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# AMERICAN EWISH A R C Introduction E S

by

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#### Jews, Judaism and the Modern World: The Breakdown of Consensus

One of the salient features of the modern Jewish condition is the lack of consensus within the community as to what constitutes essential conditions for membership. Membership and identification with community no longer entail commitment to a shared way of life. There are many segments of the Jewish community where membership is not based upon objective conditions and expectations but instead subjective feeling is sufficient. Also, the modern experience of Jewish identity is not informed by a clearly defined framework (such as a legal system) nor by a distinctive way of life. It draws upon many factors ranging from a person's background, family, community framework to a person's exposure to the collective fate of the Jewish people. There are no institutional or shared ideological assumptions which constitute the accepted boundaries of Jewish life or set limits to the ever expanding circle of Jewish values, experiences and life-styles.

The impact of modern history on Jewish life has led to the gradual disintegration of the organizing normative frameworks which had defined the Jewish community both internally, in terms of its standards of membership and externally, in terms of its relationship with the outside world. The social phenomena associated with this process were the breakdown of the ghetto, the Emancipation, the exposure to new cultural and religious forms of expression, the Haskala (enlightenment), the rebirth of the Hebrew language in literature and poetry, the flowering of Yiddish culture and the emergence of the Reform and Conservative movements. These social and cultural changes created deep divisions within the community which further exposed it to the powerful assimilationist forces of Western society.

Contemporary Jewish life is made up of a multitude of voluntary communities organized around various commitments and individual preferences. Even membership in synagogue frameworks is no longer a reliable indicator of the nature of a person's religious observance or beliefs. The very fact that a synagogue in the United States can eliminate all references to God from the prayers is an indication of the wide range of options that Jews believe are available for participating in Jewish life.

The characteristic posture of the rabbi of the modern congregation is that of suggesting and recommending rather than of exhorting or leading. The rabbi's role is to be interesting and exciting. It is "bad form" to make demands or This is a far cry from the way in which Maimonides rationalized halakhic coercion in cases where Halakha condoned coercion, e.g., forcing a husband to give his wife a *get* (writ of divorce).

If a person who may be legally compelled to divorce his wife refuses to do so, an Israelite court in any place and at any time may scourge him until he says "I consent." He may then write a get, and it is a valid get. Similarly, if it is heathens who whip him and say to him, "Do what Israelites tell you to do," so that Israelites exert pressure upon him through the heathens until he goes through with the divorce, the get is likewise valid. But if heathens on their own initiative exert pressure upon him until he writes the get, it is defective, inasmuch as the law does require him to write it. And why is this get not null and void, seeing that it is the product of duress, whether exerted by heathens or by Israelites? Because duress applies only to him who is

compelled and pressed to do something which the Torah does not obligate him to do, for example, one who is lashed until he consents to sell something or give it away as a gift. On the other hand, he whose evil inclination induces him to violate a commndment or commit a transgression, and who is lashed until he does what he is obligated to do, or refrains from what he is forbidden to do, cannot be regarded as a victim of duress; rather, he has brought duress upon himself by submitting to his evil intention. Therefore this man who refuses to divorce his wife, inasmuch as he desires to be of the Israelites, to abide by all the commandments, and to keep away from transgressions - it is only his inclination that has overhwhelmed him - once he is lashed until his inclination is weakened and he says "I consent," it is the same as if he had given the get voluntarily.

The Code of Maimonides, Book IV Chapter II, 20

Even though free choice is a necessary condition of valid legal acts in general and of giving a divorce in particular, Maimonides argued that the implicit assumption of membership in this community was sufficient justification for coercion. In such circumstances coercion can be understood as a form of liberation, an act of freeing a person from the shackles of ignorance or passion which temporarily prevent his doing what he had previously agreed to. In calling himself a Jew, the person in question had implicitly assumed the specific values and obligations of the normative framework of Judaism. The use of coercion, therefore, should not be viewed as an external act independent of that person's will but as a means of liberating a person from the psychological pressures and impulses which prevent his fulfilling his true desires.

Notwithstanding the problematic nature of Maimonides' argument, the crucial point underlying the argument which highlights the vast difference between his understanding of the Jewish experience and the modern reality is that, for Maimonides, membership in the community of Israel implies tacit assent to its Torah form of life. This assumption no longer exists in the modern world. The tacit assumption of membership plays little or no role in defining the modern Jewish community, which is less a single community than a collection of sub-communities moving in different directions at the same time.

One of the most interesting issues to have surfaced in Jewish society today is: "Who is a Jew?" The crucial question is not only who will have the legal authority to pass judgement on a person's membership in this community, but whether there are any necessary normative conditions for membership in this community. In other words, are there fundamental beliefs and practices which define the community of Israel.

The once assumed connection between minimal faith conditions and membership in the Jewish people can no longer be taken for granted for the majority of Jews. The modern experience is thus marked by a sense of a profound rupture in Israel's understanding of itself as a Torah people.

This is not to say that there was always unanimity and agreement or that ideological factionalism did not exist in Jewish life. The point is, however, that by and large the divisions that did emerge were rationalized and argued from within a common framework be

it the shared legal structure of Halakha or the mytho-poetic language of biblical and rabbinic literature. Differences were often viewed as differences of interpretation of the same legal and mythical texts and traditions. The framework of the Jewish discussion was defined by the covenant with Abraham, the story of the Exodus, the election of Israel, God's revelation of the Torah to the people of Israel, etc. The language in which both agreement and disagreement were expressed was a shared normative language and text. The concepts of God, land, covenant, election and revelation were the foundational building blocks upon which the identity of this community was constructed. The language which the community shared was thus a source of values, judgments and tacit assumptions.

This is not to say that there always were uniformity and universal compliance with the accepted norms of behavior. Living by the same rules does not imply that some people may not perform poorly or occasionally break the accepted rules of conduct. You can be a sinner without necessarily destroying the frame of reference which constitutes the identity of your community.

CURSED BE HE THAT CONFIRMETH NOT THE WORDS OF THIS LAW. "Here [in these words] he included the entire Torah and they took it upon themselves with an imprecation and an oath [to observe all the commandments thereof]." This is Rashi's language. In my opinion this "acceptance" requires that one avow the commandments in his heart and consider them as the truth, believe that he who observes them will be requited with the best of rewards and he who transgresses them will be punished, and if someone denies any of them, or considers it annulled forever he will be cursed. However, if one transgressed any commandment, such as eating swine or some abominable thing because of his desire, or he did not make a Booth or take the palm-branch [on the Festival of Tabernacles] because of laziness, he is not included within this ban, for Scripture did not say "who does not perform the words of this Law" but it states that 'confirmeth' not the words of this Law to do them, similar to the expression the Jews ordained, and took upon them [and upon their seed . . . so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days - of Purim - according to the writing thereof]. Thus the verse [before us] is the ban on those who rebel [against the authority of the Torah] and who deny [its validity].

Ramban (Deut. 28:26)

The language of modern Jewish life is far removed from the normative, cultural language which mediated Jewish identity in the past, namely, the discourse of Torah. Implicit in this discourse was the idea that God had a stake in your history. Your life was symbolic of God's presence in the world. The discourse of Torah, like the discourse of kedusha, the holy, and the discourse of mitzvah, the commandments, are normative languages. A religious life is essentially a disciplined life, an examined life, a life measured against claims and expectations. The modern break with this mode of discourse is evident in the translation of the term mitzvah as "good deed" rather than as commandment. A good deed is a worthy act but unlike mitzvah it is devoid of any connection with the concept of divine demand.

Traditionally, Jewish identity was affirmed daily through the recital of the Kriat

Shema: Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one. The reading of these three chapters in the morning and evening (during earlier periods, the ten commandments were also included) was a covenant renewal ceremony in which a person accepted the authority of God. The kriat shema consisted of two distinct parts. The first section, kabalat malkhut shamayim (acceptance of the kingdom of heaven), which referred to a specific form of religious consciousness, was immediately followed by kabalat ol mitzvot (acceptance of the yoke of the commandments), the commitment to a normative way of life.

This daily ritual gave expression to the type of person this system aimed at cultivating. The *kriat shema* expressed the subjective world view of the Jew regarded as a *ben brit*, a covenant partner, a commanded one. Today, however, this mode of consciousness has disappeared for almost ninety percent of the Jewish people. The problem of modernity as expressed by the incessant preoccupation with Jewish identity and continuity reflects this radical shift in the nature of Jewish self-perception.

The popularity and importance ascribed to the "Who is a Jew?" issue today testifies to the breakdown of the shared constitutive normative framework which informed Jewish identity and perception of history in the past. For many Jews, three-thousand years of Jewish history is no longer considered to be a guiding normative framework. Jewish history is a given fact and not a normative claim. My connection to Rabbi Akiva and Maimonides places no normative burden upon me nor does it affect my perception of how this community ought to live.

### Zionism and the State of Israel: The Secular Option

The break with the consensual frameworks of the past is most apparent in the State of Israel which offers Jews a new form of Jewish society where the traditional tacit assumption of Torah as constitutive of Jewish identity is conspicuously absent.

The reality of Jewish national existence in Israel is a forceful expression of the collective will of a people to continue in history without requiring any faith commitments of its members. Loyalty to the state does not entail loyalty to God, the Jewish tradition or the authority of Halakha. The State thus provides a frame of reference for Jewish membership and community consciousness independent of any specific normative or religious content.<sup>1</sup>

I would argue that this revolution in consciousness is more pronounced in Israel than

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Official Israeli policy conveys a double massage: "No belief commitments are necessary to be Jewish... so long as you do not embrace an alternative faith!" The initial message is that you will be accepted totally if you are an atheist, secularist or completely uninterested in the religious meaning of life or of Jewish history. The latter condition warns you against committing yourself to any faith other than Judaism, such as Christianity, Islam or Hinduism, in which case you will be disqualified. In other words, if you want to be a member of this community, you may not seek religious meaning in any faith other than Judaism, but you may renounce all faiths including Judaism.

in the Diaspora because of the presence of a viable Jewish social and cultural reality independent of a religious frame of reference. In the Diaspora, the secular dimensions of community have become less effective than in the past and seem to lack the bonding qualities required to sustain Jewish communal life. Instead, the synagogue and certain other traditional forms of religious practice provide the primary structures within which Jewish solidarity and communal identification are expressed. People often join synagogues solely in order to be part of this community. Ritual and religious symbol serve as the language through which community identification is mediated.

The failure of the secular community in America stands in sharp contrast with its success in Israel where membership in the Jewish community is not necessarily clothed in religious symbolism. Israel can therefore be described as the most viable option for Jews who wish to place their Jewish identities within a secular frame of reference. Israel allows you to become part of secular Western culture without the feeling of having betrayed the family. While the secular alternative to Judaism is a live option in Israel, in the Diaspora it still evokes images of closing the lights on Jewish history.

#### Zionism and the New Israel

The significance of Israel as the incarnation of the secular option extends beyond its geographical and political borders. The meaning of the Zionist revolution as understood by Shlomo Aveneri is that even without actually living in Israel, Jews can enjoy a new sense of membership in Jewish history without having to subscribe to a religious interpretation of Jewish nationalism. His argument is that while at one time religion was the cementing feature of Jewish peoplehood, in the modern world its influence has waned and has been successfully replaced by the new cementing forces of the Jewish people: Israel, the Hebrew language, the mystique of Israel's military capacities, the renewal of the land, etc. Zionism provides an "Israeli experience" for the Jews of the Diaspora, i.e., a sense of connection with Jewish history without religious demands or aspirations.

Zionism was the most fundamental revolution in Jewish life. It substituted a secular self-identity of the Jews as a nation for the traditional and Orthodox self-identity in religious terms. It changed a passive, quietistic and pious hope of the return to Zion into an effective social force, moving millions of people to Israel. It transformed a language relegated to mere religious usage into a modern, secular mode of intercourse of a nation state. Pious reiterations of the links of Jews to Palestine do not suffice to explain the emergence of Zionism when it did. Conversely Zionism is not just a reaction of a people to persecution. It is the quest for self-determination and liberation under the modern conditions of secularization and liberalism. As such it is as much part of the Jewish history of dispersion and return as of the universal history of liberation and the quest for self-identity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> While some people view the return to the land of Israel and the renewal of the three-thousand year old promise of Jewish history as the fulfillment of the prophetic vision, others celebrate the discontinuity with the past, hailing Israel as the fulfillment of the dream where Jews can freely choose to be whoever they want.

According to Avineri, the new frame of reference which informs Jewish identity for the greatest number of Jews throughout the world is the state of Israel. With the birth of the nation state the traditional religious grounds of Jewish identification which placed Jewish consciousness in an on-going discussion with transcendence, with being "a nation of priests and a holy nation," were replaced by the imminent categories of nationalism and statehood. Avineri's thesis is that the rebirth of the State of Israel is a new Torah, a substitute for the traditional organizing frame of reference which informed Jewish self-understanding. Zionism transformed Jewish collective consciousness from a covenantal people, a singular people whose destiny was to bear witness to the presence of God in history, to a normal community among the community of nations.

Avineri's analysis may be less accurate as an empirical description of how most Israelis actually feel than as a provocative thesis of how to view the revolutionary import of Zionism. His thesis draws attention to the fact that Zionism is undoubtedly one of the most serious challenges to Judaism in modern history. Unlike the social and ideological dangers of Marxism, of assimilation into Western cultures or of conversions to other faiths, this threat is internal to the very meaning of Jewish identity. Unlike the external threats of competing ideologies, Zionism calls into question the community's conception of who it is and who are to be the carriers of its history.

Zionism offered Jews a new ideology of continuity by claiming to be the new carrier of Jewish history. In a certain sense it resembles Christianity's claim to be the "new Israel." Both ideologies claimed continuity with the past despite radically transforming key aspects of its nature. While Christianity formulated its claims in religious terms, arguing that the past would be fulfilled in its new understanding of the Bible, the modern commitment to secularism treats the religious dimension as an accidental feature of the past which can be superseded by alternative modes of national self-expression.

The Zionist rationale for supplanting the religious dimension of the Jewish past rests on its belief in the primacy of the nation as an end in itself and not as a transparent symbol of God's rule in history. However important its role in the past, Torah and Halakha should not be regarded as essential components of Jewish identity. The concepts of God, election, the call to be a holy people are relics of an early religious stage of our national consciousness. A Torah way of life should be viewed instrumentally, i.e., as a means to national survival and not as a permanent constitutive foundation of Jewish identity. This radical reformulation preserves many of the central categories and concerns of Jewish identity - land, peoplehood, history, language - while offering radically new interpretations of their value and meaning. While the framework appears intact, its content has been transformed from within.

The Church fathers felt compelled to enter into an exigetical discussion with the biblical tradition. An enormous hermeneutic effort was needed to explain the rejection of the Law and the meaning of the biblical and prophetic traditions in the light of Christianity's claim to be the new Israel. Key categories such as election, holiness and peoplehood were reworked and reinterpreted so as to accommodate this new spiritual interpretation of Israel and Torah.

Christianity, however, abandoned the living body of the Jewish people for a spiritualized version of the continued history of Israel. The New Israel in the form of the Church superseded the living reality of the people of Israel. Zionism, on the other hand, is committed to the Jewish people and to its history in the most mundane and concrete senses of these terms. The new Israeli is part of the political reality of the Jewish people and thus consciously shares in the continuity of Jewish history. While the secular Zionists insisted on emptying Jewish history of all religious content, they nonetheless share with those committed to the tradition a common interest in the continuity of this community as a tangible political and social entity.

The Zionist argument was that the problem of antisemitism would not disappear and the Jewish people could not survive in the world as a Torah people. Torah could no longer be the organizing principle of Jewish collective consciousness but should be replaced by the idea of the Jewish nation. The Zionist solution thus involved a fundamental transmutation of values. The tradition had defined Israel as a God-constituted community. Liberation and election, Egypt and Sinai were the constitutive moments of the divine drama of Jewish history. Zionism, however, turned Jewish history into a national drama. Instead of theology and the vocabulary of the sacred, it substituted the ordinary language of politics, economics and social survival to describe and explain the historical destiny of the Jewish people.

The most heated debates over the "Who is a Jew?" issue can often be reduced to two fundamentally irreconcilable conceptions of Jewish history and national consciousness. One position believes there is a divine scheme for history and the people of Israel is its carrier. Israel is unique by virtue of its special destiny and therefore its history should not be interpreted according to the same rules, laws and patterns that govern other nations. The opposing view, which is a basic ideological doctrine of the Zionist revolution, negates all claims which transcend ordinary categories of political analysis and especially providential explanations which set Israel apart from other historical nations. Israel is a socio-political entity like all other nations. The language of miracle and providence, of special destiny and divine purpose, are deceptive and must be expunged from political discourse. The biblical and the rabbinic understandings of Israel are appropriate only as myth and metaphor. Secularization is necessary if Israel is to become mature and responsible for its own destiny.

This cultural revolution struck at the very core of the community's identity. Jewish existence was de-sacrilized into a community whose folkways and rituals were no longer expressive of an underlying theological and spiritual drama. Traditional symbols and mores were not abolished but rather they were reinterpreted as instruments serving the national interest. Rituals are no longer *mitzvot*, commandments, but symbols expressive of Jewish collective existence. As Ahad Haam observed: *It is not so much that the Jews kept the Sabbath as that the Sabbath kept the Jews*.

The question of religion in this secular frame of reference is how can it best serve the continued survival of the Jewish people? The Diaspora too reflects this transformation. As Jews, the crucial question they must face is not "How do I worship God in the 20th century?" but "Will my grandchildren be Jewish?" Their concern is with continuity and not with the need to rehabilitate the notion of a Torah people. Traditional symbols and institutions such as the synagogue, prayer, bar/bat mitzvah and the whole symbolic language of religious myth and practice are pressed into the service of building the cohesive framework necessary for

Jewish survival and continuity. The Jewish nation and Israel thereby usurp God's role in defining the meaning and purpose of Jewish history.

Part of the difficulty of grasping the radical nature of the Zionist revolution is due to the persistence of the concept of family and peoplehood as the central metaphors of Jewish identity. The notion of peoplehood was always an essential component of traditional Judaism. Unlike many religions, Judaism cannot be explained in terms of faith commitment alone. Its sacred texts deal primarily with the history of this people. Consciousness of shared destiny and history are inseparable from the faith commitment of Judaism. Consequently, the vitality of the concepts of peoplehood and family in Israel today often mask the enormity of the change in Jewish consciousness. The situation may be compared to the experience of returning to one's family after a long absence. Despite very real changes and differences, one's memories of familiar faces and places, of the old neighborhood, etc., may combine to produce an overall sense of familiarity which may hide the real changes that may have occurred.

Many Jews today are convinced that the great threat to Jewish continuity is assimilation rather than the change which threatens Jews from within. What they fail to realize is that our primary vocabulary of self-understanding has been undermined in the modern world. The traditional fundamental categories of Jewish identity no longer claim the majority of Jews. We fight in the army together, we suffer together and, therefore, we don't fully grasp the extent of the disintegration of the shared value language of our people.

The sense of family and the symbols of family solidarity which persist in spite of their changed meaning deceive us into thinking that the "people of Israel lives." For many, Israel as the "home" of the Jewish family, the safe haven where Jews are not vulnerable to oppression from without, is a most compelling argument against those who claim that without Torah and faith in God there is no meaning to Jewish history. The Israeli experience is a most powerful vindication of the Jewish people's ability to survive as a family without the excess baggage of election, covenant, theism, and the prophetic demand in the name the Lord of history.

# The Failure of Secularization

The bold revolutionary establishment of the Jewish State met with certain unanticipated historical and cultural setbacks which left the confrontation between the Jewish tradition and modernity is an unresolved state. The fact that the revolution took place in the land of the Bible was itself a challenge to the brave new secular world to make sense of its connection with the past. There also developed a need to demonstrate continuity with the past because of the resistance to secularism by large segments of the Jewish community. The superiority of the new ideal over the old was not universally acknowledged. Parts of the population remained deeply traditional, not having gone through the process of secularization which claimed to be synonymous with modernity. The Sephardic community, for example, presented such a challenge to the builders of the new society.

The strange "status quo" agreements which froze a moment of time during 1948 into law reflect the logic of pragmatic compromise. Buses could run on the Sabbath in Haifa but not in Tel Aviv nor in Jerusalem. The spirit of accommodation which developed in response

to the persistence of "pre-revolutionary" stage of Jewish history expressed the political pragmatism of an ideology forced to acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of Jewish consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

The reality of history intervened and showed the new Israel that it had to learn to live with the old Israel. Had there been no Holocaust and had secularization been allowed to continue its sweep of Europe, there may not have been a need to compromise the goals of the revolution with traditional elements. The Holocaust slowed the advance of the secular revolution. The demise of religion and of traditional society had not occurred as expected. The 18th century idea of progress and the belief in the inevitable success of secularization had not been realized. Religion had not disappeared from human consciousness. The certainty and single-mindedness of the revolution was thus upset by the failure of secular liberalism to become the definitive basis of Jewish self-understanding in the twentieth century and by the Holocaust's destruction of the large potential base of a secular aliya.

Another source of dissonance for secular Zionism was (and is) Israel's relationship with the Diaspora. Those who believe in the radical secular nature of the new Israel are at a loss to explain their relationship with the Diaspora upon which Israel relies for economic and political support and as a source of potential aliya. This interaction also raises questions in the minds of Israelis about their own identities.

Israeli identity has become more ambiguous and complicated by a confident and continuing diaspora. Is Israel the socio-political expression of a Jewish society or is it a distinctive modern creation, an *Israeli* society? Are Israelis Jews? Is world Jewry necessarily connected with the State? Does Zionism offer an Israeli experience in place of the traditional spiritual way of life of past generations? The presence of a Diaspora which is not perceived only negatively in terms of anti-semitism and Jewish vulnerability forces the Israeli to struggle with a form of Jewish self-consciousness which normalization and statehood were supposed to have resolved. The Diaspora, therefore, has in many ways forced Israelis to reconsider the meaning of their revolution and of its connection with the larger drama of Jewish history.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> The fascinating feature of the "Who is the Jew?" question as an Israeli political problem is that it deals with the status of the conversions of pluralistic branches of Judaism in the Diaspora, i.e., with the spiritual legitimacy of the Conservative and Reform movements. The irony is that the community asked to judge this issue is a self-proclaimed secular community. The revolutionary society which broke with the past, with the Sabbath and prayer, with God and Halakha 1) stands in judgment over Jews who give a religious interpretation to Jewish history and 2) hands political authority over whole areas of personal status to the Orthodox branch of Judaism. Political pragmatism which results in a secular government delegitimating liberal pluralistic Judaism reveals the contradictions and conflicts of a social reality appear unintelligible to the observer.

If the ground of Jewish cohesion in the Diaspora is religion, what, then, do Israelis have to offer the diaspora Jewry in terms of its continuity? To address the Diaspora only in terms of future aliya is futile and empty. Jews are not coming en masse to their home in Zion. A permanent Diaspora seems to be a perennial condition of Jewish history. The doctrine of *shlilat hagolah* (the negation of the diaspora), continues to be challenged by the existence of a strong Diaspora community which values itself as a legitimate framework of Jewish existence and turns to Israel as a significant partner in the Jewish discussion.

The Diaspora is thus extremely important in stimulating the Israeli to face the issue of Jewish continuity. In Israel, the problem of the emptiness of Jewish content is often buried under the socially comforting reality of being the majority culture, of speaking Hebrew, and of conforming to the standards of normal Israeli life. The breach appears when Israelis go abroad or when asked to answer such questions as: What have you to offer the Jews of the world? Does the disappearance of four million Jews due to assimilation bother you? What Jewish content can you export to the world? Do you have anything to say to Jews who are not willing to become citizens of the State of Israel?

### Peoplehood and Family Consciousness

Significant parts of the religious community are positively disposed to the secular Zionist movement because of the latter's commitment to the continuity of the Jewish people and because the State of Israel serves as such a powerful countervailing force against assimilation. For them the covenant is not an abstract idea but a concrete way of life of a living community. The existence of a physical people is a necessary condition for the existence of a Jewish Sinai-oriented religious culture.

One should not make the mistake of setting peoplehood against covenantal consciousness as two irreconcilable foci of Jewish identity. The question is not religion versus peoplehood but what is the nature of this people. The Orthodox do not subscribe to Judaism as a spiritual brotherhood not do they belittle the value of the physical existence of the Jewish people. Judaism is not just a culture of the book but of a living people that carries the book. While Christianity claimed to have inherited many of the ideas of Judaism, it broke the living connection with the Jewish people by abandoning the notion of peoplehood as the framework in which to realize its spiritual vision. By contrast, today the conflict is not whether we are a nation but what kind of nation we are.

The concept of family is an indispensable concept for explaining the historical meaning of Judaism and Jewish theology. The biblical narrative which defined this people's understanding of who they were assumed that is was perfectly natural to combine the themes of the national liberation from Egypt, the shared revelation at Sinai and the prophetic perception of history. The separation of this unified conception into distinct elements occurred in the modern world.

Nonetheless, traditional Jews who make Sinai the guiding metaphor of their cultural-religious lives cannot ignore the strong family notions which underlie it. The theologian who hopes to make sense of Judaism cannot focus exclusively on religious doctrine, practice and sacred texts but must also explain the centrality of the notion of the people of Israel which "even if it sins, it remains *Israel*." The family notion is thus a vital characteristic of the

spiritual way of Judaism.

This is the reason why I often claim that Israel has made us aware of the importance of becoming reengaged with the tradition and provides us with a living context for reopening the discussion with the tradition which is not present in the Diaspora. I do not wish to claim that most Israelis are consciously (or unconsciously) seeking spiritual meaning in their lives. I do believe, however, that Israel has created a Jewish reality which claims Jews throughout the world. The fact that there is a community where people consciously affirm their connection with Jewish history is a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for reviving the discussion with the tradition and some of its spiritual concerns.

Israelis carry the burden of the physical dimension of our historical destiny which is an important aspect of Judaism and which explains the close connection between this form of Jewish secularity and traditional Jewish communities. Despite their rejection of many of the values and institutions which traditional Jews regard as sacred and their radically secular interpretation of Jewish history, they made a decision against assimilation and against breaking their ties with Jewish history. Israelis thus participate in the physical body politic of the Jewish people, they speak Hebrew and share many of the same texts, symbols and mythological frameworks that inform traditional Jewish culture.

The important point is that these secularists perceive themselves as members of the family of the Jewish people. Their sense of community is not based on shared beliefs and ideals alone but, as the concept family implies, on the social bond between people who share a concrete living reality. While families may be divided over the nature of their goals, physically living together within the same social and economic institutions, the same government, the same army, etc., creates a common interest and concern with the continuity and vitality of the family framework.

The continuity of the Jewish people as a distinct historical entity is also a vital concern of those who wish to restore the spiritual dimension of Jewish consciousness. Judaism can only be renewed if Jews are committed to continuing the family. Judaism as a way of life cannot be realized by a commitment to abstract values separated from the living framework of the Jewish family.

Soloveitchik expressed this view in *Kol Dodi Dofek* (The Voice of my Beloved Calls). The fact that Israel made Jews self-conscious and visible and thus counteracted the assimilation of American Jewry is, for Soloveitchik, a religious value which he expresses by using of the religious concept "covenant" in his notion of the covenant of destiny (*brit goral*). The fact that this notion cannot be traced to any sources in the rabbinic tradition is less important for Soloveitchik than the fact that Torah cannot exist without a Jewish people. This noted Orthodox leader was prepared, therefore, to join forces with the Zionist enterprise despite it's ideological opposition to the basic tenets of his religious thought. He understood and appreciated the significance of Israel as a catalyst for regenerating Jewish existence after the devastation and demoralization of the Holocaust and the powerful forces of assimilation in American life. Soloveitchik felt justified in introducing the bold new religious principle of *brit goral*, the covenant of destiny, which ascribed enormous spiritual importance to the Zionist cause.

His approach differs from other equally favorable religious responses to Zionism which invoked the language of a theology of history to integrate the secular challenge into their religious world view. Rav Kook's theology of history absorbed the seemingly heretical revolution in Israel into a grand scheme which transformed the meaning of the Zionist state into an energizing agent capable of releasing latent powers within Jewish consciousness. The secularization of the Jewish people is a necessary stage in a process leading to the final vindication and revitalization of Judaism. The dialectical process represented by the secularization of Jews is a preparatory stage which will be followed by a renewed outburst of spiritual and prophetic energies in Jewish history.

Soloveitchik's argument makes no reference to metaphysics or historical dialectics but instead rests on straight-forward factual and empirical claims. After feeling the trauma of the Holocaust and witnessing the disintegration of the Jewish community in America Soloveitchik was impressed by the fact that Israel was a powerful and effective focal point of Jewish identity.

The opponents of the views of Soloveitchik and Kook in the Orthodox camp perceive only danger in the new Zionist ideology. They refuse to recognize the State of Israel and view the nationalization of the Jewish people as a deep threat to the future of Jewish life. Soloveitchik and Kook, on the other hand, believe in the inevitable failure of Jewish secularization. This belief underlies Soloveitchik's analysis and explanation of the conditional nature of Maimonides' theory of redemption. Maimonides accepts the talmudic view that geula, redemption, is dependent upon teshuva, repentance which implies that redemption is not necessary (if the community will never do teshuva, redemption, will never occur!). Belief in a possible redemption would strike many a believer as religiously preposterous. Soloveitchik, however, makes the ingenious exegetical move of interpreting Maimonides' position as a statement of belief in Israel's doing teshuva. Rather than base his certainty in redemption on divine grace, Soloveitchik invokes a quasi-mystical belief in the Jewish psyche which he believes is predisposed to do teshuva sooner or later.

While I fully agree that without a people there is no Torah, I do not believe in the necessary connection between the covenants of destiny and of Torah neither in terms of Rav Kook's necessitarian view of history nor in terms of Soloveitchik's faith in the soul of this people to withstand assimilation. My position differs from theirs insofar as I do not share their certainty in the ultimate spiritual renewal of Israel. Zionism has succeeded in "normalizing" us and in making us realize that we are a nation like all the nations.

In my earliest work I spoke passionately about the spiritual renaissance which I believed would follow in the aftermath of the Six-Day War. Perhaps it was my background and education as a Torah Jew which induced me into believing that Israel would become the center of our spiritual renewal. Today I admit to having lost this sanguine belief. I am fully awake to the fact that Israel can become a secular people with no more than a shallow sentimental attachment to Torah and to the tradition of being a text-centered people.

I now believe that Israel can survive as a sovereign political nation without making Torah into the defining feature of its self-understanding. In other words, the secularization of the Jewish people is a real possibility. And the disappearance of the Jewish people as traditionally understood is a real possibility.

It is important to mention that not all segments of Jewish society acknowledge the problem of modernity. Some do not recognize modernity as a cultural "paradigm shift" and continue perceiving the so-called new Jewish community in traditional categories. Their commitment to a frame of reference that has always informed Jewish consciousness is consistent and uncompromising. Some express this point of view by adopting a militant confrontational posture towards the secularization of the Jewish people which they characterize as yet another example of an idolatrous pagan culture.

The *haredi* community, for example, recognizes the radical change in Jewish consciousness and relates to it with all the disdain and contempt which idolatrous practices deserve. They have no hesitation confronting all Jews, regardless of stated beliefs and commitments, in the name of Torah and the authority of Halakha as if these were universally acknowledged legal and value frameworks. Because they have not come to terms with the radical break with the founding moments which traditionally constituted Jewish identity, they continue using a language of discourse which strains the limits of credibility. It is as if it were still true that if someone claims to be a member of the Jewish people, I have a right to forcibly prevent him from eating or importing pork into this country. The oddity of their religious posture towards the secular community is due to their failure to fully grasp the extent to which the radical revolution has succeeded.

The more pragmatic attitude rationalizes the historical success of secularism as a temporary phenomenon which, in the long run, will contribute to the Jewish people's eventual return to Torah. While the advocates of this approach appear to have made their peace with contemporary Jewish history and openly invoke traditional halakhic categories to explain their relations with secularism, nonetheless, they too reject its cultural legitimacy. Their flexibility and conciliatory attitude should not be mistaken for cultural pluralism. On the contrary, it reflects a deep refusal to admit that a radical change has taken place in Jewish history with the disintegration of a shared normative consensus.

The philosophical defense of this posture has various forms. As discussed above, the more metaphysical approaches, like that of Rav Kook, argue for a kind of Hegelian dialectic where secularism plays a significant role, albeit unknowingly, in the unfolding of the spiritual plan of history. Rabbi Soloveitchik, on the other hand, shows little interest in the metaphysics of history but introduces the notion of the "covenant of destiny" which establishes a conceptual affinity between secular and traditional notions of collective identity by showing how the former creates the conditions for the ultimate realization of the latter. The secular revolution, therefore, is important and worthy of serious attention because it is a precondition for the ultimate fulfillment of Israel as a Torah people. In both cases, the current historical reality is recognized and appreciated but only after being assimilated into traditional categories.

#### On Reopening the Jewish Discussion

In contrast to the approaches of Soloveitchik and Rav Kook, this book aims at showing how to begin a discussion with the tradition without assuming that the people of Israel is on its way to becoming a Torah people. The notion of a discussion with a tradition conveys the idea of an open-ended commitment. We do not know beforehand what directions the discussion will take nor how the tradition will speak to the various individuals, sensibilities and agenda that exist in Israel and in the Diaspora. Given the deep fragmentation of the Jewish community, one ought to be wary of solutions based on a coherent monolithic understanding of Judaism for the whole community. Instead we must recognize that there is a tradition that is waiting to be spoken to and waiting to speak to us. The question is how to speak to and how to listen to that tradition.

This work seeks to engage the tradition while fully acknowledging the multiple constitutive frameworks which inform Jewish identity and communal life. The underlying assumption of this work is that we live in a post-Zionist revolutionary age where 1) the inevitability of secularization has been questioned and 2) the normative consensus which claimed Torah as the single constitutive component of Jewish identity has disappeared. There is a sense of crisis as well as a feeling of excitement about the future. The crisis centers around the massive assimilation of Diaspora Jewry and the cultural discontinuity and alienation of Israelis from their Jewish past. The excitement is due to the powerful impact that Israel has had by restoring the vitality of Jewish peoplehood and memory and by liberating Jews from a Marrano type of consciousness. Jews are no longer embarrassed to be visible in Western culture.

We shall not attempt to offer a new Halakha or to indicate the direction that authoritative Jewish law ought to take. The crucial issue of our age is not how to revive Halakha but how to revive the Jewish discussion. Halakha and authority have meaning when a community shares a common foundational framework. We, however, live in an age which lacks such foundational frameworks. We no longer live with the absolutes and the certainties which shaped former periods of Jewish history. Halakha per se, therefore, is less important than the creation of conditions for becoming engaged in the discussion that made our people a Torah people.

The crucial question of our age is: What does it mean to be a Torah people? What does it mean for a modern Jew to engage Akiva, Maimonides, Halevi, the Bible, the Talmud? We must create the basis of the discussion, the desire to learn, to think, to become acquainted with the sensibilities, the values, the theological images that make up our tradition. Again, the crucial issue is not "What should I do?" or "Who is authorized to decide what I should do?" but "Who shapes my memory? What conceptions of spirituality inform my life? How do I make sense of a language of holiness, of the concepts covenant, election, Sabbath, history, community and spirituality?" Only when these issues are resolved will the issues of legal authority and Halakha become meaningful and relevant to the greater community.

My concern in not with how Halakha deals with modernity but with how the Jewish people, who have entered into modernity, can become engaged in a vital discussion with their tradition without demanding that they make a leap of faith or declare total commitment to rabbinic authority and Halakha.

#### Reclaiming the Legacy of the Interpretive Culture: The Centrality of Sinai in Rabbinic Judaism

Maimonides' justification of coercion in terms of the tacit assumption of membership in this community is no longer convincing for it lacks the consensual framework which once gave it force. The Jewish people no longer perceives itself as a people constituted by tradition and memory. In the past Jewish creativity was often expressed in the form of interpretation. The context of creativity was not the radically new and uncharted but the ongoing discussion with past generations. The creative impulse was nurtured by what one had received. The innovative student uncovered and expanded the spiritual possibilities of the tradition. It was natural, therefore, for most literary and philosophic works to be presented as commentary. One always returned to Sinai, the point of departure of all intellectual and spiritual creativity.

Covenantal religion revolved around the imagery of God speaking to Israel at Sinai.<sup>4</sup> Revelation was not a fixed, unrepeatable past event but a paradigm moment which future generations could re-live in their daily lives. The founding moment of Sinai was eternally renewable and accessible.

While the eternity of revelation might seem to be the very antithesis of cultural creativity and novelty, it in fact served as the psychological and religious impetus behind the intellectual freedom and boldness of rabbinic Judaism. Revelation legitimatizes the past while energizing and liberating the community to move in new directions. By making Sinai into a timeless but not static moment, you merge the present and the future with the past and by so doing you incorporate all of human creativity into the very moment of revelation. This idea was beautifully captured by the famous rabbinic comment: All that a distinguished scholar will originate in the future was already given to Moses at Sinai (\*\*\*)

Gershon Scholem thought that only a mystic interpretation of revelation could explain the interpretive freedom and the radical spiritual initiatives of the Kabbalistic tradition. I would argue that even without an elaborate metaphysical theory rationalizing the infinite meanings of the Word of God, the notion of the eternity of revelation is itself a powerful organizing principle which explains the innovative interpretive boldness of the rabbinic tradition. The amazing license and ease which Talmudic teachers exhibited in their treatment of the biblical text can partly be explained by the notion of Sinai as hayei netzah, eternal life. Biblical verses informed by the sense of the eternity of revelation energized rabbinic scholars to seek new meanings in old texts. Hillel could rationalize his modification of biblical legislation (e.g. the prusbul) and thereby claim to be fulfilling rather than abolishing older sections of biblical legislation.

The rabbinic mind internalized this conception of revelation and election and thus proceeded to develop Judaism in ways which differed considerably from its biblical and prophetic forms. By placing Sinai at the center of Jewish consciousness, the rabbinic tradition

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> In early versions of the liturgy, the Ten Commandments were recited together with the *ahava raba* and *emet v'yatziv* which, like the public Torah reading, invoke the dramatic imagery of revelation.

inaugurated the most innovative and creative period of Jewish history.5

## Rebuilding the Vocabulary of Jewish Identity: The concepts of Torah and Halakha

The legacy of the interpretive tradition cannot be reclaimed without rebuilding a new language of Jewish self-consciousness. As I have shown, we are no longer a text-centered people. The eternal conversation with Sinai has been broken and the majority of Jews feel alienated and estranged from the tradition. The primary task of the Jewish philosopher today, therefore, is to retrieve a language of Torah which can meet the complex challenges to Jewish survival discussed in this chapter.

Presenting Judaism as a closed system, a fixed menu prepared exactly according to divine requirements, stifles any attempt at creating the conditions for genuine discussion. I, therefore, would make the following distinction in order to counteract this religiously naive understanding of Judaism and, more important, to "make room" for the type of discussion which was so vital to this culture in the past. I shall distinguish between the concepts of *Torah* and *Halakha*, two distinct categories which are often conflated by those who lack an understanding of the rich, multi-dimensional nature of rabbinic culture.

The term *Torah*, in its broadest sense, can best be described as a language, a universe of discourse, in which the discussion about the meaning of the Jewish text occurs. *Torah* includes the analysis and interpretation of Torah text, which is comprised of the written Torah (biblical literature), and the oral Torah (midrash, talmud, responsa literature), legal and aggadic works, Jewish philosophy, theology, mysticism, hasidism, etc.

As a cultural language, Torah spans generations and religious sensibilities offering the broadest possible definition of the scope of Judaic spirituality. Legalism and romanticism, rationalism and mysticism, are some of the directions which the discussion took in the past. Jewish identity has been shaped by the various directions of the discussion and by the variety of questions asked of the tradition. What does it mean to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation? How should this community view itself vis a vis other nations and religious traditions? Are sex roles normative or descriptive? What is the meaning of prayer? What are the grounds of religious and moral obligation? The point I wish to make is that just as the possibilities of raising legitimate questions are enormous so too are the directions and paths that the Torah discussion may take. This concept of Torah does not inhibit the individual. I am not asked to submit to the normative authority of the practicing community but rather to participate in a conversation in which I am free to exercise my preferences for certain ideas, attitudes and sensibilities over others.

The language of Torah is not restricted to a particular moment in the tradition but covers the whole history of the discussion with Torah throughout history. The mitzvah of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It is an indisputable fact that the longest period of Jewish creativity was intellectually and spiritually shaped and sustained by the interpretive cultural tradition of rabbinic Judaism.

talmud torah, studying Torah, is not only fulfilled by studying law in its final authoritative form. The benediction over being engaged in the words of Torah is perfectly valid even if the texts in question are those of Beit Shamai (the Halakha usually accepted the rival views of Beit Hillel) or of later scholars, such as the discussions of Rav Joseph Soloveitchik or Moshe Feinstein. In the context of a Torah discussion I am not concerned with final decisions and accepted practice but with conjectures and directions which have been articulated even tentatively during the course of Jewish intellectual history.

The concept of Halakha differs from this notion of Torah insofar as it refers to the accepted authoritative body of law which governs and regulates community practice. Halakha is a legal system - albeit one that relates to areas of life which lie beyond the purview of most secular legal systems - and is conceptually bound up with the notions of power and authority. A complete analysis of Halakha would require us to examine the philosophical and the political and sociological foundations of legal authority, legal reasoning and legal decision making.

The language of Halakha is affected by the politics of legal authority. The force of an halakhic decision is determined by who the judge is and not only by what reasons are given. The right to be listened is no less important than the cogency of legal argumentation. Many of the struggles between rival groups within the Halakhic community today center around which halakhic authorities have the right to render decisions on the status of women, the borders of the land of Israel, the legitimacy and content of political compromise, etc.

Halakha is very concerned with guarding against anarchy. The issue of the zacken mamre, the recalcitrant elder, the judge who challenges the authority of higher courts, is a serious issue because of its effect on the stability of the community's authority structures. Whatever weakens the status and functioning of the authoritative system is dangerous and must be uprooted.

I am not claiming that Halakha is a deductive, mechanical system which contains answers for the committed. Halakhic decision making is a complex process subject to the limitations and uncertainties of legal reasoning in general. The legitimacy of appealing to authority to reach decisions in law reflects the inherent nature of practical reasoning which cannot offer the certainty and simplicity of deductive reasoning. Nonetheless, once decisions are reached they carry the stamp and authoritative weight of the recognized halakhic leadership of the community.

Halakha, therefore, is a language for people committed to the authoritative practices of this religious community. It presupposes the decision to live one's religious life within the context of this community's normative way of life. Halakhic authorities mediate the moment of Sinai by translating the eternal covenant of Sinai into concrete daily life. Living within the normative confines of Halakha presupposes an advanced stage of Jewish identification. It expresses the decision of a person committed to Judaism to conform to the shared way of life of the Jewish community.

#### The Aim of this Book: Retrieving the Language of Torah

Halakhic works are aimed primarily at people who seek clear and authoritative guidance in their everyday life. In this sense, this work is not an halakhic work. I shall not address the issues in question as an authoritative religious spokesman nor shall I try to render legal decisions. Given the above distinction between Torah and Halakha, I choose to describe this book as a work of Torah rather than of Halakha.

My aim is to provide the broadest possible framework which this traditional community made available by virtue of its rich and varied cultural history. In presenting the tradition's attitude to women, to the convert and to the non-Jew, I shall not try to solve the current halakhic problems associated with these issues but, instead, I shall suggest new directions based on a careful analysis of some of the discussions which these issues have provoked throughout Jewish history.

My concern is to engage the tradition in order to retrieve a language which makes room for new possibilities. Again, by "tradition" I do not only mean the authoritative normative tradition of Halakha but all the elements - the legal and the literary, the definitive and the tentative - which make up the world of Torah and which shape a person's understanding of Torah.

Showing the reader what it means to be part of a Torah discussion is especially important at this time in Jewish history because, as I have claimed above, the crucial problem for the majority of Jews today is not Halakha but the lack of the cultural consciousness which makes Halakha into a live option. The problem of our age cannot be resolved by offering Halakhic answers but by creating a community that will ask Halakhic questions. And before this community can ask Halakhic questions, it must rediscover Torah as a relevant framework for its identity. The current need, therefore, is to rehabilitate the language of Torah so that the Jewish people can perceive itself as a Torah community. The crucial issue is how to recreate the foundational moment when Jews become a Torah people and not how to express this foundational moment though concrete authoritative practice.

The problems facing our generation cannot be resolved by establishing a new sanhedrin, the authoritative body necessary to render halakhic decisions. The issue is not a lack of legal authority but a lack of understanding of who we are. New halakhic decisions will do little to change this community without a dramatic rehabilitation of Torah. We don't have the communities to ask the questions which force courageous halakhic authorities to render creative decisions. The role of the rabbinate will only become significant when the people who are concerned with egalitarianism, human rights and social justice will view Torah as the natural context within which to express these concerns. And this will never come about unless we can revive the significance of our being an interpretative, text-centered culture.

My aim is to relax the language of Jewish consciousness, to show how "to play" with the words of Torah in order to explore the vast variety of ideas, attitudes and human types make up this world. Unlike the tough prerequisites of submitting to the discipline of Halakha, being "engaged in the words of Torah" is not dependent on prior commitments or beliefs. Furthermore, when a person views Halakha from the perspective of Torah, then Halakha itself takes on a more relaxed meaning. By viewing Halakha less in terms of a legal system and more in terms of a way of life (as the root word, *haloch* (to go) suggests), I place less emphasis on the authoritarian elements and more on the non-threatening aspects of Halakha as an experimental system which suggests (rather than dictates) ways of concretely acting out spiritual ideals and aspirations. Halakha, which is basically an authoritative language, can thus be transmuted into a more inviting and flexible mode of discourse aimed at educating rather than legislating. The prerequisite mental attitude need not be a leap of faith or submission to rabbinic authority but an openness to the idea of articulating Jewish identity by means of the concrete forms of a specific way of life.

#### Divide your heart into many rooms

The canonization of the tradition is itself one of the best arguments against confining Judaism to a singular authoritative version. The canon is not a primer on authentic Judaism. The variety of voices, sensibilities and attitudes that are included in the canon cannot be reduced to a monolithic unity without destroying its spiritual depth and vitality. What set of principles can unite the books of Ecclesiastes with Proverbs or Psalms? What faith posture captures the essence of biblical religion? "There is nothing new / Beneath the sun!" - Kohelet's bitter and uncompromising assault on the myth of a providential universe or a Psalm to the Sabbath day - David's lyrical affirmation of the natural harmony of God and the universe? What common theology of history embraces Isaiah's and Jeremiah's eschatological prophesies as well as God's speech to Job out of the whirlwind?

The twenty four books of the Bible include elaborate and detailed tracts on ritual rules and procedures which go far beyond ethics and subjective purity as well as prophetic admonitions that righteousness and walking humbly before your God are all that God requires of you. The book of Exodus provides a covenant moment without a promise of redemption. The prudential maxims of Wisdom literature represent quite a different point of view than the passionate exhortations of prophetic ethics, not to mention the sweeping historical perspectives of Jeremiah or Ezekiel.

The talmudic tradition also did not speak in a single voice. Unanimity and absolute certainty are often considered to be indispensable conditions for religious life. It is commonly believed that religious conviction cannot tolerate ambiguity and complexity. The following rabbinic passage expresses a very different attitude, one which tries to cultivate a religious personality without the certainty and security of the single truth.

#### [quote text]

The question is: How can spiritual life be based on the Talmud since it does not speak in one voice? And the answer is: Divide your heart into many rooms, i.e., make room in your heart for differing views, for those which say: Pure! and those which say: Impure!

Unanimity is not a necessary condition of religious passion. Open your mind to the multiple rhythms of the tradition. Judaism never felt the need to turn the many into the one. Conflicting voices, conflicting visions of God, conflicting sensibilities, etc. are present within the same tradition. This is the vision of Torah that I want to rehabilitate.

# Christian Split: Can Nonbelievers Be Saved?

#### By GUSTAV NIEBUHR

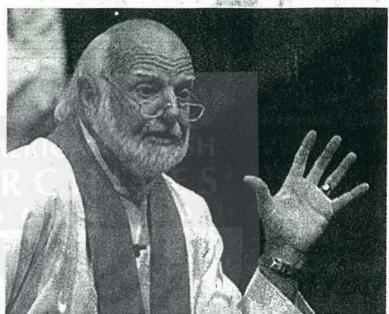
SPRING LAKE, Mich. — After 25 years in the pulpit, at the head of a congregation of nearly 1,000 people, the Rev. Richard A. Rhem would seem fitted more for a role as a denominational leader than as a denominational lightning rod.

But instead a storm is raging around him. Some here call him a heretic. The regional church authority censured him in July, holding him "in disrepute before Christ, the church and the world." His congregation, loyal to him, has voted to secede from its parent church.

The reason for the dispute is that Mr. Rhem says he no longer believes that faith in Jesus is the sole way to salvation. Jews, Muslims and others, he says, may be as likely to enter heaven.

In departing from traditional Christian doctrine that proclaims Jesus alone as Saviour, Mr. Rhem has shaken the Reformed Church in America, a denomination of about 200,000 members that has roots in the Netherlands of the 16th century and its modern headquarters in New York.

But the controversy illuminates a far broader division emerging among Christians over how to regard other faiths.



Robert Killips for The New York Times

The Rev. Richard A. Rhem sits at the center of a debate among Christians over whether faith in Jesus is necessary for salvation.

Over the centuries, church teachings on salvation have been varied and nuanced, but at their core is the conviction that only through Christ has God made salvation possible.

In recent decades, however,

some prominent theologians like the late German Jesuit priest Karl Rahner have wrestled with the question whether non-Christians can be saved through their own

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# Christian Split: Can Nonbelievers Be Saved?

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religions. And Roman Catholicism's Second Vatican Council, in the early 1960's, and subsequent Protestant efforts encouraged substantial interfaith dialogue, especially between Christians and Jews.

But none of those initiatives changed the core teaching of salvation only through Christ, a tenet that for some Christians, particularly conservative evangelicals, means

nonbelievers face hellfire.

Now, in a widening rift among Christians, some urge greater missionary zeal, as the Southern Baptists did recently in resolving to convert Jews, while others argue for dialogue and seeking understanding with non-Christians, not proselytizing. And some, prominent Protestants and Catholics among them, have said God's covenant with the Jews was not superseded by the coming of Christ.

for In an often cited biblical verse (John 14:6), Jesus declares: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one bomes to the Father but through me." That essential teaching of the Christian faith, Mr. Rhem's critics say, is now at stake here in western

Michigan.

"We think this is a debate of mountainous proportions," said the Rev. Rick Veenstra, administrator of the Glassis of Muskegon, the regional body that censured Mr. Rhem as a heretic. "It isn't Mohammed, it isn't Joseph Smith, it isn't David Koresh, it isn't Buddha — it's through Jesus that God has revealed Himself."

But at Mr. Rhem's church, many argue for a broader view. "We do not know the limits of God's grace," said one congregant, Marcia Van Ostenberg, a corporate financial officer. "And not knowing that, how can we possibly say we know these people are going to heaven, and these are

mt?"

Theological pluralism like Mr. Rhem's, said Rosemary Keller, academic dean and professor of church history at the Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan, "is very much the effect of our global village." His view of salvation, which is similar to her own, is gaining ground, Professor Keller said. But she added, "There's no question it's a contro-

versial position."

The controversy surrounding Mr. Rhem began when a local newspaper reported that his congregation, Christ Community Church, had allowed a small congregation of homosexuals to worship in its chapel. Called before a classis meeting in October, Mr. Rhem was asked to explain whether he shared the governing body's view that homosexual activity is sinful. One minister there also questioned his broader views on Scripture and salvation.

"'Dick took a deep breath," recalled the Rev. Steven Smallegan, a member of the classis executive committee, "and said, 'This is what I've thought about."

After Mr. Rhem had finished describing his view of pluralistic salvation, Mr. Smallegan added, "the meeting ran amok." Order collapsed as other ministers charged into the

debate.

The classis began an inquiry into Mr. Rhem's beliefs and soon asked him to recant. He refused. In drawing up its censure of him in July, the classis raised the possibility of a church trial, action that could have led to his being defrocked. The body later decided against that step.

Mr. Smallegan, pastor of the Westwood Reformed Church in Muskegon, said all these proceedings had been carried out with humility on the part of Mr. Rhem's accusers and had

proved painful to them.

"It's no fun to look at someone you've ministered with side by side and say, 'You're a heretic, Dick,'" Mr. Smallegan said. "But if I have to offend Christ or offend Dick, it's a clear issue, because Christ permits no equals."

The 61-year-old Mr. Rhem, tall, baldish and gregarious, calls himself a committed Christian, and extols Jesus to his congregation without reference to other faiths. But "I believe the scope of God's grace extends beyond the Christian community," he said in an interview.

Mr. Rhem said it had taken him years to come to believe that God grants salvation to non-Christians. Reared in a household rooted in traditional Dutch Protestantism, he began his ministry as a theological

conservative.

But his outlook shifted after he studied during the late 1960's at the University of Leyden in the Netherlands, where he became a disciple of Hendrikus Berkhof, a Dutch Reformed theologian. Professor Berkhof, Mr. Rhem recalled, said Jesus led people to the heart of God much as a slice of pie touches its center. The implication, as Mr. Rhem understood it, was that "there is a lot of God beyond that slice."

Mr. Rhem returned to Michigan in December 1970, in the midst of a bitter divorce. A decade earlier, he had been pastor of Christ Community, which, despite his troubles, now

welcomed him back.

"I tasted of God's grace in concrete fashion," said Mr. Rhem, who has since remarried. In a socially conservative area, his church became known for welcoming divorced people, and grew rapidly.

people, and grew rapidly.

By the late 1980's, Mr. Rhem's evolving beliefs were being described by him in church journals. In 1990, he joined an interfaith round table, the West Shore Jewish-Chris-

tian Dialogue Committee. The next year the organization was host to Rabbi David Hartman, a well-known modern Orthodox philosopher in Israel.

In a speech in Muskegon, Rabbi Hartman asked why a person had to deny another's religious tradition to affirm his own. "That," said the chairwoman of the committee, Sylvia Kaufman, "was what really moved Dick."

This January, Mr. Rhem put his views in writing for his critics in the classis. He declared that he believed Jesus to be God's revelation. But he

posed two questions: Is God known to others "through any other manifestation" than Jesus? And can God grant salvation "through any other revelation"?

Mr. Rhem said the answer to both questions was yes.

To illustrate his thoughts, he invoked the image of a cathedral with stained-glass windows. Inside stand groups of Jews, Christians and Muslims. Each group reads the story of its faith in a particular window. All the windows, he wrote, are illuminated by the light of God.

In stating this, Mr. Rhem put him-

self "outside the mainstream of Reformed Church thinking," pushing beyond a certain flexibility in the church's beliefs, said the Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, general secretary of the denomination, who has tried to play a moderating role in the conflict.

Reformed theology, a major stream of Protestant thought deeply influenced by John Calvin, holds that God's grace is beyond thorough human understanding: no one can know who are the elect that will enter heaven. "We can't declare with certainty what finally is God's prerogative," Mr. Granberg-Michaelson said. "That's the mystery that's part of what we call God's sovereign grace."

But among the faithful, he added, there can be no doubt that Christ is unique as sinful humanity's Saviour.

Within Mr. Rhem's congregation, some members talk about the controversy with references to personal experiences. Last year Mary Jane Dykema, vice chairman of the local hospital board, visited Auschwitz. Gazing at photographs of Jews murdered there, she said she could not believe that God had damned them "after the hell they lived through."

Another congregant, Jay Bylsma, noted that two highways lead from Spring Lake to nearby Grand Rapids. "My road is a different road than yours," he said. "But we are both going to the same place."

Mr. Rhem's critics say they know that such beliefs exist at Christ Community, and elsewhere.

"It's not politically correct to say Christ is the only way to eternal life," said the Rev. David Jansen, pastor of the Unity Reformed Church in Muskegon. But he added:

"I do believe those who have not responded to God's grace in faith would be left outside the kingdom of heaven. That's not something I like to say or even consider. But it makes my job all the more urgent."

More national news appears on pages B10-14.

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3/ Hartman

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22

[multiple voice]

[JC]

TO:

Prof. David Hartman, INTERNET: Hartman@hum.huji.ac.il

Re:

Your CIJE Essay

Dear Professor Hartman:

I have now completed my initial work on your talk to us at the CIJE Board Seminar. Rather than my creating an elaborate editorial letter, without the opportunity for dialogue, I wondered whether it might be possible for us to meet in person; we had discussed that option when we spoke last spring.

Do you have plans to be in New York within the next two+ months? The agenda would be to:

- 1. Define the underlying structure of the current essay and be certain you are comfortable with it; and
- 2. Identify questions you raised within your talk that need further development in a published work, particularly in relation to the subject of Jewish education.

Upon my receipt of your revisions, I could then do the line-editing and send it to you for your approval.

As you know, I read with great interest an essay your wrote on a "third approach" to the peace process, which Mort circulated to us in 1994. So I have a high standard in mind, already set by you!

In the fall we published the second essay in the series (after Jonathan Sarna's work) by Arthur Green, titled "Restoring the Aleph: Judaism for the Contemporary Seeker." I will send you a copy as soon as I know your plans.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Nessa Rapoport

this person who talked to us in a way I had never heard anyone talk before. And since that time I have in every way I could manage it, find ways to be a student and lean from David Hartman.

And I am in very good company. If it's good enough for the Prime Minister, it's good enough for me I guess. I know that David is a Resource Professor. Professor Hartman is a resource to many of us in this country, but also in his own country where he is a voice that commands attention and respect. So with that, let me say that the subject for this evening, at least the title I have, "The Road to Sinai in Our Time", and it's a real privilege for me to welcome Professor David Hartman.

[Applause]

Speaker: David Hartman

The self-evident quality of Jewish identity is no more a given fact of reality. For a long time there was a sense that to be a Jew was something that you embibed in your family context, in your environment, and it had a quality of self-evident proof. You didn't question its fundamental raison de entre. The modern world has, in some way, moved this necessity into the realm of choice. This is what has created for many people the trauma. Because for a long time we thought that the people would go on necessarily. And what we're finding out is that we may disappear, and that's a difficult thing to understand.

Was it that my father had greater Jewish education, or my zaide had a deeper Jewish education than I had? Was the past richer intellectually, more learned, with deeper internal convictions? I

would want to argue, on the contrary, it's very possible that the modern world has seen a greater renaissance of Jewish learning than ever before in history. There's more Talmud being studied today than for longest period in Jewish history. So it's not the lack of Jewish education; it is the awareness that Jewishness is a choice. It is something that you make a decision for. It is something that must grow out of conviction rather than necessity of birth or necessity in terms of one's environment.

Therefore I chose for my theme the idea of "The Road to Sinai," because for me there are two features in Jewish experience. There is the experience of Egypt, which in some way is an environment in which the alien hostility defines your identity. And then there is the move from suffering, exploitation, shared pain to shared conviction. And so the centrality in my theology is that I'm trying to make Sinai the organizing metaphor for the modern Jewish experience, because in Sinai we have identity born from choice. In fact the midrash goes so far as to say that Sinai itself wasn't the free elected decision [also ?[Hebrew] quoted in Jewish]. That God suspended the mountain over the community and said, "If you accept the Talmud?, fine." This is Jewish voluntee?rism!

Now when you deal with God, that's what voluntarism is about. He holds a mountain over you and says, "If you accept the Talmud? fine; if not [Jewish [Heb.] translation quoted first] I'm going to drop the mountain over your head." And Jews freely chose to accept the Talmud. But the Gemara? didn't let God get away with it. [Jewish [Heb.] translation quoted first] This would indicate that the binding quality to Torah is really suspect. Because if it was a coerced decision, then ultimately it is not a free decision, so what binds me? So then the Gamara gives this very

strange answer that [Jewish [Heb.] translation] they accepted the Torah on Purim. You know the Purim story. How can Purim be considered the true revelation on Sinai? That on Purim the Jews voluntarily accepted the Torah. So the coercion of Sinai is replaced with the Purim story.

But clearly the idea of covenental choice, and the idea of free choice, is a deep controlling category for Jewish spirituality. I would say our generation is one that will either make its road to Sinai, or it will disapper. It must discover the way in which Jewish identity can be rooted in conviction and really genuine authentic choice. In some way, the whole meaning of Jewish education is to provide the equipment for that choice, provide the possibility that this should be an informed choice. And that it should be one that is made with full freedom and full awareness.

But we're running very scared, we're running terribly frightened, and we don't know if the type of education people are getting would be capable of withstanding the open world, the attractive power of modern secular society. What do we need within our own framework of learning to offer a compelling alternative that Judaism should be rooted in conviction? Therefore the Sinai theme is central.

How do we get to Sinai? What does it mean getting to Sinai? Is Hartman calling for a return to Halakhah? A return to traditional Orthodoxy? Not a bad choice, but that's not what I am talking about. I'm talking about a transforming of Jewish consciousness. I don't see the issue of our time as an issue of Halakhah, of Jewish law, of making Jewish law up-to-date, or modernizing Jewish law. People thought that if we had a Sanhedrin there would be an important renaissance. We'd make Judaism up-to-date, we'd bring the Halakhah into maturity and all other type of

problems would be solved because we would have the power of a legislative body.

I would offer briefly that I don't think a Sanhedrin would make an ounce of difference in the Jewish world. And that all the bold Halakhic decisions would not bring about any profound change in Jewish life. The issue is not Halakhah. The issue is not Jewish practice. The issue is Jewish self-understanding. The issue is the consciousness. A transformed consciousness of a people that do not see itself engaged by that story. They do not see themselves as a people of Torah.

# american iewish

In Jewish history the Jewish educator was considered very important not because he was a first rate professional but because the community felt that Torah was crucial for its life. Unless the community feels that Torah is important for the life of community, then the Jewish educator, no matter how professional he'll be, will not in some way make a difference within a community. The educator will be respected if what he is teaching is considered important. Only if there is a climate within the community that believes that Torah education is important will the Jewish educator then have a prominence. So the issue is; to reshape the identity of the community so that it sees itself as essentially engaged by this story. That the Torah story is really its reality, that it is urgent for Jews to discover their way into that story. Unless Torah becomes constituative of what it means to be a member of the community, I see no hope for any transformation.

How do we reshape this community's self understanding, and what are the obstacles to that understanding?

When I was introduced to Torah, my teacher would never read a whole pasuk; he would read a word. [Hebrew reading cont'd] and then he would say [Hebrew word] say it again, and again, and then what we would do is, Kalawitz was one of the teachers and he used to read a Jewish newspaper and he would say [Hebrew reading] so we went out and had a good basketball game and by the time we came back, the guy was still on the same pasig and this was how we managed to overcome the boredom and the tediousness of the whole educational process. What do you think I learned to play basketball for? While people we saying \_\_\_\_\_? means again. My yiddish just escapes without me having any control. And then if you studied in the Yeshiva. You never read the Biblical text, you immediately said "Vosup Trashi?? What does Rashi say? Like one person once said, I'm an atheist. How are you an atheist, the Bible says that God created the world. Says no sir, the Bible said. But Rashi says so. Oh excuse me I'm sorry. If Rashi said, I mean you couldn't make a move studying Tora without Rashi accompanying you. And that was the living guide. The **humish** and then you went to the commentator Rashi. And Rashi in the first pasig of the humish brings the following midrush, which is a powerful midrush [Hebrew]. The Tora should have begun with the first commandment. Why does it start with the story of a bubam ? But it happened in the beginning of the world, so and shas should go through a whole debate. What happened in the beginning? \_\_\_\_\_ said, "What happened in the beginning?". "What do you mean, it evolved from Apes". And then they invite for this civilized theological discussion in Israel, you have to know the level of theology is in 19 -17th century. We haven't gone beyond that. And then the person from Sha says, "If you want a to come from an ape, you can. My zaida.. no wonder why you're cardi?? looks the way it does. My zaida didn't come from an ape. And that's the level of the discussion. So are you for evolution? \_\_\_\_\_ versus Shas? So what \_\_\_\_ says we could have avoided this whole

Cosmic God? What about the whole world? The whole story of the world is now what is happening to Jews? What's about the whole world? The pagan earliest critique didn't start with Spinoza. Already has it's ground of the gap between a Creator God, the Lord of Creation, the larger universe, and the whole notion of the Jewish experience.

How do you explain? How do you make intelligible a God of the Jews? Judaism is unintelligible. It seems like a \_\_\_\_\_.

How do you in some way handle this sense of tribalism. This sense of the family which seems to be such an essential moment. The book of Exodus is an embarrassment compared to the book of Genesis. God's involvement with Pharoah is to save the Jews. Feeds the Jews in the desert. Worries about the Jews allegiance to him and preoccupied with the Jews. Constantly preoccupied. Then you go further. The whole bible thrust, then, is a preoccupation with Israel. Where's the world? Does the world in some way surface in God's thinking? Is there a world in the Jewish experience? Is there a world? Is there an other? Now there were two tendencies within Jewish experience. Two moves. What are they called? I don't know if any of you read the Ginsberg article in the Jewish week? The interview with Rabbi Ginsberg,\_\_\_\_\_. And in some way these things are quoted in Israel, and they get... he was put in jail because of what he had told his students there to do. There it was legitimate to kill Arabs. And they did an interview on him know in which he says if a Jewish life is in danger, you are allowed to kill a and get a liver transplant for him. And he says, he's happy to give the teaching of to the world and that the world would not feel embarrassed by that because their importance is to save Jews. They exist in order to nurtish the Jewish people. Cause the Jewish people are the core, the center of the world. To the degree to which they contribute to Jewish well being. To

FROM: Hartman David, INTERNET: Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL

TO: "Nessa Rapoport <", INTERNET: <74671.3370@COMPUSERVE.COM

DATE: 1/20/97 3:38 AM

Re:

CIJE Board Seminar

Sender: Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL

Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL (vms.huji.ac.il [128.139.4.12]) by dub-img-1.compuserve.com

(8.6.10/5.950515)

id DAA01618; Mon, 20 Jan 1997 03:33:40 -0500

Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7b); Mon, 20 Jan 97 10:34:33 +0200

Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(132.64.177.200) (HUyMail-V7b);

Mon. 20 Jan 97 10:28:04 +0200

Received: by mailhum.huji.ac.il with Microsoft Mail

id <32E3C6FC@mailhum.huji.ac.il>; Mon, 20 Jan 97 11:26:52 PST

From: Hartman David <Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL>

To: "Nessa Rapoport <"<<74671.3370@CompuServe.COM>

Subject: CIJE Board Seminar

Date: Mon, 20 Jan 97 10:24:00 PST

Message-ID: <32E3C6FC@mailhum.huji.ac.il>

Encoding: 10 TEXT

X-Mailer: Microsoft Mail V3.0

Dear Nessa,

Thanks for your E-mail of Jan. 16.

David is on an intensive trip abroad until the first days of February.

Meantime, please E-mail me that the CIJE Board Seminar you write about is the speech of Dec. 28, 1995 for the Jerusalem Fellows. Or is there something else I am not aware of? I would appreciate your answer. Thanks.

Ruth Sherer

TO: Hartman David, INTERNET: Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL

Re: CIJE Board Seminar

Dear Ruth:

I am referring to the speech Prof. Hartman gave in New York for the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, on May 1, preceding our board meeting. It was titled "The Road to Sinai in Our Time." He and I spoke about my editing the piece with him; he has been waiting for my comments and suggestions, which I've now prepared. (We publish these essays in a series, of which his would be the third.)

I can imagine how busy he is, and yet it would be far more effective to sit together, even for 30 minutes, than to try to do this initial stage by correspondence. Any chance?

Best,

Nessa



FROM: AFSHI, INTERNET: AFSHI@INTAC.COM

TO: Nessa Rapoport, 74671,3370

DATE: 1/22/97 11:10 AM

Re:

David Hartman

Sender: AFSHI@INTAC.COM

Received: from mailhost.intac.com (nile.intac.com [198.6.114.2]) by

dub-img-2.compuserve.com (8.6.10/5.950515)

id LAA23909; Wed, 22 Jan 1997 11:02:51 -0500

Received: from intac.intac.com (palpk-s38.intac.com [198.6.114.135]) by mailhost.intac.com (8.7.1/8.6.12) with SMTP id LAA11326 for <74671.3370@CompuServe.COM>; Wed, 22 Jan

1997 11:02:46 -0500 (EST)

Date: Wed, 22 Jan 1997 11:02:46 -0500 (EST)

Message-Id: <199701221602.LAA11326@mailhost.intac.com>

X-Sender: afshi@intac.com (Unverified) X-Mailer: Windows Eudora Version 2.0.3

Mime-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain; charset="us-ascii"

To: 74671.3370@CompuServe.COM From: AFSHI@INTAC.COM (AFSHI)

Subject: David Hartman

Date: Jan. 22, 1997

To: Nessa Rapoport

From: Dorothy Minchin

Our Jerusalem office has sent copies of your email messages for David Hartman. Please call me as soon as possible at (201) 894-0566, American Friends of the Shalom Hartman Institute, Englewood, New Jersey.

Thank you.

Dorothy

FROM: Hartman David, INTERNET: Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL

TO: "Nessa Rapoport <", INTERNET: <74671.3370@COMPUSERVE.COM

DATE: 1/23/97 2:25 AM

Re: Conference with David Hartman

Sender: Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL

Received: from VMS.HUJI.AC.IL (vms.huji.ac.il [128.139.4.12]) by dub-img-1.compuserve.com

(8.6.10/5.950515)

id CAA20477; Thu, 23 Jan 1997 02:19:21 -0500

Received: by HUJIVMS (HUyMail-V7b); Thu, 23 Jan 97 09:19:29 +0200

Received: by HUJIVMS via SMTP(132.64.177.200) (HUyMail-V7b);

Thu, 23 Jan 97 09:19:00 +0200

Received: by mailhum.huji.ac.il with Microsoft Mail

id <32E7AB2D@mailhum.huji.ac.il>; Thu, 23 Jan 97 10:17:17 PST

From: Hartman David <Hartman@HUM.HUJI.AC.IL>

To: "Nessa Rapoport <"<<74671.3370@CompuServe.COM>

Subject: Conference with David Hartman

Date: Thu, 23 Jan 97 09:18:00 PST

Message-ID: <32E7AB2D@mailhum.huji.ac.il>

Encoding: 12 TEXT

X-Mailer: Microsoft Mail V3.0

Dear Nessa,

David will be happy to speak with you this coming Monday morning at 8:00. He will be at the Lombardy Hotel, New York - phone 212-753-8600. The fax there (should you need it) is 212-754-5683.

Our E-mail is undergoing some changes, so I am also faxing this message to you. If you can fax me back that you have received the message, I would feel more confident that you have received it. Thanks.

Ruth Sherer

January 23, 1997

#### Dear Professor Hartman:

I'm delighted that we will have the opportunity to meet in person on Monday.

#### Enclosed are:

- -- A copy of the rough transcript of your talk. (Note that in the initial pages I began line-editing, until I realized that we needed to address some of the substantive questions before fine-tuning the piece.)
- -- A copy of the two previous essays in the CIJE Essay Series: A Great Awakening: The Transformation that Shaped Twentieth Century American Judaism and its Implications for Today by Jonathan Sarna, which you have seen; and Restoring the Aleph: Judaism for the Contemporary Seeker by Arthur Green, which we published last fall. (Green's treatment of the mountain metaphor is interesting to juxtapose with the Sinai of your talk.)

We publish thousands of copies of these essays, which are widely disseminated and often taught. Yours would be the third.

-- A letter outlining the chief editorial questions I'd like to address with you. (I've also included a bio of myself to explain my background.)

Looking forward to our meeting.

# Nessa Rapoport

Should you need to leave me a message, my office number is: (212) 532-2360, ext. 408. My assistant, Chava, is available at ext. 442.

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January 23, 1997

Dear Prof. Hartman:

I have highlighted in bold type the core themes of the essay. Beneath each I have raised questions for our discussion and/or for your thought.

#### The Road to Sinai in Our Time

# Introduction:

Judaism as a choice (Egypt vs. Sinai).

Jewish education allows an informed choice.

Jewish education for what? You say: not knowledge of halacha or practice, but a transformation of consciousness, Jewish self-understanding. This point can sound "anti-legal." (Since I spent part of 1996 consulting to Jimmy Carter on his recent bestseller, *Living Faith*, I am particularly sensitive about this point!) I also felt that in telling the anecdotes of your early schooling (p. 5), you were inadvertently suggesting that Jewish education in schools is somewhat beside the point. Only a Jewish aristocrat can afford to make that claim. I think this needs rethinking.

\*\*\*

# The essay:

Humanity vs. the tribe/family: Why start with Breishit instead of the first law, with stories rather than with reason?

I like the question you raise here about the seeming tension between cosmic and tribal. <u>The central theme of the essay is the hope of reconciling the two.</u> I also believe this tension is very pertinent to American Jews and their relationship to the multicultural debate.

# Morality vs. law:

This is a variation on the previous theme. If you are going to treat it in the essay, it requires further development. (You return to it on p. 21.)

Relationship of contemporary Zionism to the humanity/tribe tension:

Interesting analysis.

# The possibility of a Jewish renaissance in America:

This point, on p. 16, is obscure in the transcript. But I can glean enough to know that we need to talk about it.

# "Many things in the rabbinic tradition need reworking":

Your access to the textual tradition makes you particularly credible. I'd like to hear more about this.

# What Jewish education doesn't solve (i.e., who are the authentic voices of the tradition):

This returns us to an earlier theme, raised here again on p. 17. I think the questions: What is the point of Jewish literacy? Toward what ends? are strong ones. As a founder of educational institutions, you can address them with thoughtfulness. Can you develop the distinction between Jewish literacy and Jewish education? This would be a real contribution to the current arguments on the role of Jewish education for our future.

Also, can you connect this issue to your central thesis about Breishit and Sinai?

On the "What Jewish education <u>does</u> solve" side: What is the relationship between philosophy and institutions? How do you nurture philosophy in day-to-day Jewish life?

\*\*\*

#### Conclusion:

"What we need are bold interpretive strategies to recover what I would call inner corrective possibilities in the tradition."

This powerful claim demands discussion. What kind of education can serve this goal well? What characterizes the institutions or families within which such strategies can flourish? What role can the diaspora play in contributing to this exploration? (Don't say: "None.")

Finally, at the essay's close, you speak of "healing the polarization between the 'family' and the 'world'.": Is this what you would describe as the mission of Jewish education?

\*\*\*

See you on Monday.

Nessa Rapoport

Introducer: Morton L. Mandel

Good Evening, folks. It's a pleasure to welcome all of you to the CIAG Board Seminar. I know some of you have been to previous seminars. This is, I think, our fourth to which we have had a distinguished speaker/teacher so that we could have in a sense a learning experience together before our Board meeting, which I remind you starts at 9:30 tomorrow. If you are on the Board. I know some of you are not. I might also remind you that the proceedings will be printed. That the remarks that we hear this evening and what we heard from Arthur Green at Brandeis Universtiy last time will be published in essay form. You should have received a copy of Jonathan Sarnas, Professor Jonathan Sarnas's comments of two or three meetings ago, which by the way sold out and is in it's second printing. It was a wonderful address as they all have been. We have a special treat tonight and it's my pleasure to welcome and introduce to you a person who in addition to being someone I have a great deal of respect for, I consider a personal friend for that reason. I will, Professor Hartman, read the four page introduction that you handed me.

Professor David Hartman if you don't know him, is Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Education at Hebrew University and in 1976 founded the Shalom Hartman Institute and I first met Dr. Hartman in a snowed in hotel room on a Mission that was the Board of the then JWB now JCCA and the event that we had planned for that day, I think, was in Tel Aviv and we could't get out of Jerusalem and so somebody found a substitute and if you were in school, public school, private school, you know how people felt about substitutes. So, I heard for the first time David Hartman and while I didn't say "oy vey", I probably thought "oy vey". And I remember the hotel room and I remember being absolutely transfixed, if that's the right word, by

this person who talked to us in a way I had never heard anyone talk before. And since that time I have in every way I could manage it, find ways to be a student and lean from David Hartman. And I am in very good company. If it's good enough for the Prime Minister, it's good enough for me I guess. I know that David is a Resource Professor. Professor Hartman is a resource to many of us in this country, but also in his own country where he is a voice that commands attention and respect. So with that, let me say that the subject for this evening, at least the title I have, "The Road to Sinai in Our Time", and it's a real privilege for me to welcome Professor David Hartman.

[Applause]

Speaker: David Hartman

The self evident quality of Jewish identity is no more a given fact of reality. For a long time there was a sense that to be a Jew was something that one embied in his family context, in his environment, and it had a quality of self evident proof. You didn't question it's fundamental raison de entre. The modern world, has, in some way moved, this necessity into the realm of choice. This is what has created for many people the trauma. Because for a long time we thought that the people would go on necessarily. And that what we're finding out is that we may disappear, and that's a difficult thing to understand. Was it that my father had greater Jewish education, or my zaida had deeper Jewish education than I had. Was the past richer intellectually, more learned, deeper internal convictions. I would want to argue, on the contrary, it's very possible that the modern world has seen a greater Renaissance of Jewish learning than

# Tolmud

ever before in Aistory. There's more Talmat?? being studied today than for longest period in Jewish History. So it's not the lack of Jewish education; it is the awareness that Jewishness is a choice. It is something that you make a decision for. It is something that must grow out of conviction rather than necessity of birth or necessity in terms of one's environment. And therefore I chose for my theme, the idea of "The Road to Sinai,", because for me there are two features in Jewish experience. There is the experience of Egypt, which in some way is an environment in which the alien hostility defines your identity. And then there is the move from suffering, exploitation, shared pain to shared conviction. And therefore the centrality in my theology, and if you've read the things that I have written, is I'm trying to make Sinai the organizing metaphor for the modern Jewish experience because in Sinai we have identity born from choice. In fact the midras?? go so far as to say that Sinai itself was, it the free elected decision [also quoted in Jewish]. That God suspended the mountain over the community and Toroh ? (slow)? said,"If you accept the Talmat?? fine" This is Jewish voluntarism. Now when you deal with God, that's what voluntarism is about. He holds a mountain over you and says, "If you accept Tolmyd? the Talmat ?? fine; if not [Jewish translation quoted first] I'm going to drop the mountain over (Gremora) your head," And Jews freely chose to accept the Talmat?? But the Gamara?? didn't let God get away with it. [Jewish translation quoted first] This would indicate that the binding quality to Tora is really suspect. Because if it was a coerced decision then ultimately it is not a free decision, so what bind's me? So there wasn't really a voluntary act. So therefore the Tora is not obligatory. So then the Gamara?? gives this very strange answer that [Jewish translation] they accepted the Tora on puram. You know the puram story. And so many sermons I gave on this. on furm How can puram be considered the true revelation on Sinai? That in puram the Jews voluntarily accepted the Tora. Therefore we're stuck, so it's not the coercion of Sinai is replaced by the

puram story. So think about what is there about puram that made it seem as a voluntary commitment is and interesting question to throw out to your Board. Who Mort said the purpose of you gathering here this evening is to study Tora so I imagine tomorrow the Board should devote many hours to why puram should be considered the true acceptance of Tora.

But clearly, and both in my own teachers, theology under Jober, Oliver Shalom??, the idea of covenental choice, and the idea of free choice, is a deep controlling category for Jewish spirituality. I would say our generation is a generation that will either make it is road to Sinai, or it will disapper. Either it will discover the way in which Jewish identity can be rooted in conviction and really genuine authentic choice and I would say, in some way, the whole meaning of Jewish education is to provide the equipment for that choice, To in some way provide the possibility that this should be an informed choice. And that it should be one that is made with full freedom, and full awareness. But we're running very scared, we're running terribly frightened, and we don't know if in some way, you know, the type of education people are getting would be capable of withstanding the open world, the attractive power of modern secular society. What do we need within our own framework of learning to offer a compelling alternative that Judaism should be rooted in conviction. Therefore the Sinai theme is central and what I want to do tonight, is to talk about that centrality of that theme How do we get to Sinai? What does it mean getting to Sinai? Is Hartman calling for a return to Hala Hah?? A return to traditional Orthodoxy? Not a bad choice, but that's not what I am talking about. I'm talking about a transforming of Jewish consciousness. I don't see the issue of our time as an issue of Hala Hah? Of Jewish law, of making Jewish law up to date, or modernizing Jewish law. People thought that if we had a sonehedron?? there would be an important Renaissance. We'd

Holskhoh make Judaism up to date, we'd bring the Halaha?? into maternity and we'd in some way solve the problem, women problems and all other type of problems would be solved because we would have the power of a legislative body. I would offer briefly and say that I don't that a sonehedron?? would make an ounce of difference in the Jewish world. And that all the bold Halahie?? decisions would not bring about any profound change in Jewish life. The issue is not Halahah?? The issue is not Jewish practice. The issue is Jewish self-understanding. The issue is the consciousness. A transformed consciousness of a people who do not see it self engaged by that story. They do not see themselves as a people of Tora. I know Mort's commitment to give professional dignity to Jewish educators. And I know how/important that is. And we've spoken about it in Jerusalem. But I want you to know that in Jewish history the Jewish educator was considered very important not because he was a first rate professional, but because the community felt that Tora was crucial for it's life, and unless the community feels that Tora is important for the life of community, then the Jewish educator, no matter how professional he'll be will not in some way make a difference within a community. The educator will be respected if what he is teaching is considered important, and only if there is a climate within the community that believes that Tora education is important will the Jewish educator then have a prominence. So the issue is much deeper than techniques or educators, the issue is to reshape the identity of the community that they see themselves as essentially engaged by this story. That the Tora story is really their reality and it is urgent for them to in some way discover the way into that story. So unless Tora becomes constituative of what it means to be a member of the community, I see no hope for any transformation. Therefore we're calling for what is needed for is how do we in some way reshape this community's self understanding, and what are the obstacles to that understanding.

So, I'm going to go back to the beginning and start with you with the Pasaguh homash?? When I was introduced to Tora, my teacher taught me [Hebrew reading] he'd never read a whole pasig he would read a word. [Hebrew reading cont'd] and then he would say [Hebrew word] say it again, and again, and then what we would do is, Kalawitz was one of the teachers and he used to read a Jewish newspaper and he would say [Hebrew reading] so we went out and had a good basketball game and by the time we came back, the guy was still on the same pasig and this was how we managed to overcome the boredom and the tediousness of the whole educational process. What do you think I learned to play basketball for? While people we saying \_\_\_\_\_? ? means again. My yiddish just escapes without me having any control. And then if you studied in the Yeshiva. You never read the Biblical text, you immediately said "Vosup Trashi?? What does Rashi say? Like one person once said, I'm an atheist. How are you an atheist, the Bible says that God created the world. Says no sir, the Bible said. But Rashi says so. Oh excuse me I'm sorry. If Rashi said, I mean you couldn't make a move studying Tora without Rashi accompanying you. And that was the living guide. The humish and then you went to the commentator Rashi. And Rashi in the first pasig of the humish brings the following midrush. which is a powerful midrush [Hebrew]. The Tora should have begun with the first commandment. Why does it start with the story of a **bubam** ? But it happened in the beginning of the world, so and shas should go through a whole debate. What happened in the beginning? said, "What happened in the beginning?". "What do you mean, it evolved from Apes". And then they invite for this civilized theological discussion in Israel, you have to know the level of theology is in 19 - 17th century. We haven't gone beyond that. And then the person from Sha says, "If you want a to come from an ape, you can. My zaida.. no wonder why you're cardi?? looks the way it does. My zaida didn't come from an

ape. And that's the level of the discussion. So are you for evolution? \_\_\_\_\_ versus Shas? So what says we could have avoided this whole science and religion issue. We won't have to worry about the age of the universe and \_\_\_\_\_ should not have to say that the scientific theories and then all this whole insane attempt to prove that the world is five thousand and I don't know how many years old, a few million year old, whatever that may be. We could have started with the first law. It would have been rational. Why did we need all the stories? So I asked myself, I remember, this was the first Rashi that I was introduced to. Rashi's answer seemed very important. I said, on the deeper level, I was preparing my lecture for today so what was really behind this question. I mean, why remove, it's not just a story of creation. What he is referring to by that question is to the whole book of Genesis. Because if he says it should start with the \_ that is already in the book of shimoyzs?? That means the \_\_\_\_, everything, the whole narrative framework of the book of Genesis should not be part of the Jewish bible. All the bible stories would be gone. I mean, what would happen to kindergarten's? What would happen to everything? I mean God. What did they mean when they wanted us, that the Tora should just contain law, mitzfah? Because the very definition here I accept or claim that the word Tora means law. Tora, the definition of the word Tora, is law. If it's law, then it's a book of law, then what are story books doing there? Who's interested in creation? How the world began and what happended with Adam and Eve and the whole garden of Eden story and all that. Who needs that? It it's law, then what is Genesis doing in Jewish tradition? Now, this question, What is Judaism? What is Tora? Is is law or is is Genesis? Now let me explain even on a deeper level what the question is about? The Pagan critique of Judaism from Paganism, through St. Paul, through Spinoza, through Kont, centers around the following question, "How do you explain the move from the Lord of Creation, the Cosmic God, who in some way creates a whole world,

judges a whole world, and suddenly goes tribal. He suddenly becomes Jewish. And he becomes a family God. What happens to the Cosmic God? What about the whole world? The whole story of the world is now what is happening to Jews? What's about the whole world? The pagan earliest critique didn't start with Spinoza. Already has it's ground of the gap between a Creator God, the Lord of Creation, the larger universe, and the whole notion of the Jewish experience. How do you explain? How do you make intelligible a God of the Jews? Judaism is unintelligible. It seems like a \_\_\_\_\_\_.

[Interuption]

Everybody Okay? Ull wait until it's Okay.

How do you in some way handle this sense of tribalism. This sense of the family which seems to be such an essential moment. The book of Exodus is an embarrassment compared to the book of Genesis. God's involvement with Pharoah is to save the Jews. Feeds the Jews in the desert.

Worries about the Jews allegiance to him and preoccupied with the Jews. Constantly preoccupied. Then you go further. The whole bible thrust, then, is a preoccupation with Israel. Where's the world? Does the world in some way surface in God's thinking? Is there a world in the Jewish experience? Is there a world? Is there an other? Now there were two tendencies within Jewish experience. Two moves. What are they called? I don't know if any of you read the Ginsberg article in the Jewish week? The interview with Rabbi Ginsberg, \_\_\_\_\_\_. And in some way these things are quoted in Israel, and they get... he was put in jail because of what he had told his students there to do. There it was legitimate to kill Arabs. And they did an interview on him know in which he says if a Jewish life is in danger, you are allowed to kill a

and get a liver transplant for him. And he says, he's happy to give the teaching of \_\_ to the world and that the world would not feel embarrassed by that because their importance is to save Jews. They exist in order to nurtish the Jewish people. Cause the Jewish people are the core, the center of the world. To the degree to which they contribute to Jewish well being. To that degree do they have a raison de entre, their life given meaning. And he felt very comfortable saying that. And they we get very upset that Jews don't know. So Arthur Waltzberg says he's taking it out of context. He's not taking it out of context! You see what's happened is very interesting. Certain things that are written in the Talmat, which there is always the sense that the Talmat was on trial, both in medieval Europe and in the modern world for it's alleged racism, for it's alleged discriminatory treatment of the non-Jew. And people were always called on to defend the statements in the Talmat which makes distinctions between the Jew and non-Jew in Jewish law. Now in the when we lived among the **ghoeim??** completely. We had a very strong need to explain these things and that's not the true Judaism. But I want to tell you something about Israel. In Israel all this inhibitions of the exile has gone. In other words, things that we thought would be part of the Jewish life, the Jews never do these things. Jews never speak this way. Jews are for the human rights, Jews are for the universal, Jews are for the moral principles, Jews are not racist. All those things and suddenly the return of the repressed in the Freudian sense. In Israel, there is no inhibitions. Because there is no \_\_\_\_\_ world out there that you have to impress. Everything comes back. Everything surfaces. And what surfaces with enormous vigor, enormous power. And therefore the issue is, is there a world other? How does want us to go back to Sinai? Is this a regressive move? Is that moving from the universal to the tribal? Didn't, Isn't history a movement from the tribal to the universal? And this was the earlier critique of zionism as well. The . Where do we want to be? Do we

want to be in a? Do we want to be contained by a very particularist tribal mentality?
What's all this thrust on Jewish education? Let the kids get a universalist, humanist, education?
What do we want to put them back into the ghetto for? What do we want to encourage helias??
for? Let them be part of the larger world, and make their contribution as part of the larger world.
And therefore this was the deep Pagan critiquePaul. The central critique of
Christianity in Judaity was this. Was in some way bringing the way into Abraham's covenant.
That's what Paul claimed. To bring the world into the convenant of Abraham. And Jewish law
with it's insistance on circumcision and all the ritual laws is a barrier for the world. To convert
Rome, we are going to have to get rid of circumcision. To convert Rome, we are going to have
to say salvation is through faith. And that was the message of the gospel. There is a new
transforming event which is the living message of Jesus law, Gospel was the first
critique. Jews kept you in a small world. Christianity's going to bring God and the Bible into
the larger world. Something the God of Genesis is going to find expression in Christianity. Jews
are stuck in the book of Exodus. They're stuck at law. They're stuck about their own story.
Christianity is going to bring Abraham's spirituality to the world. Abrahamic spirituality. That's
why Abraham is so crucial for both Islam and for Christianity. Abraham is crucial because in
Abraham you don't have law. You don't have law in Abraham. You don't have this elaborate
framework. You don't put on in the morning or not. In fact if you studied Yeshiva or
not, Abraham had to be a Jew. One time he welcomed guest and he served meat and
then he served milk. So, I remember, we asked Rabi, "Rabi, what's happened?". [Hebrew
answer]. What do you mean? It wasn't milk. It was It wasn't real milk. It had a MK on
it or OU st I mean what do you ask these questions? And then questions about what did
Abraham do on, he had a

Sada". So I asked him," Excuse me, how could he have a sada if we weren't in Egypt yet?"
What do you mean? Abraham fulfilled every mitfah. He knew it through prophecy, because
they couldn't image the father of the Jewish people not being able to eat bread on
How is that possible? I mean, So therefore, in other words, Abraham the rabidic
response to Christianity is they made him into super Jew. Who fulfilled even
But in other words, what you see already in early Chrisitanity is that the book of Genesis with
it's non-emphasis upon law is really a problematic book for those who emphasize the centrality
of law. Abraham comes then, a principle of salvation through faith. So it's not only in
Christianity, then not only it get's it's most vicious expression in Spinoza. I never understood all
those who were interested in taking away the excommunication of Sinoza. I said would he be
interested in that return. Was he? Was he benedict? Spinoza carefully, in his
makes the following claim. That ultimaely the ones who taught the world morality, who
understood that God is a model force as Christianity is Jesus. Moses is a political statesman who
built a nation-state and there is no sense of morality in the mosaic teaching. It's pure law. Pure
legislative politics. And the moral vision comes out of Jesus. And the reason why Jews survived
after their nation-state was destroyed. Is not because of any inner reason. It's because they hated
the Their revultion for the was so deep that even, that even thought the
meaning of Judaism ended because it was only a political, national idea. It should of ended, but
because of their revultion, they continued. Spinoza, then influenced all of Westeren civilization.
kant, the whole notion of legalism, of law versus morality, which you have in kant as
well. Also gets worked out that way, so you have then this very deep problematic feauture.
What is the Sinai moment? Is it family? Is it law? Does it have a moral impulse? Is there a
univeral impulse in the Sinai moment? Rashi for example answers his own question. He said I

should teach Tora more, so I'm teaching Tora. Rashi answers his own question by saying the
reason why the homish begins with the story of creation in order to justify the Jewish claim to
the land. Because in case anybody says,"what right have you to inherit the land of and take
it?" As you know God is the Lord of Creation and he can take it and give it to anyone he wants.
Since the world belongs to God, he gave it to the Jews and therefore we are not So in
other words, Rashi reads Sinai back onto the creation story. The creation story was meant to
legitamize the Jewish family story makes the same move as well. That the unique
genius of Israel already started in creation. And that there is a unique difference between the Jew
and the non-Jew. And that's how he explains the meaning of election. That there is a spiritual
genius which the Jew has which the world does not possess. And we inherited that directly from
Adam, and then it passed over to Noah and then it was passed on carefully through the
generations until it came to the whole nation of Israel. So as well reads back the
creation story from revelation. Revelation then defines how you read the creation story. Where
you have that is saying was the world created. That God looked in the Tora and
created the world. And for the sake of Israel did God create the world.

the Arabs? You know, why don't you worry about the Jews a little bit? Then you get all these feelings that if you worry about Arabs, you are not really a worrier about Jews. And you have to choose? It it's your peace, you don't care about Jewish lives. And therefore it is very interesting that the orthodox critique of the peace process has it's roots in this theological world view.

There is a choice to be made the family or the world. Either or. They are incompatible loyalties.

Do you work intensively to strengthen the family? Or do you work in some way to worry about what the world thinks?

I bought a text here. Let me quote to you someone who represents the other pole. The pole that says the whole meaning of Sinai. The whole meaning of the Jewish people is the universal dogma. The one that reacted to Spinoza was the German philosopher Hermun Cohen. Amazing, a great thinker. And let me read to you what he says. You should all get it by Eva Jaspi, "Writing from Hermun Cohen, Reason and Hope". In his argument with Booba, against zionism, he was very deeply opposed to zionism. And he says the following," We love Germany (you see, you can't trust philosopher's judgement). We love Germany, and all it stands for. Not merely because we love our homeland, as the bird loves it's nest Nor do we love it becasue we draw our spiritual sustanence largely from the treasure troves of the German mind. Weighty though these motivations for our love may be, they loose some of their significance when compared to our awareness of that innermost accord existing between the German spirit and messianic religion theosity. The German spirit is the spirit of classical humanism and true human universalism. True universalism. The political religious orientation of ours constitutes for all pratical purposes the difference between us and zionism. While the zionist believes that Judaism can be observed only by an all encompassing Jewish nationalism. We are of the

opposite view believing that only universal mankind orientated Judaism can preserve the Jewish religion. And at the very essense of Judaism is yearning for universal redemption. And it's the ethical impulse in Judaism. And therefore, land is not really land. That was earlier. When the land was destroyed, something important was given up. Tribalism was given up. This ethnic particularity was given up and we now taught the world the important principle of the unity of mankind. And the important principle for Herbert Cohen, was love the stranger. Love the stranger. And that the whole meaning of Jewishness was to in some way bring about a univeral ethical humanity. And he saw in the German spirit a deeper finity. What do you mean zionism? [Hebrew] Go back again to the steeple? What do you want me to do? Go back to Brownsville? What do you want me to be? We are now in a new phase. And therefore the country that gave us kont. The kont that gave us the Renaissance of Plato. That gave us the Renaissance of idealism. This is the natural home of the Jew. And therefore, I love Germany because it is the true home of the Jew. And you zionists are trying to make us into \_\_\_\_\_. Make us into small minded people. You want to make us into a small minded nation, when we are really meant to serve the whole world. \_\_\_\_\_ wrote, a philosopher of great power. One of the philosophers of great \_\_\_\_ conscience. The greatest voice in German Jewery intellectually, Hermun Cohen. Now you can't be a \_\_\_\_\_ in retrospect. But I want to give you the impulse of what he felt. The German modern Jew, the counteract Spinoza, and to counteract Contz legalism. And to counteract the pagan critique of Judaism with Christianity as well. The only way he could defent Judaism, was to say, "We are the true universal religion. We are the carriers of universalism. And therefore Germans should keep the Jews alive." He writes. Because if you would hurt us, you would hurt your true German spirit. You would hurt what is beautiful in Germany. The universal geist of Germany would be destroyed if the Jews would dissapear.

Keep us because we are the carriers of the true monotheism. The one God is the one humanity, that is what we stand for.

So here is the other move. Instead of the move of reading creation from Sinai, you read Sinai from creation. The Genesis story reveals the problem of what is the connection between the book of Creation and the book of Exodus gets two separate moves. One move is absorb the universal into the particular. Make the family the crucial category. Make our interests the crucial category. See the whole world from the perspective of the Jews. The prism of the family defines the world. The other view was, you define the Jewish experience by it being an instrument to bring about universal justice. That's the Herman Cohen move. That's how he was able to counteract Spinoza. So you had the Jewish people now torn apart by these two tendencies. Zionism was a deep choice for ethnicity. Now you understand in it's deepest sense, why Israel tolerates the \_\_\_\_ community. People don't understand it. They are non-zionist. What is the attraction? It's not just for political reasons. Because in the community it gives expression to their own tribal ethnicity. When they see \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_ community. Kids born each year and you walk into liberty bell park. What a joy \_\_\_\_\_. And you see \_\_\_\_, a parent walking with eight, ten, twelve kids. You know in North Tel Aviv, he's walking with three puppies and here \_\_\_\_\_ you see \_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_ Jews. And I said for example, one of the great achievements of the \_\_\_\_\_ community, is that it has obliterated the holocaust as an orientating framework. Every major institution in Western Europe has been resurrected. Every major achievement in Eastern Europe has been rebuilt. The same yiddish \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, , all these frameworks, it's the same style. They have rebuilt Easter Europe. It's the same style, in the zionist radical state. And the one whose the biggest supporter of the return to

Easter European ethnicity is the zionist state. That's the amazing thing because the government
would not support all this they would disappear. It's sort of a dialectical move. It's a
strange dialectic. They support that which is deeply underming the very meaning of zionist
experience. So in some sense the attraction to them is you feel these people have a gut ethnic
understanding. These people have an understanding. They are not asking is it good for
democaracy? Or ecology? Let the liberals in New York worry about are we having too many
Jewish children around? What about the hunger and poverty of the world? Given India, how do
you continue having so many children? They don't read about India. They don't know about
India. [Hebrew] happening in India. [ Hebrew] The Jewish liberal never wants to embrace the
larger universalist ethic. You know sometimes commits national suicide. He can't handle the
problem of his own Jewish tribal instincts with his liberal sensibility. So the deep affinity
between Zionism and the party is the merger of two tribal ethnic family passion
orientated people.
3
Now I don't move in Herman Cohen, nor do I accept Rashi's perception. I am closer to the
mimiridian framework which I have tried to articulate. And let me offer you the third option,
that I think is important. Which is fundamentally a whole discussion between Benaza and
which I don't have time now to go into because I was given a certain amount of time so there
could be discussion.
The third orientation is not a either or. You see in it's deepest sense, what I love about Israel and
I argued this with Elle And why I feel that everything I want to do must come out of
Jerusalem. And I once spoke about Why is Israel so crucial? And I felt it was

missing in article. I don't believe there will be a Jewish Renaissance in America if it's
severed from that major reality. I don't believe in I believe we must tap into the
potential spiritual power that may emenate out of Israel. [Hebrew] The embarrassment we will
have out of that area, like we were embarrassed by Lebanon. Recently, which Jew in america
wasn't embarrassed by the bombing? And I asked my son, I wasn't in Israel, I said, were they
embarrasses? He says, "[Hebrew]", and I was given the reason he had to do this because there
was possibly ground troups, I heard that was the rumor. But it was not here we were
embarrassed. You read time magazine, you want to bury yourself. Because we want in some
way, Israel to be the carrier of our voice to the world. We want the best of what we thought
Judaism was about, that the ethical imperative. The sanctity of human life should come out of
that reality. Now it's not necessarily going to come out of that reality heard everything
else. And there are many things in the rabbinic tradition that needs reworking. We spoke about
that in Jerusalem. Because many things in the Talmot grew from and enbitteres persecuted
minority who distrusted Rome. Whose lives were vulnerable. The mission says you can't take a
haircut with a you worry, you think he's a murderer. The image of the world, the world
in vulnerability. I can show you that in documentation. In other words, judging the negro by his
rage that comes from being an oppressed minority. There must be rage in oppressed minorities.
And therefore there is rage in the Talmot. But we never thought that that rage would be put into
practice. We thought it was written, okay, so it was verbal. You know fundamental Jews would
not build their lives by it. But you have a mission that states that if a is dying on, you
don't have to save him. You don't have to desicrate the to save him. So the
worked it out, not worked it out. He offered a different interpretation. But the early mishna,
makes a fundamental difference between Jewish and non-Jewish life. Clearly this is the

fundamental thrust of the Rabbinic tradition. There is a qualitative difference in value between a Jewish and non-Jewish life. That was the expression of a deeply embittered, vulnerable authority who saw the world as threatening. Who saw the world and not inviting you to feel dignity in it. Who felt always de-legitamized whereever they went. Who had to fight in order to breathe. Therefore there is going to be an expression there but what happens when this literature is read and studied, and not reinterpreted, and not channelled in a new perspective. We could have in the name of Talmot a racist doctrine that could emerge. And what we thought Jewish education would do, does not solve. In other words, unless we have a strong purpetive tradition by people with a profound moral sense. The tradition itself, could embarras us for eternity and the road to Sinai would then be seen as a road to racism and regression.

I therefore claim that this is not authentic Jewish tradition, if understood not according to the moral or others. But if you take a different perspective. Because it is not one voice in the Jewish tradition. Jewish tradition does not speak in a monolithic voice. Multiple. There is a symphony of voices and we have to recapture that symphony of voices. And we have to give a greater weight to certain tendencies in that tradition and we have to offer it a new power. A new purportive power. Otherwise we will be permanently, morally embarrassed by Jewish education. And we have to hope that kids won't study those sections of the Talmot. In Holis high school, we study all the tex which create moral embarrassment for the high school kids. So people say, why are you doing that? Is it masochism of Hartman? No, I say. I want to prepare them, how to deal with this. Instead of being shocked, because what they did in Israel, I want you to know the seculars are wainting to find these texts. And when they get it, [Hebrew]. The more merits can show that orthodoxy is primitive, the more they have a chance to be elected. They require a

primitive orthodoxy. Hartman is dangerous for merit. It took me fifteen years before my articles
got published in Because it was too sophisticated. I remember giving a lecture when I
was in the army on eduction, on Rosh Shashana, on the meaning of rebirth. And the people
wanted to ask me as teachers, can you give us a program as Yom Kippur. So I told the teachers,
you want a program for Yom Kippur, I'm going to tell them about,, I
said, I have a program for you. Do not ask the children of last year to bring their leaving
certificate of last year or their report card when they come back next year. So they said what
does that have to do with Yom Kippur. Because I remember, when I went to school as a kid in
Heim, Berlin and I'd go into Friedman with my Delaney card. And he woud see the card, and he
would say,"Hartman, don't think you are going to give us trouble, as you gave every other
teacher. Here, I won't tolerate it". And I was thinking the whole summer, "Oh, am I going to be
a good student. I'm going to be a little mensch so my mother and father could have a little
in their So as soon as I was placed in a class, I was already placed in a category. My
past followed me inextricably. I couldn't leave it. They used to drive me crazy in Heim, Berlin
they said because I was a good basketball player and that's how I got into Yeshiva University.
And in some way, they wanted a good Pagan basketball team, so they decided to get Hartman on
it, with Kouzi's letter of recommendation and Lester Pollak's backing. Now, I remember, they
could'nt understand Hartman was wearing black shoes and studying in the But he's
a basketball player. And I remember, how could I in some way overcome that image of the
basketball player. They should see me as a Could they see me as a, as a
passion for loving Tora. Always the feeling that my past will never leave me and I will never be
seen as serious. Luckily, I went to Israel at forty-one. Because in Israel, they pigeon hole you
from gon. There was once a philosopher who wrote eighteen books and they went to a professor.

An old German professor, I say [Hebrew], what do you think of him? [Hebrew answer] He's very shallow. I say[Hebrew], I remember him from high school. [Hebrew] He finished high school. I mean you don't finish high school. [Hebrew] You never finish you youth movement. Wherever you were, you got pigeon holed and boxed and you stayed there for the rest of your life time. That's the reason for \_\_\_\_\_. That's the only reason for yuri-dah so that people could breathe. The kindergarten doesn't follow them. So when I told the teachers, please you want to do a Yom Kippur program? Don't ask your students to bring their report cards from last year. So there they can believe that maybe they can change. And they can be seen in a new way. So they said to me, "Hartman, that's Yom Kippur". That's relevant. That's good educational philosophy. What does it have to do with Judaism? I say what do you think Judaism is about. Judaism is about creating foundations for renewal and if it's humanly relevant it can't be really Jewish. So in some way, I would say the following,"What we need is bold interpretive strategies to recover what I would call inner corrective possiblities in the tradition. There are voices in the tradition that have to resurface and we have to have the educational power and without that the books will be closed for us. The books will reveal context which are profoundly morally dangerous for today. We have to tap into those sources within the tradition that pointed in an important new direction. And the meaning of Zionism for me, is that I overcame that polarity. That I live in two worlds. I live in the particular and I equally as well live in the story of creation. I don't see one as controlling the other. But I see them both existing side by side. I don't explain Judaism by the universal. I don't make the move to explain on the basis of it's ethical importance. To make ethics the controlling category of all of Judaism, is I think again the Hermut Cohen move. The place of ritual, I don't even like that term, or symbolic language, or family language, mitzfah language is meant to in some way solidify and create a holy community and the meaning of that

holy community is not only bbecause it will save the world. Their is a validity and legitimacy to particularity independent of it's universalist thrust. I am not just meant to serve the world. I am not only meant to be a light unto the nation. There is an importance to particularity, to the dignity of particularity, because I always claim that the universal can be a deeply demonic force in history. That the deepest control over universal demonism is a healthy dignified particularity. Particularity, therefore is crucial in it's own validity. I don't need to justify my love for my family because in some way we are going to make Jerusalem better. I like may family, stop. I don't need any further explanatins. I do this because I am a loyal family member. I do this because this is how Jews lived for thousands of years and I want to keep my family alive. But as the only to family, do I only live in the book of Exodus? Do I ever go back to the story of creation? So I live in two realms. Creation is a control against the distorted family moods. The family has to be corrected by not forgetting that there is a larger story. And Rabi Keeva understood that when he said,"[Hebrew]Beloved is human beings created in the image of God and greater love has Israel cause it's called children". Judaism is a family religion. It is. God becomes a member of the family. God learns Tora and fact has God putting on . And they ask,"What does God write on \_\_\_\_\_?" In our \_\_\_\_\_ is written, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One. What does God wear in his \_\_\_\_\_? In God's \_\_\_\_ is written [Hebrew], Who is like to people of Israel? One nation. A unique nation in the world. God became Judaised in Judaism. And in some way, because it is a family spirituality, it is not the universal. It is the practicular. And if I had time, and invite me next year on the significance of particularity and show you in the \_\_\_\_ the foundational principle of Jewish ethics around this concern, but ethics through the community or ethics through the universal. That's the distinction between and who said that \_\_\_\_\_, the great principle of the Tora was beloved as human beings created in

the image of God. And said, the great principle of Tora, is love your neighbor as
yourself" you build the ethical personality through neighbor, through family, through
community, that is how you build the ethical soul. Through the living deeply within the shared
memory, and shared tradition. With a shared narrative, that's how you build ethics. Through the
family. Through the community. You become ethical by being part of the community that has
meaning. Benozai thought that the is beloved as human beings created in the image of
God. And both are the words of the living God. Both in some way, I think have to be held
together. Beloved are human beings created in the image of God and in some way beloved is his
family who had dreams of holiness. Who have dreams, and memories, and traditions which unite
them and solidify them together. Do I have to choose one in terms of the other? Must I buy into
Spinoza the law and morality are fundamentally incompatible virtues? Must I buy into the
notion that if you are concerned about what you eat, you are not concerned about what comes out
of your mouth? I mean, do I have to choose between what comes out and what comes in? That
was the Christian critique. Do I have to be concerned that concern with the flesh is
fundamentally in opposition to the spirit? So I have to in some way say, if you are concerned
about worrying about the details of a mitfah, therefore you can't take ethics seriously? I always
used to be asked as a Rabi,"What's more important, Rabi Hartman, to be honest or to put on
in morning? So I never understood the question. So what is it? It putting on like an
invitation to dishonesty? So what's more important, because I know there are smugglers who
put the diamonds in their? Why choose? Why have to force this polarization as an
unnatural dimension of the Jewish spirit? And it is my hope and fervent prayer that the
Commission in Initiatives in Jewish Education will heal the polarization that has traumatized the
Jew. Either the family and not the world? Or not the world and the family? The instinct for

family solidarity is not important. That you will in some way point a new way in which the road to Sinai does not mean a regression into the ghetto. But that the road to Sinai, can in some way be embraced by someone who feels part of the human race. By someone who feels deep solidarity with the human race. And being a Jew is not having to go through those conniptions of either or. I hope, what I had to say was important. Thank you.



TO: Prof. David Hartman, INTERNET:Hartman@hum.huji.ac.il

Re: Your words

Dear Professor Hartman:

A quick note to let you know that I received your essay and will read it with care.

"Talk" to you soon.

Nessa Rapoport

3/12/97



David Hartman has sent NR an essay that explains more formally some of the ideas he expressed at the Board Seminar. NR will distribute to staff for discussion and then respond to Professor Hartman.



עזריה שרוי בתוכו. 13. בימה של עץ עושין לו בעזרה ויוטב עליה. ר׳ אליעזר בן יעקב או׳ בהר הבית, שנ׳ ויקרא בו לפני הרחוב אשר לפני שער מהאור ועד חצי היום נגד האנשים והנשים והמבינים ואזני כל העם אל ספר התורה, ואו' ויעמד עזרא הסופר על מגדל עץ אשר עשו לדבר ויעמד אצלו מתתיה ושמע עניה ואוריה שריה ומחסיה מימינו ומשמאלו עמד פדיה ומישאל ומלכיה חשום וחשבדנה זכריה ומשלם ויפתח עזרא הסופר לעיני כל העם כי מעל כל העם היה וכפתחו עמדו כל העם ויברך עזרא את ה' האלהים הגדול ויענו כל העם אמן אמן במעל ידיהם ויכרעו וישתחוו לה' אפים ארצה, ואו' ותרא והנה אשר עשו לו לדבר וגו׳. המלך עמד על עמדו במבוי ושירים וחצוצרות למלך

בעלי אסופות. אילו שנכנסין ויושבין אסופות, אסופות, ואומ' על טמא טמא, ועל טהור טהור, על טמא ועל טהור במקומו. במקומו, שמא יאמר אדם בדעתו הואיל 4.12 יים ובית שמיי מטמין ובית הלל מטהרין, איש פל' אוסר ואיש פל' מתיר, למה אני למד תורה מעתה, ת״ל דברים, הדברים, אלה הדברים, כל 105 הדברים נתנו מרועה אחד, אל אחד בראן, פרנס אחד נתנן, רבון כל המעשים ברוך הוא אמרו, אף אתה עשה לבך חדרי חדרים והכנים בה דברי בית שמיי ודברי בית הלל, יו דברי המטמאין ודברי המטהרין. אמ׳ להם אין דור יתום שר' ליעזר שרוי בתוכו. 13. במה של עץ היו עושין לו בעזרה ויושב עליה. ר׳ ליעזר בן יעקב אומ׳ בהר הבית, שנ׳ ויקרא בו לפני הרחוב אשר לפני שער המים מן האור ועד מחצית היום וגו' ויעמד עזרא הסופר על מגדל עץ 120 ויפתח עזרא הסופר לעיני

96 בעלי חקופות. קסלת י"ב, י"ח. בים חלם הדברים. דברים ח', ח'. בים במה של עץ וכו׳. משכ׳ פ"ז מ"ח. ביי ד׳ ליעזר וכו׳. בבלי מ׳ ב׳, יומח ק"ע ב׳. ועיין ספרי שופעים פי׳ קמ״ה, עמ׳ 200, בבלי תמיד כ״ח ב׳. ויקר ח וכו׳. נחמי׳ ח׳, ג׳-ה׳.

90 אסופות | פ אספות. אילו |  $\top$  אלו  $\top$  אילו |  $\top$  אלו  $\top$  אלו  $\top$  אילו |  $\top$  אלו  $\top$  אילו |  $\top$  אסופות |  $\top$  אסופות |  $\top$  אסופות |  $\top$  אילו |  $\top$  אילו  $\top$  אילו |  $\top$  אילו  $\top$  אילו ד תלמוד לומר. 104 הדברים (ב'פ) ן ד הדברי'. 105 הדברים ן ד הרברים ד מרועה | ד מרוע'. אל ן ד [כלום] אל. יסו בראן ן ד בראו. אחד ן ב אחד (בראו) מנפחק ע"י נקודות פלפעלה). 107 המעשים | ד המעשי'. אפרו | ד אמרן. 108 בה | ד בו. 109 ספיי | ד שמאי. בית | ד בי'. 110 אמ' להם | ד אמר להן. ווו ליעזר | ד אלעז' [בן עזריה]. 112 במה | ד בימה. 113 עליה ר' ליעזר ן ד עלי' רבי אליעזר. 114 אומ' ן ד אומר. 116 ועד ן פ עד. 117 ויעכד ן ד ייטתוד. 119 לון פח'. מו הסופרן פ הספר. 115 הסופר | פ הספר.

# Translation of Tosefta Sotah

Lest a person says in his mind since the House of Shammai declares impure and the House of Hillel declares pure, this man prohibits and this man permits, why should I study Torah any longer (lit. From now)? Scripture Teachers 'words', 'the words', these are the word', all these words were given from one shepherd, one God created them, one provider gave them, the Lord of all Creatures blessed be He gave them, Even you make your heart rooms within rooms (chambers within chambers - or many chambers) and place in them the words of the school of Shammai and the words of the school of Hillel, the words of those who declare impure and those who declare pure.

אַמַר רַבִּי תַּנְחוּם: חִיגַר בְרַגְלוֹ אַחַת – פָּטוּר מְן

הַרָאָיָה, שֶׁנֶאֲמַר ״רְגַּלִים״. –וְהָא ״רְגָּלִים״ מְבָּעֵי

לֵיה בּפָרָט לְבַעֲלֵי קַבִּין! –הַהוּא מִ״פְּעָמִים״ נָפְקָא.

דְּתַנָיָא: ״פְעָמִים״. אֵין פְעָמִים אָלָא רַגְלַיִם. וְכֵן הוּא

קּרַש רָבָא: מַאי דְּכְתִיב ״מָה יָפוּ פְּעָמַיִּךְ,

אוֹמֵר ״תַּרְמְסֶנָה רָגֶל רַגְלֵי עָנִי פַּצְמֵי דַלִּים״ וְאוֹמֵר

בַנְעָלִים בַּת נָדִיב״ – כַּמָה נָאִין רַגְלֵיהֶן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל

בַשַעה שַעוּלִין לַרָגַל. י״בַת נָדִיב״ – בִתוּ שֶׁל

אַבְרָהַם אַבִינוּ שֵׁנְקָרָא נָדִיב, שֶׁנָאֶמֶר ״נְדִיבֵי עַמִים

נַאַסָכּוּ עַם אֱלֹהֵי אֶבְרָהָם״. אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם וְלֹא אֱלֹהֵי

יִצְחָק וְיַצֵקֹב: אֶלָא: אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם שֶׁהָיָה תְּחִילָה

לַגַּרִים. "אָמַר רַב כָהַנָּא, דָרַשׁ רַב נָתָן בַּר מִנְיוּמִי

מַשוּם רַבִּי תַּנְחוּם: מַאי דְּכְחִיב ״וְהַבּור רֵק אֵין בוֹ

מַיִם" מְמַשְׁמֵע שֶׁנָאֲמֵר "וְהַבוֹר רַק" אֵינִי יוֹדַע שֶׁאֵין

בוֹ מִים? אַלַא: מִים אֵין בוֹ, אַבֶּל נַחָשִים וְעַקְרַבִּים

אָלְעָזֶר בֶן חִסְמָא שֶׁהָלְכוּ לְהַקְבִּיל פְּנֵי רַבִּי יְהוּשַעַ

בַּפָקִיעִין. אַמַר לָהָם: מַה חִידּוֹשׁ הָיָה בְבֵית הַמְּדְרָשׁ

הַיוֹם? אַמְרוּ לוֹ: חַלְמִידֵיךְ אַנוּ, וּמֵימֵיךְ אָנוּ שׁוֹתִין.

תַּנוּ רַבַּנֵן: מַמֵצְשָה בְרַבִי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן בְרוֹקָה וְרַבִּי

״מַה יָפוּ פְעָמֵיִךְ בַּנְּעָלִים בַת נָדִיב״.

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נחלה

לבוא.

מפרש

בשורת חשים

ערכיי יט. ב. ור מבילתא

שנעת כב יד תפייים, ייבוט

תשכד. שם תתקצב וכל

ו. סוכה מט, ב ייכוט ויד

ת. שבת כב. א. ובביר פכיד

ט. ירושלמי חנינה כיא היא

שם סוטת כ"נ ה"ד

תוספתא סוטה כדו ו-1

והשפטותו. מכילתא בא טו

ובשינויים רביסו נסדבייר

י. נתביטוח ברכות כח א

יאנותביטוים ביב קבנ ב

נמזביר שם.

אפר ר תנאם.

יב ברכות ו, א. היססתא שם

ינ ר מכילתא שמית טי. ב

נרכות

כפת נאין רגליאן בכתיי ובמקבילה כפת יפין פענייתן.

בשעת שעוליו בבת"י

ובסקורות בנעלים בשעה

אלא פים בכתייי ובפיקביכה

אכא פת תלפוד לופר אין בי

אפרו לו בכתיי ועוד אפרו לו

ררש ובדומה לות בבקורות

צאכח זו מובנת על רסע

המשרעות המייחיים בשתח תקופת. זמן מסיים כחב

סודים את הנשיא יבו נפליאו

שבת של פי חיחת

בשיים תנוצבא ישב ב

יק, וכומך סיף בוקו פניז. אלא רגלים – מדם בים נו רננים. פעמיך בלים - מנממ: ככעלי מוענים ביתי פעמים. וכרמייה כמינ "שנש פעמים :ה יראה כל זכורך ונו". שנקרא נדיב — על שם שנדטו לכו להסיר כוראו. - רגל תוחבת, אף שיכולים ללכת, כיון שאין להם רגלים פטורים מלעלוה: וסשיבים:

בי עמים - הם הגרים, המתנדנין ה כשמים לקבל פליהן של מטם. בור רק - משום דרני מנסום רה, נקט לה הכם גני שמעשמם דרני זום. אבל נחשים ועקרבים יש בו - לם היה בק חלם ממים. להקביל ביו - יום טוב היה, בחייב פדם כד אם רבו נהקבלת פנים, כדאמריט :סכם רמב השנה (טת, כ): "מדוכ מם לכם אליו כיום לא סדם ולא שכם" נכים כ׳ דן. תלמידיך אנו – ומין ו לדכר כפניך. האמרת = שכחת, ש משמחו כל פועלי מון" (מהלים כ - ישמנסו שדרק ללפה. חטיבה מת - שנם מסד, שנם מייסד, ימר: אין כמוך, לכך בפרנוך לאנוה.

#### תוכפות

מפעמים נפקא. – וכי אמריע לקמן רגלים פרט לבעלי קבין - אסמכתא בעלמא הוא, דמייפעמיםיי נפקא. וכי ברך ב"מצות חליצה" (יבמות קנ, א) בערכין פרק ייהאומר משקלייי ויט, בו רמינהי: רגלים פרט לבעלי קבין -ההיא מדסמכיה רגלים קאמר, ולא משום שהוא עיקר דרשה.

תחילה לגרים - שנצטווה על המילה טפי מכל אותם שלפניו.

נשים לשמוע - אמר בירושלמי: דלא כבן עואי, דאמר: חייב אדם ללמד לבתו תורה.

כדי ליתן שכר למביאיתן - ועל זה סמכו להביא קטנים בבית הכנסת.

אַמֶּר לָהַם: אַף עַל פִּי בֵן. אִי אָפְשָׁר לְבִית הַמְּדְרַש בָלא חִידוש. ישבת של מי סְיָהָה י שבה של רבי אַלְצְוַר בּן צְוַרְיָה סִיְהָה. -וּבַמֶּה הָיָתָה הַגָּדָה הַיּוֹם? אָמְרוּ לוֹ: בְּפָרָשַׁת הַקְּהֵל. -וֹמָה דָּרָשׁ בָהּ? -״הַקְהַל אֶת הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנָשִים וְהַטַף״ אָם אֲנָשִׁים כָּאִים לֹלְמוֹד. נָשִׁים בָאוֹת לְשָׁמוֹעַ. טַף לָמָה בָאִין? כְּדֵי לִיהֵן שָׁכָר לִמְבִיאַיהָן. –אָמַר לָהָם: -מַרְגַּלִית טוֹבָה הָיָתָה בְּיָדָכֶם וּבְקַשְׁהֶם לְאַבְּדָה מְמֶגִיּי! –וְעוֹד דָּרַשׁ: -"אֶת ה׳ הָאֱמֶרְתָּ הַיּוֹם וְה׳ הָאֱמִירְךָ הַיּוֹם״ אָמֵר לָהֶם הַקַּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: אַתָּם צַשִּיתוּנִי חַטִיבָה אַחַת בַּעוֹלָם, וַאַנִי אָצֵשָה אָחָכֶם חַטִיבָה אַחַת בָּעוֹלָם - - אַתָּם צְשָׂיתוּנִי חֲטִיכָה אַחַת בָעוֹלֶם דְּכְתִיב ״שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה׳ אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה׳ אָחָד״. וַאֵּנִי אָעֱשֶׂה אֶתְכֶם חֲטִיבָה אַחַת בָעוֹלָם שֶׁנָּאֱמַר:

בו. –

למביאיהן, סדיכה הקדוש ברוך הוא במצוה את אלה שמביאים את הטף. אמר להם רי יהושע לשני תלמידיו: מרגלית טובה זו היתה בידכם, ובקשתם לאבדה ממני ולא סיפרתם ליי: כיון שראו שהוא שמח לשמוע דברים אלה שנתחרשו בבית המדום. אמרו לו: ועוד דרש די אלעזר: נאמר "את ה' האמרת היום (דברים כו, יו) וה' האמידך היום" (שם יח) אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא ליטראל: אתם עשיתוני חטיבה (דבר מיוחד) אחת בעולם על ידי אמונתכם בי ואני אעשה אתכם חטיבה אחת בעולם בין העמים. ופירושו: אתם כשיתוני חטיבה אתת בעולם, דכתים (שנאסת "שמע ישראל ה" אלהינו ה" אחד" (שם ו. ד) ואף אני אעשה אתכם חטיבת אחת בעולב. שנאמר:

שנאמר רגלים / וכתב דרמבים בפידים שהלימוד הוא משינוי הלשון. שהרי מצאנו במקיא גם "שלש פעמים" וכיון שבוטא רעיון זה בלשון רגלים. הרי זה רפו לעלייה ברגלים פמש. פרט לבעלי קבין / ולפי זה אפשר היה לופר כי פי שיש בו מום נפור שאין לו רגלים כלל (יבעלי קביןי) דוא הפטור מראייה, אבל החינר. כיון שיש לו רגלים חייב בראייה (טראל ואטפר מה יפו פעמיך / ומכאן למדים ש־פעמים־ אינו רק שם נודף לרגלים, אלא שכלול בכך גם ענין הנעלים. שמי שאין לו אפשרות לנעול נעלים אין זה בכלל יפעמים נרשיי. וד שיח

דדש רבא... מה יפו / וכן הוא בתרנום שיר השירים: יכמה שפירן תנליתון דישראל בד סלקן

ש לבעלי קבין — כשמתמו הנליהם נתנו קג קנון נפוף שוקו, ונותנים נו האמר רי תנחום: חינר ברגלו אחת פשור מן הראיה, שנאפר הרגדים־ ושם כנ, ידן, ולא נאמר זמנים, ללמרנו שעורים דווקא בשתי רגקים. ושוארים. והא רגלים מבעי ליה נוהרי רגלים נחוץ לח ללימוד: פרט לבעלי קבין כלומר. בעלי תהוא מדפעמים" (כם יו) נפקא נרבר

זה ממה שנאמר יפעמים הוא יוצא). ש־פעמיכ־ יש לו גם משמעות רגליים. דתניא (ששנויה ברייתא): "פעמים". אין "פעמים" אלא רגלים. וכן הוא אומר התרמפנה רגל רגלי עני פעמי דלים־ (ישעיהו כו. ו) ואומר דמה יפו פעמיך בנעלים בת נדיב" (שיר השירים ז. ב). מביאים עוד מה שנאמר עליו: דרש רכא, מאי דכתיב נסהו שנאסת "מה יפו פעמיך בנעלים בת נדיב" – כמה נאין רגליהן (־פעמיהכ־) של ישראל בשעה שעולין לרגל. יכת נדיבי היא - בתו של אברהם אבינו. שנקרא נדיב, שנאמר זנדיבי עמים נאספו עם אלהי אברהם" (תהלים מו. י) ושואלים: מפני מה נאמר "אלהי אברהם" ולא אלחי יצחק ויעקב? אלא כך ים להבק: אלהי אברהם - שהיה תחילה לגרים רעל שמו נקראים הגרים (ינדיבי עמיםר) טנדב לבם אותם להצטרף לעם ישראל. כיון שהביאו דברי ר תנחום מביאים עוד בשמו. אמר רב כהנא. דרש רב נתן כר מניומי משום רי תנחום: מאי דכתיב נמהו שנאמח ביוסף "והבור רק אין בו בו מיב: אלא יש לראות זאת כהדנשה לענין אחר: מים אין בו, אבל נחשים

ברוקה ורי אלעזר כן הסמא שהלכו היום? אמרו לוו תלמידיך אנו ומימיך אנו שואין, וכיון שכולנו חלפידיך כיצד אפשר לומר לך דבר שלא שמעת. אמר התשובה היא – כדי ליתן שכר

כיון שהחכר פסוק זה לעניננו מים" (בראסית לז. כה) ממשמע שנאמר "והבור רק" איני יודע שאין

ועקרבים יש בו. תנו רבון: מנשה כרי יותנן בן להקביל פני ר' יהושע בפקיעין. אמר להם: מה חידוש היה כבית המדרש להם: אף על פי כן, אי אפשר לבית המדרש בלא חידוש. שבת של מי היתה. מי היה הדורש בטבח זוי אמרו לו: שבת של ר אלעזר כן עזריה היתה. שאל אותם: וכמה היתה הגדה היום: אמרו לו: בפרשת הקהל. שאל: ומה דרש בה? אמרו לו: נאמר "הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף" (דברים לא. יב) רש לשאול: אם אנשים באים ללמוד, נשים שלא כולן מבינות באות לפחות לשמוע, טף למה באין?

החזירו את רבן נסליאי כתבקידו אלא שכא ביטל ומשום כך כבער סדר שלפי ידרוש רבן נמליאל שתי שבתה ושאכת רי יהושע חיתה איצוף תורו של מי'חיה לדריש בשב

לטה

השורש "חטב" מרונ שמשיות, ובכמה מתן כיר את המושנ "חטיבח" האב טע. דע במשפעות חטב - ח ונילף, וכבי זה חטיבה תוא ד חתוך. מיוחד ונבדל האחרים, ותן במובי שה ש חטב – זרשה, דברי שב ואף במשפעות שה דבר מיי נסים, כמו מסרנית בש

שוחו בו נחשים דווקאל וכתב בפתח עינים בשם האר"י כי דווקא על נחשים תקרבים אפשר לומר יותבוד ריקי, כיון שהם נתבאים כסדקים ובתורים, ומצד שני מתברר לבפוף שרק מים אין בו, אבל נחשים מצרים בו בכל זאת.

תלמידיך אנו וכו׳ / ואת כפל הלשון מסבירים: תלמידיך אנו שהרי תורתנו קבלנו ממך, וגם אחר כך עדיין ימימיך אנו שותים" – ומקבלים תורה מפך. וכפין זה נוסח הירושלמי יהבל תלפידיך ופתח עינים ועייים. והיה שכתב כי אף ששאל מה חידוש היה בבית המדוש התצלו ואפרו שאולי עבורם הרבר הוא חידוש, ושמא אינו הידוש עבור רכם ולחם שלפהג. כרי ליתן שכר למניאיהן / וכתבו בהסברת החידוש שבדבר כי למעשה כיון שהכל. גם אנשים וגם נשים, חייבים לבוא להקהל, הרי בהכרח חייבים הם להביא את הטף עמם. כי מי ישמרם ירירי ילכי אחר שיבונים בכל ואת ציויה על כר כדי לומר שים עוד שבר מיוחד בעצם

"וֹמִי כְעַמְךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל גֹוֹי אֶחָד בָאָרֶץ". יְנְאַף הוּא

פָתַח וְדָרַש: ״דְּבְרַי חֲכָמִים כַדְּרְבֹנוֹת וּכְמַשְׁמְרוֹת

נטועים בעלי אַסְכוֹת נְתְנוּ מֶרֹעָה אַחָד״. יּלְמָה

נְמְשָׁלוּ דְּבְרֵי תוֹרָה לְדָרְבָן? לוֹמֵר לְךְ: מַה דְּרְבָן זֶה

מְכַבֵּין אֶת הַפָּרָה לְתְלֶמֶיהָ לְהוֹצִיא חַיִּים לָעוֹלָם,

אַף דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה מְכַנְּוֹנִין אָת לוֹמְדֵיהָן מְדְּרָכֵי מִיתָה

לְדַרְכֵי חַיִּים. אָי מָה דְּרְכָן זָה מְטַלְטֵל אַף דְּבְרֵי

תוֹרָה מְטַלְטְלִין – תַּלְמוּד לוֹמֵר ״מַשְׂמְרוֹת״. אִי

מָה מַסְמֵר זָה חָסֵר וְלֹא יָחֵר אַף דְּכְרֵי תוֹרָה חַסֵירִין

ולא יָחַירִין – הַּלְמוּד לוֹמַר ״נְטוּעִים״, מַה נְטִיעָה

זוֹ פַּרָה וָרָבָה – אַף דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה פַּרִין וָרָבִין. ״בַּעֲלֵי

אַספוֹת" – אַלוּ תַּלְמִידֵי חַכָּמִים שֵּיוֹשְׁבִין אַסוּפּוֹת

אַסוּפוֹת וְעוֹסְקִין בַתוֹרָה. הַלֵּלוּ מְטַמְאִין וְהַּלְּלוּ

מטהרין. הללו אוסרין והללו מתירין, הללו פוסלין

והַלָלוּ מַכְשִׁירִין. שַׁמַּא יֹאמַר אַדַם: הַיאַךּ אַנִי לְמֵד

תורה מעתה? תלמוד לומר: כולם "נתנו מרעה

אָחָר" – אַל אָחָד נְתָנָן. פַּרְנָס אָחָד אַמְרָן. מְפִּי

אַדון כָּל הַפַּעֲשִים בָּרוּךְ הוּא, דְּכְתִיב ״נוְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים

אָת כָּל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶה״. אַף אַתָּה עֲשֵׂה אָזְנֶיךְ

כאַפּרְכֶּסֶת. וּקְנָה לְךְ לֵב מַבִין לְשְׁמוֹעַ אֶת דְּבְרֵי

מְטַמְּאִים וְאֶת דְּבְרֵי מְטַהַרִים, אֶת דְּבְרֵי אוֹסְרִין וְאֶת

בַּלְשוֹן הַנָּה אָמַר לָהָם: אִין דּוֹר יָתוֹם שֵׁרְבִּי אַלְעָזָר

הַיּוֹם? - אָמַר לֵיה: נְמְנוּ וְגָמְרוּ: יּעַמוֹן וּמוֹאָב

דְּתַנְיָא: יְמַעֲשֶׁה בַּרְבֵּי

– משום מעשה שהיה.

מְעַשְׂרִין מַעְשֵׁר עָנִי בַשְּבִיעִית.

בשודת השים

- ב תוספתא סוטה בייו ו אורים פריח במובייו פריו. ותנחומא בחעלותך טו ובשינויים). כסייר נ ובשיטיים ספרי דברים יא ביך תתפעט.
  - .toott
  - חבינתא בא מטייו
- ד. תוספתא ידים כיינ ז ובשיטיים) ובידים פייד סיינ עבשינויים). ור שוחדט כה
- ת. ינטות טו, א. חופין ז, א. רושלמי יכמות פיא היו.

נרסות

לחוצים חיים בכת-ונמקורות: לחביא חיים. את משדיחן בכתדי ומקורות:

מלם נחב בכתיי ופיבורות אתם כמו במקרא.

לב סבין לשמוע בכתי ומטוחת לב לשפיע.

ר אליעזר נופוסים ח שתבש לדי אלעור.

יברי... חברי.

לטון

סכה זו, שקיבסה צורה עברית. מקורת כנראת ביוונית. אססעסקא ופיוכואים) – כדי שמעכירים בו טולים או

הערכת ברכונות אמרכנות

למה נמשלו דברי תורה לדרכן – לומר לך: מה דרכן זה מבוון את הפרה - ללהיט. פרנם אחר אמרן – לון לך מכיל ולסיים מדכרי נכים הכל למנוק כל

לתלמיה והיא חורשת וגורמה להוציא חרם ומות מן האדמה) לעולם - אף דברי תורה מכרונין את לומדיהן מדרכי מיתה לדרכי חיים. אולם, אי נאת מה דרבן זה מטלטל ואיננו קבוע אף דברי תורה מטלטלין – תלמוד לומר כהמשך הכתוב הזה "מסמרות". שהם קבועים. ומאידך. אפשר לומר אי מה מסמר זה חסר ולא יתר שהוא מתכלה עם הזמן ואינו גדל אף דברי תורה חסרין ולא יתירין - תלמוד לומר "נטרעים" (שם) מה נטיעה זו פרה ורכה וגדלה אף דכרי תורה פרין ורבין. "בעלי אסופות" – אלו תלמידי חכמים שיושבין אסופות אסופות (קבוצות קבוצות) ועוסקין בתורה ואף שבין החכמים יש לעתים מחלוקות. הללו מטמאין והללו מטהרין. הללו אוסרין והללו מתירין. הללו פוסלין והללו מכשירין. אם כן שמא יאמר אדם: היאך אני למד תורה מעתה כאשר יש כה כל כך הרכה מחלוקות וחילוקי דעות – תלמוד לומר כולם "נתני מרועה אחד" (שם) לומר: אל אחד נתנן, פרנם אחד ומשה רבינו) אמרן. מפי אדון כל המעשים ברוך הוא, דכתיב (שנאמת) "וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה" (שמות כ, או ולשח הריבוי בכתוב כלומר: את כל הדברים, על כל שינריהם ומחלוקותיהם. אף אתה, הלומר, עשה אוניך כאפרכסת (תכלי שכו שופכים את גרגידי התבואה לרחיים). וקנה לך לב מבין לשמוע גם את דברי מטמאים ואת דבר מטהרים, את דברי אוסרין ואת דְבְרֵי מַתִּירִין, אֶת דְּבְרֵי פוֹסְלִין וְאֶת דְּבְרֵי מַכְשִׁירִין. דברי מתירין, את דברי פוסלין ואת דברי מכשירין. כששמע ר יהושע וברם אלה. כלשת הזה אמר להם: כֵן עַזַרְיָה שָׁרוּי בְּתוֹכוֹ וְלֵימְרוּ לֵיה בְּהָרְיָא? אין דור נחשב יתום (בלא אב ומדריך) כאשר רי אלעזר כן עזריה שררי בתובו. ושואלים: כיון שהיו ביום דברים יוֹמֵי בֶּן דּוּרְמָסְקִית שֶׁהָלַךְּ לְהַקְבִּיל פְנֵי רָבִּי אַלְעָזָר יפים אלה מפי רי אלעזר בן עזריה. ולימרו ליה בהדיא ושיאמרו לו במישרין. בְּלוֹד, אָמֵר לוֹ: מַה חִידּוּשׁ הָיָה בְּבֵית הַמְּדְרָשׁ מידן מה שמעו בררשה ומפני מה הססר תחילה לומר לוז ומשיכים: משום מעשה שהיה פחדו לומר זאת. דתניא

> (ששנויה ברייתא): מעשה ברי יוסי בן דורמסקית שהלך להקביל פני רי אלעזר בלוד, אמר לו רי אלעור: מה חידוש היה כבית המדרש היום? אמר ליה (לח: נמנו הצביעו ומנו את הדעות וגמרו רק שעמרן ומראב בעבר הירדן. מאחר שאינם חלק מארץ ישראל אין דין שמיטה ומעשרות חל עליהם. מכל מקום כיון שסמוכים לארץ ישראל מעשרין מעשר עני בשנת השביעית (השמיטה), והיו צריכים להחליט על כך. משום שנחלקו איזה מן המעשרות צריכים הם להפריש.

ואף הוא פתח / הפהרשיא פירש שאף הוא חחר לרי יהושע. שהוסיף דרשה משלו. וכבר העידו חכמים אחרים שאין נראה כן מנוסח המקורות המקבילים. מה מסמר זה חסר / רשיי מפרש (ואולי גם גרס כך) – מחסר, כלומר שהמסמר מחסר ונוכב

את המקום שהוא נערץ בו נוכן הוא במהרשיאל. רש שפירש שהמסמר חסר שכאשר הוא נעץ בטתל דרידו מתמעט מנחילו נענף יוסף:.

כולם נועו פרועה אחר / נושא זה של המחלוקות בדברי חורה שאנו מחשיבים את כל הרעוה כולן ווכעין האמור יאלו ואלו רברי אלקים חיים") נידון באריכות ובהעפקה על ידי ראשתים ואתחנים (ורי בעקרת ינחק שהאריך בבך? ורבים אמרו כי מעיקרו של דבר. בנתינת התרדה עצמה ניתנו דרכים מרוכות של הכנה בה. דש נתיכים רבים שכל אחד מדם דוא אמיתי לעצמו וכעין ישבעים פנים לתורהר וכיוצא בדבוג ואף שהחבמים מביאים לבסוף את דרברים

ופי פעמך ישראל צרי אחד (פיוחד) בארץ" (רברי היפים אי ה. כאו. ועוד - ואף הוא – רכי ללפוד כן פוריה. לתלפיה – סירות המענה. פיסלדי הוסיפו: ואף הוא ר אלעזר כן עזרה פתח ודרש: כתוב "דברי חכסים ומכשירין – כדן לומר לכנין פפול כרות ופסול כהונה. כולן אל אחד כדרבונות וכמסמרות נטועים בעלי אסופות נתבו מרועה אחר" (קהלת יב. יא) אמרן — פון לן מכני המחנוקה מנים רחיה מחורם פניה להם מחירה

משה רכיט. עשה אוניך באשרכבת - מפחר שכולן לכן לשתים - עשה מוקר שומעת ולמוד, ודע דכרי כולן. וכשתדע להנחין לי זה יכשר – קנב הנכה כמותו. מפרכבת = יבירתויים שכל הריסים. מה מסמר זה – כשטענק אותו נכותל הול משבח, יכיל מף זה כן - פלמוד לומר נטועים, כנטיעה שדרכה לפרום ולרכות. ולימרד ליה בהדיא – מיד, למה החקקר לומר "סלמידין פט". נמנו וגמרו -והמקינו שיהו ישרמל הדרין נעכר הירדן, כמה שכנשו מסיחון יעוג, חרך כמון ומומכ. מעשרין – מכשר עני כשכיעית. שהן היו ארעק בשביעית, כדמתריע לקמן שלם קדשוה פולי נולה כקדוםם המכך.

#### תוספות ומי כעמך ישראל נוי אחד בארץ -

אמריע במדרש: שלשה מעידין זר על זה: ישראל, ושבת, והקדוש ברוד הוא. ישראל והקדוש ברוך הוא מעידים על השבת שהוא יום מנוחה, ישראק ושבת - על הקדוש ברוך הוא שהוא

אחד, הקדוש ברוך הוא ושכת - על ישראל שהם יחידים באומות. ועל זר סמכיע לומר "אתה אחד" במנחה בשבת, אף על פי שאינו מדבר מעניינא דיומא דשבת כמו תפלת ערכית ושחרית עמון ומואב מעשרין מעשר עני בשביעית - לפי סדר השנים היה להכ

להפריש מעשר שני, שהוא שנה ראשונה. ומעשר עני נוהג בששית, ולא מצינו מעשר עני שתי שנים רצופים. אלא תקנה תקנו בה. כדי שיסמכו עליהם עניים בשביעית. ובדין הוא דאפילו תרומה נדולה לא ניתקן אלא יהא הכל מעשר עני. אלא שלא רצו לחלק כל כך משאר שנים. פירש רש"י: דהיינו ארץ סיתון ועוג, כדאמריע בחולין (ס. ב: עמון ומואב טהרו בסיחון. כלומר, על ידי כבוש סיחון ועוג הותר לישראל ליכבש. והקשה רביט תם: דאמריע נפרס "מקום שנהנו" (מסחים נב. ב): שלש

ארצות לביעור: יהודה, ועבר הירדן. והגליל. ועבר הירדן הייט ארץ סיחון ועונ. וכי תימא דקדושה ראשונה לא קידשה לעתיד לבא - אם כן תיפשוט מיניה דלרבי אליעזר לא קידשה, אלמה מיבעיא לו בפרק קמא דמנילה (י, א) ובשבועות (טו, א): מאי סבירא ליה, אי קידשה אי לא קידשה! ותירץ רבינו תם: דיש לחלק, דהכא בעמון ומואב דלא כבשו סיחון ועוג. ולא נתקדשו כלל בקדושת הארץ. ועוד מתרץ: דלא קידשה עבר הירדן רק לארץ

סיחון ממש, אבל מה שכבש מעמון - לא נתקדשה.

לידי הכרעה של הלכה למעשה אין הכרעה זו שיללת את אמיתותן של הדעות שלא נהלכלי כהלכה. ומשום כך יש ללמוד את רברי התורה כולם ער אתנר הכבוד, ודי בבאר הנולה. וכי מוכא כשם הרשביאג

עמק ומואב פעשרין / הראשונים דט הרבה כהלכה זו, ושיטת רבנו תם (ר כתום ריה עמת. ובספר הישר) היא טאין מרובר כאן בעבר הירדן. ארץ סידוון ועוג ממש, אלא בעמון ומואב שלא נבבשו כלל בידי סיחת, או באותו חלק של עמת ומואב שיטדרו בסיחתי שסיחת כבשם. ולא היו חלק מנחלתו מאו ומקדם. כי ארץ סיחון היא בנדד ארץ האמורי, שהיא נחלה ישראל. ואילו עבון ומואב הם יארץ קיני קנידי וקרמונדי שדים נחלת ישראל רק לעתיד לבוא. ואילו המאידי סבור כי מדובר כאן כעבר הירדן שכבש סיוען. וד בכים וכשאר מפרשי הרמבים שדט בסוניה זו לשיטת הרמבים. Raba expounded: What is the meaning of the verse: 'How beautiful are thy steps in sandals, O prince's daughter'. [It means:] How comely are the feet of Israel when they go up on the festival pilgrimage. 'Prince's daughter': [means] daughter of Abraham our father, who is called prince, as it is said: The princes of the peoples are gathered together, the people of the God of Abraham.' 'The God of Abraham', and not the God of Isaac and Jacob? [It must mean], therefore, the God of Abraham, who was the first of the proselytes.'

R. Kahana said: R. Nathan b. Minyomi expounded in the name of R. Tanhum: What is the meaning of the verse: And the pit was empty, there was no water in it? Since it says that the pit was empty, would I not know that there was no water in it? [It must mean] therefore, there was no water in it, but there were in it snakes and scorpions.

Our Rabbis taught: Once R. Johanan b. Beroka and R. Eleazar Hismas went to pay their respects to R. Joshua at Peki'in. Said he to them: What new teaching was there at the College to day? They replied: We are thy disciples and thy waters do we drink. Said he to them: Even so, it is impossible for a college session to pass without some novel teaching. Whose Sabbath was it?

—It was the Sabbath of R. Eleazar b. 'Azariah, [they replied].—
And what was the theme of his Haggadic? discourse to day?

(1) Ps. XLVII, 10. (2) Prince' (200) means lit., one who offers himself willingly' i.e., for God's service. Abraham was the first to confess and worship the Lord, and the reference to the 'princes, the peoples' is to the proselytes who, like Abraham, offer themselves to the service of God. (3) The name of R. Tanhum is the link between the preceding and the following exposition. (4) Gen. XXXVII, 24. (5) In Tr. Soferim the reading is Eleazar b. Hisma. For the cognomen which is not adjectival (i.e., 'muzzled') but locative (prob. 'a native of Hismeh') v. J.E. Vol. V, p. 99. (6) Also Beki'in, modern Fukin, in S. Palestine between Lydda and Jabneh (Jast.). It was customary for pupils to visit their teacher on holy days; cf. R.H. 16b. (7) I.e., disciples may not speak before their teacher (Rashi); or we cannot possibly have anything to teach you. (8) R. Gamaliel used to lecture on two (or three) Sabbaths and R. Eleazar b. 'Azariah on the third (or fourth) v. Ber. 28a. (9) Haggadah (1717), a nomen actionis of Tria. (to tell), denotes all scriptural interpretation which is non-halachic (i.e., non-legal) in character (H. L. Strack). V. Glos.

They answered: The section 'Assemble'. And what exposition did he give thereon? 'Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones'. If the men came to learn, the women came to hear, but wherefore have the little ones to come? In order to grant reward! to those that bring them. Said he to them: There was a fair Jewel in your hand, and you sought to deprive me of it.

He further expounded: Thou hast avouched the Lord this day... and the Lord has avouched thee this day. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: You have made me a unique object of your loves in the world, and I shall make you a unique object of My love in the world. You have made me a unique object of your love, as it is written: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And I shall make you a unique object of My love, as it is said: [3b] And who is like unto Thy people Israel, a nation one in the earth. And he? also took up the text and expounded: The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well planted are the words of masters of Assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd.

Why are the words of the Torah" likened to a goad? To teach you that just as the goad directs the heifer along its furrow in order to bring forth life to the world, so the words of the Torah direct those who study them from the paths of death to the paths

(1) V. supra p. 5, n. 10. (2) But not to study it fully; cf. J.T., Sot. III, 4. For the status of the woman in Judaism v. J.E. vol. XII, p. 556. (3) For the Rabbinic conception of reward v. R. T. Herford, op. cit. pp. 123-24, 127-120. (4) Deut. XXVI, 17-18. (5) DAR ADPEN; Jast. the only object of your love (from root meaning to fall in love, woo'); Levy. 'Herescher' (ruler) comparing it, according to Bacher, with Pers. 'Khedive'; Goldschmidt, 'Verherrlichung' (glorification); Rashi, 'sole or unique object of praise'; Aruch, in the name of R. Hai Gaon, 'Unique concept' (DAR DEE); Maharsha (quoting Rashi to Deut. XXVI, 17) 'separation. (from root meaning to hew'). (6) Aruch reads: 'in this world ... in the world to come'. (7) Deut. VI, 4. For different renderings of this verse v. I. Abrahams, A companion to the Auth. Daily Prayer Book, p. LI. (8) I Chron. XVII, 21; for thought, cf. Midrash quoted in Tosaf. a.l. (9) I.e., according to Rashi, R. Eleazar b. 'Azariah; but according to Maharsha and Goldschmidt, R. Joshua. (10) Eccl. XII, 11. (11) The 'words of the wise' are identified with 'the words of the Torah'.

of life. But [should you think] that just as the goad is movable so the words of the Torah are movable; therefore the text says: 'nails'.

But [should you think] that just as the nail diminishes and does not increase, so too the words of the Torah diminish and do not increase; therefore the text says: 'well planted'; just as a plant grows and increases, so the words of the Torah grow and increase.

"The masters of assemblies: these are the disciples of the wise, who sit in manifold assemblies and occupy themselves with the Torah, some pronouncing unclean and others pronouncing clean, some prohibiting and others permitting, some disqualifying and others declaring fit.

Should a man say: How in these circumstances shall I learn Torah? Therefore the text says: 'All of them are given from one Shepherd'. One God gave them:'s one leader outtered them from the mouth of the Lord of all creation, blessed be He; for it is written: 'And God spoke all these words'.' Also do thou make thine ear like the hopper and get thee a perceptive heart to understand the words of those who pronounce unclean and the words of those who pronounce clean, the words of those who prohibit and the words of those who permit, the words of those who disqualify and the words of those who declare fit. He [then] spoke to them? in the following words: It is not an orphan generation in which R. Eleazar b. 'Azariah lives. But

(1) Le., unstable and of impermanent authority. (2) The nail driven into the wall makes a hole. (3) To act as witness, or as priest. (4) Le., in view of the contradictory opinions beld by the scholars. (5) Le., the various opinions do not emanate from differen "Revelations", but have their origin in the One Torah, given by the One God. Cf. Tanhuma to Num. XIX, 2, section 8; and ref. to Moses and Akiba Men. 29b. (6) Le., Moses. The term "Shephers" [717] is applied in the Bible both to God (e.g., Gen. XLVIII, 15; Ps. LXXX, 2) and to Moses (e.g., Isa. LXIII, 11), Maharsha. (7) Ex. XX, 1. (8) PODDEN. According to Jast. from root DDD (to rub, grind), itself an extension of root 710 (to break). According to Levy, from the Greek. The hopper, being funnel-shaped, more enters it than issues from it, i.e., hear all views, and then sift them and accept the true. (9) Le., R. Joshua to his two disciples.

they could have told him directly!'-It was on account of a certain occurrence. For it is taught: Once R. lose b. Durmaskith went to pay his respects to R. Eliezer at Lod. J Said the latter to him: What new thing was taught in College today? He replied: They decided by vote that in Ammon and Moabs the tithe of the poor should be given in the seventh year. 5 Said [R. Eliczer] to him: Jose, stretch forth thine hands and lose thy sight. He stretched forth his hands and lost his sight. R. Eliezer [then] wept and said: The counsel of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and His covenant, to make them know it. 7 He [then] said to him: Go, say to them: Be not concerned about your voting,8 thus have I received a tradition from Rabban? Johanan b. Zakkai, who heard [it] from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher, that it is a halachah of Moses from Sinai to that in Ammon and Moab the tithe of the poor is to be given in the seventh year. What is the reason?-Many cities were conquered by those who came up from Egypt, which were not conquered by those who came up from Babylon; since the first consecration" held [only] for the time," but did not hold for the future [per-

(1) I.e., why did they at first evade R. Joshua's request by saying: We are thy disciples etc.? (2) I.e., woman of Damascus. (3) Cf. I Chron. VIII, 12; afterwards Lydda and later Diospolis, near Joppa. (4) According to Rashi, that part of Ammon and Moab which was subjugated by Sihon and Og. and later was captured from them by the Israelites (v. Num. XXI, 21-15, and Hul. 60b). But according to R. Tam (in Tosal.), it refers to the rest of Ammon and Moab, not conquered by Sihon and Og. (5) In Transjordania, which did not possess the sanctity of Palestine proper, the land did not have to lie fallow in the seventh year (cf. Lev. XXV, 2f). Accordingly, the Rabbis ordained that the tithe of the poor, although given the preceding year, should again he given in the seventh year. V. Deut. XIV, 28-20 and Sifre al.; cf. also Lev. XXIII, 22 and Deut. XXIV, 19. (6) Lit., 'receive thine eyes', a euphemism. He was vexed because R. Jose ascribed an old traditional law to the particular session in his college. (7) Ps. XXV, 14. (8) I.e., have no scruples concerning it. (9) Lit., 'our teacher', the honorific title of several descendants of Hillel, and of R. Johanan b. Zakkai. (10) A statute in immemorial usage. V. Strack, op. cit., p. 9 and nn. 17-21. (11) I.e., under Joshua: the territory conquered by Israel became holy. (12) I.e., till the first exile.

July 1, 1997

### Dear Professor Hartman:

The length of time it has taken to respond to the introduction you sent me is a measure of how seriously we at CIJE have taken your provocative thesis: That to meet the challenge of Jewish survival in our day, *Torah* and *Halakha* be viewed as two distinct categories.

We began to imagine publishing your essay alongside the responses of some serious, responsible thinkers in contemporary Jewish life. We could elicit a range of thoughtful written reactions to the questions you pose: Is there a value to our studying sacred texts independent of their religious authority over us? What is the educational, rather than religious, purpose of our studying Torah in modernity?

If you are interested in this idea, I would be delighted to meet with you and discuss what might be the best timetable for you to develop the introduction into an independent essay, as well as a list of possible respondents for your approval.

Looking forward to hearing from you--and many thanks for your patience.

Nessa Rapoport

CC: Alan Hoffmann; Karen Barth

Asian religions as "cults," I shudder. By using the label "cult," we insure that we will never understand; it is no more than theological name-calling. We will never understand the religion we condemn, and worse yet, we will never understand what leads young Jews to these alien

Worse perhaps is that we fail to take seriously the spiritual aspirations of Jews who don't find their needs met in their synagogues. Does anyone really believe they will bring a Jew back by poking fun at her or his searchings and strivings? When we misrepresent Buddhism, we only display our own igno-

I don't know whether it's kosher to practice yoga or Buddhist meditation; such a question could only be addressed by rabbis who know the pertinent halakhas and who have a deep understanding of Buddhism or Yoga—an unlikely coincidence of expertises.

My point is that spirituality is an approach to religion which can be learned. And if Sylvia Boorstein, for one reason or another, did not find it in Judaism, maybe she found it elsewhere. And now, she has returned to Judaism with it, thereby re-injecting Judaism with a spirituality which had been broken. Maybe that's her tikkun. Maybe that's why she wrote, "I can say-with perfect faith-that my contribution to tikkun olam... begins with my dedication to maintaining a loving heart." Maybe this rebbe was correct when he suggested that Jewish spirituality, which was burnt in Hitler's ovens, might possibly be reclaimed from India!

REVIEW

# **Returning to Jewish Texts**

Marc M. Epstein

From Jerusalem to the Edge of Heaven, by Ari Elon, JPS, 1996.

Intil recently the names Elul, Milah, and Almah were virtually unknown in America. The proliferation of institutions in Israel devoted to the study of traditional texts in a new non-sectarian, extra-academic, post-rabbinic context was hardly deemed worthy of comment in the media. But in the wake of the Rabin assassination, with the quest for a new sense of purpose and direction for the whole of Israeli culture, these bisyllabic acronyms have become increasingly familiar to more and more people both in Israel and abroad. What is happening in upscale neighborhoods in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv is nothing less than a quiet revolution: a broad spectrum of individuals of the political left who exhibit an extraordinary religious and spiritual diversity-identifying as halakhic and post-halakhic, orthodox, traditional and secular— are getting together to 'learn,' (rather than to 'study' or to 'research') the classic texts of the rabbinic tradition. Previously established arenas for the

study of the political implications of religious texts, such as the Hartman Institute, are expanding, and institutions such as Pardes and Yakar, which seek authentic, open-minded (though not necessarily always liberal) and inclusive socio-political direction within the four amot of Halakha are attracting larger and larger numbers of people. The salient question of this revolution, like any revolution is, of course, "Whose culture is this, what will we take from the tradition and how will we use it?"

Every revolution needs a manifesto, and some are predicated on declarations of independence. In From Jerusalem to the Edge of Heaven, the recently released English translation of Ari Elon's epically challenging work, Alma Dee, this nascent movement 'back to the sources' finds both its manifesto and declaration of independence. Elon is the scion of a prominent Israeli family which has produced scholars and politicians representing the entire continuum of Israeli political opinion, and now Director of the Rabbinic Texts program at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. His work, stunningly produced by the Jewish Publication Society, is rendered in a pellucid translation by Tikva Frymer-Kensky, through which we can clearly see Elon's clever and incisive mind at work and at play. The book itself combines elements of memoir, diary, religio-political manifesto and literary critique in a quirkily poetic, often dreamlike stream-of-consciousness anti-narrative.

Early on in this profoundly difficult and often disturbing work, Elon tells what can only be described as a postmodern horror story. He describes entering a senior class at a well-known secular high school in Jerusalem in order to teach, well, 'Judaism.' The students insist that he cannot be their Judaism teacher because such a teacher would necessarily wear a kippah and a beard and tzizit; he counters by asserting that he does not know what 'Judaism' is, and then asks the boys if they wear kippot in math class. No-they do not wear kippot in math class. As for Judaism, it consists of "the subjects of the datti'im [the 'religious']... subjects that the datti'im teach." And as for themselves: "... We're Jews a little-they [the datti'im] are much more Jews than we."

The story is frightening on a number of levels. For one, it shows that 'secular' education in Israel has not succeeded any better than American after-school Hebrew schools at inculcating a sense of Jewish identity in Israeli students. But much worse than that, it shows that Israelis-the very people held up in afternoon Hebrew

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schools as alternate paradigms for what it means to be a Jew-have fallen into the very same trap of defaulting on the tradition as have the majority of American Jews. Ask most of my intelligent college undergraduates how they identify Jewishly and they will answer, "Well, we don't do very much-so I guess we're Reform." (Imagine Geiger spinning in his grave to be identified with this sort of Judaism by default). Or, wear a kippah in class, on campus, and (yes) at home, and students will assume that you are "more religious" than they are, "very religious" in fact, "very orthodox" perhaps, or even that pinnacle of the scale, "hasidic."

There is something very wrong here. Religious authority has become so intertwined with conservative politics as to be identified with it. To make matters worse, a polymorphous and diffuse 'spirituality' is differentiated from religion and has become the purview of the left. This 'spirituality' resists any attempt at quantification or particularization, and has consequently come to represent that which is universal. This is wonderful, progressive perhaps, except for the fact that it leaves only dry, spiritless 'religion' to represent all that is particular and quantifiable about Judaism, making "authentic" Jewishness the property of those who wear fedoras. The fedora-less masses can only, at best, feel that "...they (the datti'im) are much more Jews than

Elon objects to this: Why are we on the left so willing to accept the 'fact' that "the Talmud says...." "the rabbis teach..." or "the Halakha is..." while delegating to the right the privilege and responsibility of working with the text. But what if, Elon asks, we reclaim from the right the idea that rabbinic texts are at the center of Jewish existence? And what happens if it should turn out that the culture those texts represent, a culture we are perhaps prepared to condemn, ends up speaking to us? What happens in the likely event that parts of our cultural heritage make us bristle while others are in direct confluence with our ethos? Will it do to deny interpretive responsibility? On the contrary: such ambiguity should be a call to interpretation, an invitation to learn how to learn texts in such a way that one can appreciate them as an integral tapestry.

Elon recognizes in an agonized and visceral way that Jewish culture is in crisis, and that neither bagels and lox, nor liberal or conservative politics, nor the ba'al teshuva nor the Renewal movements will save it. What, he asks, will save Jewish culture if not learning Torah? And perhaps rightly so-for what, besides raw genetic material, makes Jewish culture Jewish? Only an active and lively engagement with Jewish texts-what has classically been called limud Torah. In an intensely personal poetic memoir, Elon charts his path from being a rabbinically determined (rabbani) to becoming a self-determined (ribboni) Jew. He uses his own experience as an example of the way in which Jews need to free themselves from the myth that only those who live the lifestyle described in rabbinic texts are suited to study them; that such texts, in other words, are, by and large about how to live a certain way, and if one does not live that way, one does not need them. He reveals the ways in which those of us who choose not to live that way have, in effect, walked over to the nearest person in a fedora or a sheitel and handed over to him or her our most sublime possession and inheritance: "Here," we said, "Take this. We don't need it. You have better use for it than we do. You can Jew for us." And then the fedora and sheitel people replied, "But of course you need this, in fact you must have it for the salvation of your soul! Only you must not only learn it, but live it, you must do what it says." But we refused it because making those oh-so halakhic texts central to our identity as Jews, seemed so inexorably intertwined with the observence of a Halakha, a Way we wanted no part of. Thus, we gave away our greatest national literary and moral treasure to people who tend to conceptualize it as an elaborate instruction manual. But how can we, having lost our faith and abandoned our observance, reclaim our

Various post-war solutions to this problem, including the "return to orthodoxy" of the ba'al teshuva movement of the sixties through the present and the American Jewish Renewal movement of the eighties through the present have failed to achieve the marriage of liberal politics with a true return to and embrace of rabbinic texts that Elon

clearly desires; ba'alei teshuva, in searching for religious 'authenticity' very often find themselves involved with teachers and communities which are politically conservative. Some accept this equation as a 'package deal'— quietly disagreeing with the politics, but remaining with such teachers or communities for the sake of the religious environment. Others are converted to the belief that conservative politics is the necessary end of a truly 'authentically Jewish'lifestyle. If a formerly liberal ba'al teshuva speaks out in the cause of conservative politics, s/he is celebrated as one transformed by the wisdom of the Torah from a path of ignorance and blindness to the True Way. If that same ba'al teshuva were to have spoken out in the cause of liberal politics, s/he would be 'read out' of the community, dismissively condemned for lack of learning or improper upbringing. Unlike the ba'al teshuva movement, Elon calls for no repentance in the classical sense, no 'awakening' to Jewish observance, and certainly no adherence to conservative politics as the only authentically Jewish politics.

Renewal, on the other hand, seeks to legitimate the individual's spiritual experience, whatever it may be, as part of the Jewish tradition. When texts are studied, it is often in translation, and the discussion centers more around the discussants than around the text. Renewal celebrates Jacob's discovery that "God was in this place, and I did not know it— God is wherever we are. In this sense it can be a bit disingenuous: by accentuating the positive and the relevant, it tends to ignore aspects of the tradition which are problematic. It disregards the fact that we would never set foot in some of the places the tradition says that God is, as well as the fact that the tradition would assert that some of the places (philosophical and otherwise) we find ourselves, are antithetical to God's presence. Thus, while the ba'al teshuva movement requires us to become 'authentic,' by buying into a certain conservative world-view, Jewish Renewal grants blanket spiritual authenticity to anything done by a Jew, and celebrates the authenticity of "being here now," but is somewhat unclear concerning its sources of authority and connection to history. Yesterday's innovation is as sacred as

the Halakhot explicated by the rabbis of the Gemara. While Elon might sympathize with some elements of this approach, teaching as he does at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, it seems clear that he wants to move beyond it into something

radically new.

What Elon, in fact, advocates in his desire to encourage those who are post-rabbinic Jews is no less than a culture of what many present day observant Jews would label epikorsut. A culture of Jews who know as much as a Jew can know about how to learn, but who aren't committed to actively observing any specific part of it. Yet it has been observed time and time again that whatever the criticism of Jews who default on the ritual laws, there are plenty of ritually observant Jews who default on the ethical laws, particularly in the areas of interpersonal relationships and respect for all people as the image of God.

No one would deny that these commandments are as critical as those of mixed seed types and the depth of ritual baths. One is bound, in Elon's opinion, to learn Torah in such a way as to uncover the myriads of halakhot concerning human interaction and society-building which can be derived from the midrashim in particular. How many yeshiva bokhurim are taught to scorn the midrashim as fairytales which break up the study of "the real thing"-Halakha? Is any learning truly deep which plumbs the depths of Ukzin, (the Mishnaic tractate dealing with the ritual impurity of roots, stalks, husks, shells and kernels) while allowing the broad field of midrash to lie fallow? If R. Akiba could learn "heaps and heaps of halakhot" from the tiny crowns on the letters of the Torah, then why should we not gain humanistic insight of similar depth from the aggadic fox fables of R. Meir? And why should the halakhic and the humanistic, the 'religious' and the 'spiritual' be so unnaturally divided out and set against each other?

Elon makes compelling arguments for the holiness of the vocation of traditional Torah study for Jews for whom God may be dead, or at least sleeping. It is true that the vast majority of us no longer live a lifestyle where, say, the dimensions of ritual baths are either compelling or apropos. We are certainly alienated from much of the content of Jewish learning. But it is equally true that we have institutionalized and synagogified Judaism to a point where it is unrecognizable as a living pathway—we have transformed Halakha from Tao to Law. Halakha works for the right because they live a life within its boundaries, their Judaism is integral, not something to do for a couple of hours on a Saturday morning.

But Elon asks why the love and learning of rabbinic texts should be any less 'natural' for post-halakhic Jews, and he muses about how to make such learning holistic and contiguous with the rest of our lives. Unlike the traditional epikoros, Elon doesn't want us to learn for the sake of knowing what we're rejecting. Elon is revolutionary in that he is not afraid not to reject. Elon proposes that we approach rabbinic texts in a way which will suit people for whom God exists as well as people for whom God is dead.

Elon's ideal of learning "Torah for its own sake" is based not in the authority of divine commandment, but in the free spirit of academic inquiry. One learns texts because they are important, but recognizes that such texts, to paraphrase Barthes, suspend meaning while perpetually dispatching one toward interpretation, urge one beyond dogmatism, beyond ideology, beyond authority. One studies text because it is the place wherein answers are provoked but not given.

While Barthes' approach is fine for literature, it is risky for cultural continuity. When one's very identity-both one's selfhood and one's peoplehood are at stake, one cannot help hoping against hope for answers. From Jerusalem to the Edge of Heaven is a brilliant critique which stops short of concrete solutions. Elon sensitively, subtly, despairingly, overwhelmingly cries out to us that things are terribly wrong, and describes the profound spiritual transformation which needs to come about in order to awaken ourselves to our destiny as ribboni Jews. And after reading Elon, one might find oneself wandering in the wilderness and despairing, "From whence shall our salvation come?"

If From Jerusalem to the Edge of Heaven stands as a manifesto and declaration of independence, then Elul, Milah, Almah, Hartman, Pardes, and

many other groups and institutes which are likely in formation, are writing the constitution of a new and revolutionary Jewishness. The movement in Israel is the concrete solution, whereby post-halakhic Jews will take the necessary next step, to now seek to become equally learned as the self-appointed custodians in the yeshivot, since Judaism has developed since the period of the Second Temple as a democracy of learning and a hierarchy of authority based on text study.

Questions remain about the dilemma and its solution: What is the imperative behind the learning of rabbinic texts if not a Divine mandate, and what is its goal, if not observance? Elon proposes that rabbinic literature is the foundational document and the most profound expression of the cultural heritage of the Jewish people. But it happens also to be in great part a legal corpus: one doesn't find secular Muslims studying hadith, lay Catholics intimately involved with Canon Law, or ordinary Americans devoting their lives to Constitutional Law. What do we do, ultimately with the legal corpus? And if it is not a legal corpus which is to be followed, what is to compel us to study it and what do we pass on about the value of this literature?

These are, in some senses, the same questions which European and American Jews faced at the end of the last and at the beginning of this century. How will they be answered in the Israeli context at the end of the century? Can we have any expectation that it will be answered in ways other than the dry and non-compelling ways in which they were answered in America? Judaism is going through its post-adolescence in Israel. The rebellion has been accomplished, now it wants to settle down and start a family. To what extent will it replicate the mistakes of the American and European experiments? I am encouraged by the developments afoot in the creation of a new democracy of learning in Israel. And I feel confident that with Ari Elon as one of its seminal thinkers, and From Jerusalem to the Edge of Heaven as one of its critical texts, this approach cannot but have some profound impact on the development of Jewish culture well into the next century.