing about the food is that they keep bringing tray after tray until everything is eaten up!")

"Don't sit with the same people all weekend," Dr. Alvin Mars, the Camp's executive Director, had suggested. "At each meal dine with people whom you really haven't come to know yet. In this way you will make many friends and get to know everyone here." Bless him for his kind advice. I seek out a table with seven new people to befriend. My breakfast companions are from Long Beach and Palos Verdes. We talk about politics, Judaism, and share thanks at being inside Camp Ramah where no cars are driven, no telephones are ringing, and relaxation and education are the order of the day. Dr. Mars' assistant, Pat, and her husband, Dick Wiggins are at my table. She is animated, dedicated and delightful. He is tall, in aerospace and a likeable, friendly fellow.

At Saturday morning services I realize that the rabbi sings very well, has a faultless sense of timing (Bob Hope beware), and laces his service with commentary and humor. Dr. Joel Renbaum, also on the staff, interprets the Torah portion, the sunlight catching silver threads in his beard as he paces back and forth. "God made covenants with erring human beings, not super men . . . Jacob got back later in life, in his own household, what he gave out." The Torah is read and we conclude with song.

Kiddush is vividly recorded in my mind's eye forever! On a grassy slope several yards from the chapel a table is set with white cloth billowing in the gentle breeze. Tiny cups of wine and eight honeycakes adorned with almonds grace the table. It looks like a frame of film as we congregate at midday.

"Praised art Thou, O Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who createst the fruit of the vine." How perfect to be standing amongst G-d's creations of the earth and blessing that which grows. People smile, kippas are worn throughout the day, and the ambience is free of stress and daily burdens. There seems no separation of body or

mind. I am at one with myself. Many friendships have been formed for we are united in the observance and celebration of Shabbat at Camp Ramah.

At 12:15 Dr. Brinner, whom we now call Zev, gives us background on Muhammad and Islam. Delightedly, I follow his readings in my own Koran. A period of questions and answers provokes the mental processes. A gamut of issues is raised... socially, politically, and religiously. Brinner is well-informed and handles them easily, grateful for the variety and quality of the queries. At 2 p.m. no one is willing to relinquish the professor or his subject but "ess" we must.

Lunch is a super buffet of cold cuts, salads and drinks. Andy and Greg are from Westchester, animated and eager to share in dialogue. They appear as newlyweds but have been married for 11 years. The Kabakers and Feinfelds are from Westwood. The hour spent in repast is pleasant. Dessert trays float endlessly by and fresh coffee is poured and repoured. We are free until 4:30.

"Thwack-thwack" echoes from the newly-paved tennis courts where four men are playing. Across the way, a phonograph renders Israeli music while Toby leads people in the art of folk dancing. Halfway up the hill, two couples are sprawled on sun-lounges and their laughter filters down the slope, mingling with the strains of music, clapping hands and stomping feet. The sun is refreshing, not hot or draining. Birds twitter, one pursuing another from branch to branch. An insect is making clicking noises by the dry creekbed. Time stands still as the afternoon rays of sun catch the 2x4s of the chapel wall. A jet streaks across the sky at such a high altitude it is soundless.

Back in my room, the golden sun is playing peek-a-boo behind a tall oak. A red-berried bush creeps along a coral-tiled roof. Members of our group head to their rooms to change for Mincha. As I dress I can hear a flute faintly playing in the distance.

Again Dr. Brinner astounds us with his knowledge of Muslims and Islam. We learn that the word "Jerusalem" is never mentioned

by name in the Koran but that it is implied by the words "Far Distant Place of Worship." I had wondered about the difference between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims. According to Brinner, "Shi'ites believe that man has free will; Sunnis believe he does not." The Western Wall in Jerusalem is important to Islam only because that is where Muhammad's horse was tethered in the legend of "night journey and ascension" in which Muhammad is taken to Heaven to speak with G-d. Says Brinner, "Only when the Jews or Christians are in Jerusalem is it important to the Muslims. They feel that Israel was taken away from them and must be returned. If, after being kicked out of Spain 500 years ago, they have not forgotten about it—imagine what a problem Israel must be for them."

"The Bahai religion was formed after Islam, therefore the Bahais are considered heretics and subject to death under Islamic law.

"Today there are 2 to 3 million Muslims in the United States. There are 75 to 80 million in China. The largest concentrations are in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and China. Egypt ranks 10th.

"The expulsion from Israel and the war defeats suffered are explained as G-d's punishment to man. After the '67 War, mosques couldn't hold the millions who wanted to pray. Streets were sealed off and rugs laid on them in order that the Muslims could pray. They were told that they won the '73 War because they had repented sufficiently.

"The pure Fundamentalist Muslim always runs to the West for medical attention or technology as they need it. This notion was developed early in Christianity when Christians were told to adapt what they need, even from an antagonistic culture as long as it serves their purpose. In a film called *Gift of Islam* we are told that there would be no space flights if not for the mathematical formulas developed in the Islamic world in the 9th and 10th centuries. But, Muslim society prevents a man from working once he has attained his degree. So, we see doctors, graduates of Western universities, sitting around while their assistants try to do the research

and work. This is why many Egyptian doctors come here to practice and work. Muslim society prohibits development.

"By and large, as long as Christians and Jews accepted the state of humiliation and Muslim principles they had safety and Jews weren't subject to massacre as in Europe. In the 19th century many Jews and Christians lived in the Muslim world. What happened to them? They were converted to Islam by the sword. Today, in Morocco, King Hassan has taken the Jews under his protection and they are only safe as long as he lives; when he dies there will be a Jewish exodus.

The sun has set and the sky grows pale and then dark. I have never been in temple at this time; it is a very special experience. We walk in the cold night air to the lighted garden of Kevin McCormack's home. He is the camp facilities manager, a charming man with a friendly, pretty wife and two darling children. There we sup cheeses, vegetables and drinks. An outdoor gas bar-b-que resembling a burning bush is lighted for warmth. Soon it is time for Havdalah. In the forest-like setting Miriam and Aaron Wise (Rabbi Emeritus of Adat-Ari-El in North Hollywood) put their arms about me and we are part of an endless circle, swaying and chanting prayers and melodies. A single candle is lighted and spices are passed around. Though the night air is chilled, warmth flows from one to another. There is a sadness about Shabbat ending which I have never felt before. There is a joy, too, evolved from being here and wishing each other a good week. Dinner is another feast and we congregate in the chapel for more discourse with Brinner. Later, "make your own sundaes" precedes entertainment in the lounge. As I stroll back to my building I can't help but notice the Furnace Creek sky with millions of flickering stars set against the backdrop of the black velvet. I fall asleep smiling, "Camp Ramah—how sweet it is!"

Sunday is sleeping in, and a relaxing continental breakfast with yet more people to chat with anew. It is another fabulous session with

Brinner which ends in a standing ovation. There are kind words of thanks from the team whose efforts were largely responsible for the countless successes of the weekend, Sandy and Bill Goodglick from West Los Angeles.

Many of the weekenders share their feelings with me before they depart. These are just a few:

Rhoda—"...loved the warm hospitality by ALL members of the staff.

Sylvia—"Enjoyed the learning, religious services, and everything that transpired. Thank you!!

Burt—"The weekend met all my expectations: the scholar, leadership, company and weather were outstanding.

Alma—"...most enlightening... wonderful. Dr. Brinner took a difficult subject and made it understandable. What a teacher!

Miriam—"...wonderful Jewish experience. I also enjoyed the intellectual exchange with many special people.

Mike—"Fantastic weekend. Wish it could have lasted longer. I feel that we just arrived.

Ruth & Richard—"...restful, stimulating, seemed to create a renewal of oneself...

Aaron—"Scholar excellent and stimulating, social mixing just enough; physical arrangements fine. Amen-Amen-Amen.

Sandy—"Spirited and spiritual!"

As Dr. Mars bid each of us thank you and goodbye, he had a lump in his throat. "If you find one person who justifies what you do, you should say 'day-e-nu,'" he said. Well, Alvin, after this weekend you are justified in saying about six dozen 'day-e-nus.' We are all grateful for your time, staff, warmth and love of people. We are indebted to you and the Goodglicks for giving us the opportunity to share Zev Brinner and to share in his knowledge of the Islamic world.

To all of you at Ramah Academy I will conclude by quoting Elie Wiesel who once wrote to me saying, "What can I say? Except—thank you!"

*I've only been here for one half-hour
and the anxiety and urgency
which engulf me in the city
have emptied from my body.
My soul is quiet and at peace.*

Ramah Academy weekends are held
at the University of Judaism's
Max and Pauline Zimmer Conference Grounds
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