

# CHAVRUSA

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in the Limelight:  
Advocacy, Activism  
and *Askanut*



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## CHAVRUSA

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## Editorial Policies

- CHAVRUSA will consider articles and letters for publication.
- Books authored by musmakhim that are reviewed by musmakhim will be considered for publication as well.
- Obituaries about and authored by musmakhim will be considered for publication.
- CHAVRUSA aims to maintain the Hebrew pronunciation style of the author of the article. Transliterations follow the author's preference i.e. academic, Ashkenazic, Modern Hebrew or the like. While we will remain consistent within articles, each author will be afforded to transliterate within his comfort level.
- CHAVRUSA reserves the right to edit articles received for publication, and will make every effort to show a draft form to the author prior to publication.
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- In addition to CHAVRUSA magazine, articles and divrei Torah may also be submitted for publication in the weekly Rabbinic Alumni e-newsletter. Please email them to rabbinicalumni@yu.edu

# CJF And Rabbinic Alumni Host Webcast For Rabbis On Financial Crisis

In an effort to help rabbis understand, anticipate and respond to the needs of congregants, students and friends during the difficult economic climate, the Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future (CJF) - Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and Rabbinic Alumni presented a webcast entitled "What the Rabbi Needs to Know about the Current Financial Crisis." It was a two-part interactive conference broadcast live on the Web on January 6 and January 13. The audio of the webcasts can be downloaded on [www.YUTorah.org](http://www.YUTorah.org). Each webcast aired for an hour and a half and addressed the financial side and the pastoral component respectively. Speakers include members of the YU faculty and administration and other communal leaders.

The financial panel was moderated by Rabbi Shaul Robinson of Lincoln Square Synagogue in New York. Sharing their expertise was: Avi Lauer, general counsel and vice president for legal affairs of Yeshiva University; Dr. John Malindretos, associate professor of finance at Sy Syms School of Business; Rabbi Yossie Stern, founder and executive director of Bergen County-based Project EZRAH; and Rabbi Hershel Billet '74R of Young Israel of Woodmere in New York.



(L-R) Dr. John Malindretos, Rabbi Yossie Stern, Mr. Avi Lauer, Rabbi Hershel Billet, and Rabbi Shaul Robinson.

The pastoral component, which focused heavily on the psychological ramifications of the crisis, was moderated by Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Schwartz '99R of Congregation Adath Israel in Elizabeth, NJ, who is also a clinical psychologist in private practice. Panelists were: Dr. David Pelcovitz, the Gwendolyn and Joseph Straus Professor of Jewish Education at Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish

Education and Administration; Dr. Sara Barris, a clinical psychologist in family practice; and Rabbi Shmuel Goldin '76R of Congregation Ahavath Torah in Englewood, NJ.

"The program provided the rabbis with tools to aid those who are suffering in this global crisis," said Rabbi Kenneth Brander '86R, dean of the Center for Jewish Future. Rabbi Brander added that they are also "reaching out to clergy outside the Orthodox community, since this issue permeates the entire community. The CJF is concerned about the future of our entire people."

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler '05R, rabbi of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation in Toronto, said he enjoyed the program. "The webcast on the financial crisis was excellent," he said. "It allowed me, as a rabbi outside of New York, to connect with colleagues and teachers with expertise that I am developing. It was like getting "radar" before a storm – and knowing how to protect your people before things get bad. I was able to ask questions and get answers in real time – making it more of an interaction than a video."

CJF and Rabbinic Alumni plan additional programs like these which impact and help the community and its *klei kodesh*. ■



(L-R) Dr. Sara Barris, Rabbi Shmuel Goldin, Dr. David Pelcovitz, and Rabbi Jonathan Schwartz.

# Roshei Yeshiva Energize S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program Students

More than 650 young men in the S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program converged on Jerusalem on Motzei Shabbat March 7 for a special “Melave Malke/Kumsitz” hosted by Yeshiva University in Israel. The event was the first of its kind, bringing together students from 23 different yeshivot from across Israel to enjoy a scrumptious buffet, entertainment by musician Ari Goldwag, and divrei Torah from RIETS Roshei Yeshiva Rabbi Michael Rosensweig '80R, Rabbi Hershel Shachter '67R, and Rabbi Mayer Twersky '85R.

The evening capped off a busy week for the Roshei Yeshiva, who were in Israel to interview applicants for the RIETS Masmidim Honors program. The program seeks to admit those who excel in their Torah studies in Israel and who will adhere to advanced standards of study once on the Wilf Campus in New York.

The Motzei Shabbat event followed a special Shabbaton at YU in Israel's Gruss campus for the applicants to the Masmidim Honors program. In addition to shiurim and words of inspiration from the roshei yeshiva, the students had a chance to hear from Rabbi Ari Zahtz '04R, the program's coordinator, who made the trip from New York specifically for the shabbaton.

“We were thrilled by the response for this event,” said Rabbi Ari Solomont, director of the Yeshiva University S. Daniel Abraham Israel Program. “It demonstrates how eager these young men are to hear from and gain inspiration from our Roshei Yeshiva. The Motzei Shabbat event was a landmark program, offering the opportunity for future Yeshiva students to mingle among each other, as well as meet, dance with, and draw inspiration from RIETS Roshei Yeshiva.”

Alex Porcelain, a future Yeshiva University honors student learning at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh could not agree more. “The S. Daniel Abraham Israel program Melave Malka was awesome. It was a great opportunity to meet the Roshei Yeshiva on a more personal level and hear divrei Torah from them. The top notch food, lively music, and incredibly leibedik dancing allowed guys from yeshivot all over Israel to meet and have a fun time together. It was the perfect way to usher in the month of Adar, and pick up some new friends along the way. Now that the YU guys in Israel are more oriented with the roshei yeshiva and their peers, everyone's really



Photo Credit: Jared Bernstein Photography

excited for their upcoming years in YU, knowing what great opportunities lay ahead.”

The roshei yeshiva similarly appreciated the experience. Speaking on behalf of all the Roshei Yeshiva, Rabbi Michael Rosensweig said that, “It gave us all *sipuk hanefesh* to see so many *talmidim* from various yeshivot and how Yeshiva University is a unifying force that can bring them all together.”

Rabbi Solomont said he hopes to build on the success of the evening, noting that it also offered

students another reminder of the services and programs YU in Israel offers, such as this year's Summer Kollel at the Gruss campus, offering students the opportunity to continue studying Torah in Israel through the summer.

“There are really a lot of meaningful things going on here for our students,” Rabbi Solomont noted. “The atmosphere here is really one that gives meaning to the goal of bringing wisdom to life.” ■

## New Research on the Year in Israel

According to the findings of an ongoing study by Dr. David Pelcovitz, the Gwendolyn and Joseph Straus Professor of Psychology and Jewish Education at Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration, and Rabbi Steven Eisenberg '05R, the Rabbi Dr. Mordecai Zeitz Doctoral Fellow at Azrieli, three key factors play a role in the internalization of religious values of students studying Torah in Israel post-high school: cohesive families, a positive attitude toward Judaism and the religious influence of high school teachers.

With support from the Institute for University-School Partnership, a division of Azrieli, Dr.



(L-R) Dr. David Pelcovitz, Rabbi Steven Eisenberg

Pelcovitz and Rabbi Eisenberg are in the process of conducting a three- to four-year longitudinal study on religious development and the variables associated with religious growth. They surveyed students in their senior year of high school and followed up with them during their year in Israel. The third phase of the study will include an assessment of those students upon their return to college in America. While communities across North America have observed the transformative impact of the post-high school year in Israel over the last two decades, little research existed about the psychological aspects of this phenomenon until now.

Dr. Pelcovitz and Rabbi Eisenberg presented the results of the second of three phases of research a lecture titled, "What Happens When Your Child Isn't Like You? Understanding the Religious Change After Year(s) of Study in Israel." In his presentation, Rabbi Eisenberg clarified a common misconception. He noted that too often, the religious growth in Israel is attributed only to Israeli *rebbeim*, without recognizing the integral role of high school teachers. He added that the number of students in their sample who increased their religious observance significantly while studying in Israel was "much smaller than anticipated." Students

that came from more conflict ridden homes were more likely to make extreme lifestyle changes, whether increased or decreased observance, and become different from their families.

Dr. Pelcovitz noted that change is often a result of healthy questioning typical of young adult behavior. "There is a real need on the part of young adults to find their voice and experiment with new ways of thinking," he said. Offering advice to the parents in the audience, Dr. Pelcovitz focused on the variables that contribute to a positive year of growth and development. Parents must relate to Judaism positively, "a religion based on the yesses and not the nos," he said. "When children perceive a conflict about religion in their home, it tends to be a bad predictor of how they will do in Israel."

Students who develop and maintain close relationships with family, friends and teachers cope better during their year in Israel, while those with the inability to forge connections tend to gravitate to the extremes, becoming either very religious or rebellious. Dr. Pelcovitz and Rabbi Eisenberg plan to disseminate the findings of the study and make practical recommendations for educators and parents through publications and presentations. ■

## The Benefits Of Attending Religious Services

A study published by researchers at Yeshiva University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, strongly suggest that regular attendance at religious services reduces the risk of death by approximately 20 percent. The research was conducted by Rabbi Dr. Eliezer Schnall '03R, clinical assistant professor of psychology at Yeshiva College of Yeshiva University, and co-authored by Dr. Sylvia Wassertheil-Smoller, professor of epidemiology and population health at Einstein, as an ancillary study of the Women's Health Initiative (WHI).

The study adjusted for participation of individuals within communal organizations and group activities that promote a strong social life and enjoyable routines, behaviors known to lead to overall wellness. However, even after controlling for such behavior and other health-related factors, the improvements in morbidity and mortality rates exceeded expectations.

"Interestingly, the protection against mortality provided by religion cannot be entirely explained by expected factors that include enhanced social support of friends or family, lifestyle choices and reduced smoking and alcohol consumption," said Dr.

Schnall, who was lead author of the study. "There is something here that we don't quite understand. It is always possible that some unknown or unmeasured factors confounded these results," he added.

To evaluate the impact of religiosity on mortality and morbidity, the investigators looked at variables including self-report of religious affiliation, frequency of religious service attendance, and religious strength as well as comfort, in relation to coronary heart disease (CHD) and death. It is important to note that the study did not attempt to measure spirituality; rather, it examined self-report religiosity measures (irrespective of the participant's religion.) The study investigators concluded that although religious behavior (as defined by the study's criteria) is associated with a reduction in death rates among the study population, the physical relationships leading to that effect are not yet understood and require further investigation. "The next step is to figure out how the effect of religiosity is translated into biological mechanisms that affect rates of survival," said Dr. Wassertheil-Smoller. "However, we do not infer causation even



Rabbi Dr. Eliezer Schnall

from a prospective study, as that can only be done through a clinical trial."

The investigators are considering doing an analysis of psychological profiles of women in the study to determine if such profiles can help to explain the apparent protective effects of attending religious services. ■

## Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim to the Four Sons

Rabbi Aharon Kahn



It is a fundamental principle that *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* be conveyed to others, and specifically to one's children, wherever possible. Furthermore, that it be conveyed in a manner consistent with the child's capacity. The Mishnah formulates this idea and uses the word *melamdo* twice: "*v'im ein da'as b'ven, aviv m'lamdo ... ul'fi daaso shel ben, aviv m'lamdo.*" It would seem that the mitzvah of *sippur* is through *talmud Torah* and that it is essentially a concept of teaching Torah. Yet the Rambam (*Chametz Umatzah* 7:2), in his formulation that *sippur* is to convey to others, chooses the word *lehodia* even as he quotes soon afterward the *loshon* of the Mishnah: "*mitzvah l'hodia l'vanim, v'afilu lo sha'alu, shene'emar, v'higad'sa l'vincha, l'fi da'aso shel ben, aviv m'lamdo. Keitzad? ...*" and so too later in this halachah: "*v'im hayah haben gadol v'chacham, modi'o ma she'ira lanu.*" The use of the word *lehodia* appears to be deliberate and intends to convey that *sippur* is essentially something other than a *talmud Torah* mitzvah. It is the imparting of information, the conveying of experience. But because there are four formulations in the Torah, it is understood that the *lehodia* demands both elaboration as well as comprehension, thus the use of the word *melamdo*. For were it merely a recitation there would not be four separate formulations of the story. One size does not fit all.

However, it might be a mistake to think that the Torah has presented four distinct formulations of the mitzvah of *sippur*, that is that the mitzvah itself appears four times (much as the mitzvah of *tefillin*, for example). The commandment of *sippur* per se appears only in conjunction with one son: the *she'eno yoda'ia lish'ol*. The context of each of the other three formulations clearly relates to other circumstances and is not specific to the night of Pesach. The *ben Hechacham's* context (*Dvarim* 6:20) is anytime in the future. Nowhere in this parsha does the night of Pesach appear to be

singled out. The context of the *tam* is *peter chamor* and *pidyon bechor*. Even the *ben harasha's* context is not *achilas hapesach* at night but *hakravas korban pesach*, which is erev Pesach.

In the end, it seems to be a *machlokes* between the *Targum Yonasan* and the *Tanchuma* (end of parshas Bo). On the words (of the *tam*) "*ma zos,*" the *Tanchuma* says: *mitzvas Pesach*, and the *Targum Yonasan* says: *mitzvas bechor*. According to the *Targum Yonasan*, therefore, we must explain that it is enough that we find that the conveying of the theme of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, albeit found in contexts other than *mitzvas sippur*, has four formulations which are different one from the other, and *vehigad'ta* is only one of them.

Were there not these other possibilities we would not question why the words *ba'avur zeh* etc., form the text of *mitzvas haggadah* on the night of Pesach. We would assume that this is all there is to say. Now, however, that we find these other formulations, we must ask why *davka* the rather limited *ba'avur zeh* etc., is the way to fulfill *mitzvas sippur*. The answer, it is concluded, is that the words *v'higad'ta l'vincha* indicates the level of the son (he cannot even ask a question) and thus the limited, bare bones response of *ba'avur zeh*. In other words, we must tailor the story to the level of our listener.

There is yet one question to ask. If, as has been suggested above based on *Targum Yonasan*, the only instance of actual *mitzvas sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* is *v'higad'ta*, how do we know altogether that the mitzvah is *derech she'ilah ut'shuvah*? In *v'higad'ta* there is no *she'ilah*. He is, after all, *eino yode'a lish'ol*.

It would seem, therefore, that *she'ilah ut'shuvah* is not derived from any of these *pesukim* but is an inherent notion to *sippur* itself. This is what *sippur* is.

In fact, in the matter of *she'ilah ut'shuvah* there seem to be "two *dinim*." One "*din*" is that *she'ilah* is a part

of the very text of the *sippur* itself. That is why we must ask even when we are alone. And that is why the *koreh haHaggadah*, according to the Rambam, repeats the *mah nishtanah*, even though the children have themselves already asked.

The other "*din*" is that the children must ask. To make them ask we attempt to arouse their curiosity through a variety of "gimmicks." We make them ask so that they are more "ready" to hear the answer. The interest of the listener actually changes the level of his receptivity and therefore of his comprehension. Both of these *dinim* seem to be inherent in *mitzvas sippur*. It is what makes *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* different than *z'chiras yetzias Mitzrayim*.

There is much "*chiddush*" in the formulation of the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* in the *pasuk* of *v'higad'ta*. This is all the more so if we follow the argument, outlined earlier, that in this *pasuk* lies the only formulation of the mitzvah itself. Let us first examine what level this child is on. We mentioned that we give out "candies" to encourage children to ask. If so, we seem to be dealing here with a child so young that even the candies do not make him ask. Even a "*mah zos*" he cannot ask! He must therefore be either very young or very limited. How essential must *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* be that we begin at such a tender age!

It is a *chiddush* already that we bother with such a young child altogether, instead of just waiting until he has reached some minimal level of maturity. But it is a much greater *chiddush* that our response to this very young or limited child includes a reference that places *yetzias Mitzrayim* squarely in the context of *asiyas hamitzvos*. Indeed, that is not the Rambam's formulation, as is evident from *Hilchos Chometz*, perek 7 *halachah* 2. Yet it seems to be the "*pshtat*" of the *pasuk*.

We must certainly wonder about the explanation the Torah offers the simple, young child, which is: *ba'avur zeh* etc. "For the sake of this," we declare to the young child, "Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim*." To what is the pronoun "*zeh*" ("this") referring? To *pesach*, *matzoh* and *morrer*. Rashi comments "*ba'avur zeh: she'akayem mitzvosav.*" I was taken out of *Mitzrayim* so that I will fulfill Hashem's will, that I will obey His commandments. This would seem to be a very sophisticated answer, beyond the comprehension of the child. Yet so fundamental is this link to *mitzvos*, so compelling is this unusual understanding of freedom, that we must begin relating it to our children at an age so young that they cannot even begin to ask questions.

Let us turn our attention to the wicked son, the *rasha*. The *pasuk* connected to the son who is called a *rasha* is “*V’hayah ki yomru aleichem bneichem mah ha’avodah hazos lachem.*” How we know that this refers to a *rasha* is a subject of much analysis. Some argue that it is known from the words *ki yomru*. If they are telling us, not asking us, there is no genuine inquiry. There is something contemptuous in the attitude of the son who is a “*ki yomru*”nik. Others say because he calls the seder (or the *korban Pesach*) an *avodah*, meaning, here, a burden. Still others say that this son says: *lachem*. And this seems to be the explanation of the *ba'al haHaggadah* himself for he says: *Ul’fi shehotzi es atzmo min haklal...* (The distinction between the *rasha’s* “*lachem*” and the *chacham’s* “*eschem*” is well documented.)

There are at least two other explanations as to why this *pasuk* must refer to the *rasha*. Every one of the other three instances mentions *yetzias Mitzrayim* in the “father’s” response: *b’tzeisi miMitzrayim* (the *she’eno yodea lishol*); *hotzionu Hashem miMitzrayim* (the *tam*); *vayotzi’enu Hashem... miMitzrayim* (the *chacham*). Here, in the Torah’s response, it speaks instead of the protection Hashem gave us at the moment of *makas b’choros*. There is no mention of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. This is because the Torah wishes to emphasize that Pesach is not a “festival of freedom” but rather a festival which celebrates Hashem’s choosing us as His people. We were set “free” even before we left Egypt, because it was the *mitzvah* of *korban pesach* that made us free. “*Avadai heim v’lo avadim lavadim.*” This very unique formulation of “*yetzias Mitzrayim*” is in response to the *rasha’s* insistence that being *avadim* to Hashem is hardly freedom. We respond by declaring that what is impossibly burdensome to the *rasha* is the very essence of freedom for us.

There is one other argument that the *pasuk* of *ki yomru aleichem bneichem* is referring to the *rasha*. It may very well be that the Torah does not ask us to answer the *rasha* at all. If we insist (in contrast to what was suggested before) that there cannot be any fulfillment of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* without mention of *yetzias Mitzrayim* (in the vein of: “*ikkar chaseir min hasefer*”), then the absence of such in the reaction to the *rasha* would indicate that we do not answer the *rasha* at all. And although the Haggadah declares: *kneged arba’ah banim*, etc., it does not necessarily mean that there are four formulations of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* but rather that there are four *pesukim*, three have the charge of a response and the fourth has the charge of deliberately not responding, which is how the Torah wishes to deal

with the *rasha’s* “question.” Thus, the absence of the mention of *yetzias Mitzrayim* indicates implicitly that we are dealing with a *rasha* who does not merit any response.

There is further corroboration to the thesis that we do not answer the *rasha*, in the fact that the *pasuk* says, “*v’amartem zevach pesach hu,*” etc. Notice that the *pasuk* does not say, “*v’amartem lahem!*” We find that in the other three instances we have the pronoun “to him”: With respect to the *chacham*: *v’amarta eilav* (to him); with respect to the *tam*: *v’amarta eilav* (to him); with respect to the *she’eno yode’a lishol*: *v’higad’ta l’vincha* (to your son). Thus the *pasuk* here is unique and again indicates that we are dealing with a different kind of son, in fact, with the *ben rasha*.

## The Torah wishes to emphasize that Pesach is not a “festival of freedom” but rather a festival which celebrates Hashem’s choosing us as His people.

This seemingly radical approach (that we do not respond to the *rasha* altogether) is indeed the approach of the Gaon of Vilna. According to the Gr”a zt”l, the text of the Haggadah implies that we never address the *rasha* directly. After stressing the *girsu* of the Haggadah which says: “*li v’lo lo, ilu haya sham lo hayah nigal,*” (using the third person pronoun), the Gr”a argues: Should not the second person pronoun “*lecha*” have been used? If the father is speaking to the *rasha* who sits at the seder table in front of us, should he not say: “If you were in Egypt you would not have been redeemed?” Should not the *rasha* been spoken to with the words: “*v’lo lecha... hayisa sham*” rather than “*v’lo lo... haya sham?*”

Furthermore, continues the Gra’s argument, are not these words that we quote to the *rasha* (from the *posuk*: *ba’avur zeh...*) the very words that we say to the youngest child who cannot even ask? Why do we use that same *pasuk* to instruct the *rasha* if it is not the *pasuk* addressed to the *rasha* in the Torah? We see, argues the Gaon, that the Haggadah wishes that we do not address the *rasha* at all. Indeed, by means of our oblique reference to the *rasha* we teach the little ones how to deal with the *rasha*. We instruct those who cannot yet even ask their own questions, that there is an ultimate truth which is absolute, which is Divine, which cannot and must not be challenged. We speak not to the *rasha*, but about him. We speak in the harshest of terms as we explain to the youngest children why such a *rasha* would not have made it out of Egypt.

Thus it may be that the only specific reference to *mitzvas sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* is the *pasuk* which we identify with the youngest child, who is simply not capable of raising any questions himself, and it is to him that we must impart two fundamental lessons that are surely closely intertwined. First, that *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* is a part of *avodas Hashem* and the fulfillment of *mitzvos haTorah*; and second, that those who would seek to define freedom in terms other than servitude to Hashem cannot merit *yetzias Mitzrayim* and would have perished in Egypt.

That we seek to impart these fundamentals to children so young show us how necessary it is to imprint them upon the child’s consciousness as the bedrock principles by which he must think and live his entire life.

There is a corollary that ought to be added here. The four sons are not numerically equal. Whereas each of the other three is referred to in the Torah in the singular (*bincha*), “*ki yomru aleichem bneichem*” (the *rasha*) is in the plural. (This was noticed already by *m’farshim*, see, e.g., *Kli Yakar* to Shmos 12, 26.) There will be times that the *ben harasha* will be in the plural. And still, when the Jews in Egypt heard the “*besores habanim*” (see Rashi) they bowed down in gratitude to Hashem. If there are *banim* there is a future, even if we cannot fathom how that future will take shape because the *banim* look and act the way they do. That is perhaps why, in anticipation of these *arba’ah banim*, and especially of *banim* in the plural who are saying *mah ha’avodah hazos lachem*, the Haftarah of Shabbos Hagadol confirms in a glorious flourish: “*v’heshiv lev avos al banim v’lev banim al avosam*”. It is then that these *banim* (in the plural) will return to Hashem. ■



## Beginning and Ending the Seder on Time

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

Fulfilling the mitzvos of Pesach night in their correct time is an integral part of the seder. The halachah dictates the earliest and latest times to perform these mitzvos. The mishnah in *Psachim* 99b specifies that one does not eat the matzah at the seder until dark. *Tosfos* presents two ways to understand this requirement. The first opinion of *Tosfos* maintains that the mishnah is highlighting a distinction between Pesach and other Shabbos and Yom Tov meals. The mitzvah of *tosefes Shabbos vYom Tov* which requires refraining from *melachah* before the actual onset of the halachic day enables one to fulfill the mitzvah of a Shabbos or Yom Tov meal at this time. In contrast, the Pesach meal cannot begin until it is actually dark. The second opinion of *Tosfos* is that Pesach is not unique in this respect, as any Shabbos or Yom Tov meal cannot begin until dark.

These two opinions of *Tosfos* reflect a fundamental question as to the nature of *tosefes Shabbos vYom Tov*. The first opinion maintains that *tosefes* transforms the time endowing it with *kedushas hayom*. Not only must one refrain from *melachah* during this time but one can fulfill the positive obligation of the Shabbos and Yom Tov meals. The second opinion of *tosefes* understands *tosefes* as merely a prohibition of *melachah* prior to the onset of *kedushas hayom*. This prohibition does not impact on the positive mitzvos that must be fulfilled at a time of *kedushas hayom*. Thus, the mitzvah of *seudas Shabbos vYom Tov* must wait until dark.

According to both opinions of *Tosfos*, matzah cannot be eaten until dark. *Tosfos* quotes the *pasuk* that requires *korban Pesach* to be eaten "at night" and matzah is compared to *korban Pesach*. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik explains that there is a basic difference between *seudas Shabbos vYom Tov* in contrast to matzah. *Kedushas Shabbos vYom Tov* obligates *seudah* whereas the night of the 15th of Nissan creates the requirement to eat matzah. Even if *tosefes yom tov*

has *kedushas yom tov* of Pesach this is insufficient to fulfill matzah. The daylight hours of the 15th day of Nissan are unacceptable for matzah, notwithstanding the *kedushas yom tov* present because they are not the night of the 15th of Nissan. Similarly the time of *tosefes yom tov* is not acceptable for matzah because it is not the night of the 15th.

The *poskim* extend the time frame of matzah to the other mitzvos of the seder. *Maggid* is linked to *korban Pesach*, matzah and marror, and thus can be fulfilled at a time one can fulfill matzah. One cannot even recite kiddush at the seder until dark. Two reasons are suggested for this. Kiddush is the first of the four cups of wine instituted by Chazal. All the mitzvos, both *d'oraisa* and *d'rabannan*, must be fulfilled at night. An additional reason is based on the requirement of *kiddush b'makom seudah*. Kiddush must be recited not only where the *seudah* will be, but it must be recited at a time one can eat the *seudah*. Since the time for matzah has not yet arrived, kiddush cannot be fulfilled either.

The latest time to fulfill matzah is a dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah in *Psachim* 120b. The initial dispute was concerning

*korban Pesach*. Based upon different *psukim*, Rabbi Akiva concluded that one can eat *korban Pesach* the entire night *m'deoraisa* whereas according to Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah, the *Korban Pesach* must be eaten before *chatzos*. This disagreement impacts on matzah because *korban Pesach* and matzah are compared to one another. *Tosfos* concludes that the halachah follows Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaryah, whereas the Rambam *paskens* like Rabbi Akiva. We treat this question as unresolved, and therefore insist that matzah must be eaten before *chatzos*. However, if one did not, matzah should still be eaten without reciting a brachah.

We eat matzah at *Motzi Matzah* and later for *afikoman*. The *Rosh's* opinion is that the mitzvah *d'eoraisa* of matzah is fulfilled at *Motzi Matzah*, but according to the *Rashbam* the mitzvah isn't fulfilled until *afikoman*. According to the *Rashbam* for sure one must eat the *afikoman* before *chatzos*. Even the *Rosh* would concede to this for a different reason. *Afikoman*, according to the *Rosh*, is to remember the *korban pesach* which was eaten at the end of the meal. Just as *korban pesach* had to be eaten by *chatzos*, so too, the *afikoman* must be completed by *chatzos*.

There is a dispute between the *rishonim* concerning the mitzvos performed after *afikoman*. The opinion of *Tosfos* is that we need not be so careful to complete the *Hallel* and the last two cups before *chatzos*. Apparently, since we view the deadline of *chatzos* as questionable, concerning mitzvos *d'rabannan* we can be lenient. Yet the *Ran* is strict even about these mitzvos. We try to follow the *Ran* when possible but one certainly must be careful about the *afikoman*.

May we merit to eat the *Korban Pesach* this year and properly fulfill all of the mitzvos associated with it as we celebrate the time of our redemption in *Yerushalayim*. ■

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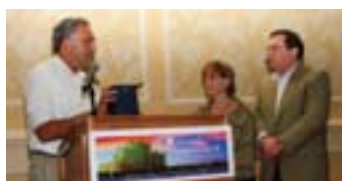
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Pairs young rabbis with senior colleagues for support, insight and a resource to discuss and work out personal and professional challenges. Beginning with a seminar to meet and prepare for successful mentorship, the program features frequent conversation between pairs, as well as regular visits over the course of the year.



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Rabbi Isaac Elchanan  
Theological Seminary

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# Musmakhim in the Limelight:

*Advocacy, Activism  
and Askanut*



*Vice President Henry Wallace (left) listens as  
Rabbi Eliezer Silver zt"l pleads for the Jews of  
Europe - Oct. 6, 1943*



*Rally for Soviet Jewry  
Los Angeles - October, 1969*



When Rabbi Boruch Sorotzkin zt"l passed away, Rav Chaim Kreisworth zt"l, the then chief rabbi of Antwerp, eulogized the late Telshe *rosh yeshiva* at the Bais Medrash Govohah in Lakewood. In introducing his *hesped*, he commented, "There are two kinds of *oskim b'tzorchei tzibur*. There are those who are needed by the *tzibur*, and then there are those who need the *tzibur*."

The book "Jewish Power" chronicles the maturation of the American Jewish community regarding its ability to influence the movers and shakers in Washington. Today we can turn to AIPAC as a powerful tool to help *Medinat Yisrael*. But before our community had organized leadership to help our parochial causes, our people have always found ways to try to better our condition by building bridges and relationships, making deals and taking principled stands.

Rabbi Avraham Weiss '68R, in his book "Spiritual Activism" describes the organized Jewish community as a symphony. There are times, he writes, when the delicate deliberations of a diplomat are needed, the *askan*. He compares this to the virtuoso violinist. There are times when civil disobedience and protesting are also required. This is the timpani section of the orchestra, the drummers. He views this as the role of the activist. Commenting on Rabbi Weiss' metaphor, Rabbi Michael Miller sees his role, the advocate, as the conductor of the symphony. "A conductor decides when the violinist and drummers play and when they do no not; when the audience needs to hear a sound and when it does not. Sometimes silence on the surface is more important than the din of activity. Below the surface, there could be a din that defies imagination."

Standing up for justice, integrity and *netzach Yisrael* are part of the *yashrut* with which the *Netziv* adorned the *Avot Hak'doshim* in his *hakdamah* to *Sefer Bereshit*. As we approach Pesach, we can certainly learn this lesson from the *m'yaldot*, who defied the orders of the Egyptian monarch to help build *klal Yisrael*. We have role models in the *nashim tzidkaniyot* who took upon themselves the burden to assure the continuity of *Bnei Yisrael* under Pharaoh's evil and backbreaking subjugation (Sota 11b). Moshe Rabbeinu himself was filled with this passion for his people and the notion of *netzach Yisrael*. When the Torah informs us that Moshe "went out to his brethren" (Shmot 2:11), the Ramban comments that Moshe had just been informed that he was a Jew. When he saw their suffering and hardship, he could no longer control his anguish at their fate and killed the Egyptian who was beating the poor Jew. He felt the pain of that Jew and couldn't help himself from acting.

This edition of CHAVRUSA has the privilege of learning about this aspect of *rabbanut* and *avodat hakodesh*. The three individuals whom we interviewed all have certain aspects of their lives in common: their work is fueled by what they all categorize as *mesirut nefesh* and *siyata dishmaya*. It also will become apparent that all three — *askanim*, advocates and activists — cannot exist in a vacuum. Each of these three vital servants of our community need the services of the others.

The three *musmakhim* featured are individuals whom, in the words of Rav Kreisworth, the *tzibur* desperately needs. Like Ramban's rendering of Moshe Rabbeinu's actions, these three people saw needs and found ways to help and save others. It was a privilege to meet them and hear their stories.

## ASKANUT — SERVING KLAL YISRAEL AND FEELING REB AHARON KOTLER'S PRESENCE

Rabbi Amos Bunim

Rabbi Amos Bunim is well known as the author of the biography of his late father Irving Bunim z"l, entitled "A Fire in His Soul". He still speaks emotionally about his father as he follows in his giant footsteps. "None of my father's family members can identify a source from where he inherited this passion; all they could say was that it was his unique *neshamah*. He was the only one in his family with that feeling. I have paved my path with *siyata dishmaya*; nothing else. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* helped me to be involved in different areas. Every one of these areas in which I was *zocheh* to serve was all due to *siyata dishmaya*."

While his father is one of his role models, he also considers Reb Aharon Kotler zt"l as a personal mentor as well. "I was a *talmid* of his in *shimush*," he notes. "He was the one who really, to a great extent, gave me a feeling for *shtadlanus* and for doing work for *klal Yisrael*. His love and feeling of *achrayus* for all of *klal Yisrael* in *Eretz Yisrael* was of great importance. He would always tell me that although he was opposed to the government of the State of Israel, he always warned me that when I go to Washington and speak with non-Jews, I do not have the right to ever speak

against Israel, because I have to understand that we're dealing with *klal Yisrael*."

"Reb Aharon arrived in the United States on April 23, 1941, via Kobe Japan and San Francisco. He said that he came to America for two reasons: to save as many European Jews as he could and two, to rebuild Torah in America which was destroyed in Europe. Reb Aharon called the Rav zt"l every Yom Kippur to wish him a *Gut Yohr*. The world does not know that and some try to hide it. *Reb Yoshe Ber* was not a *shtadlan*; he was a *m'lamed*. He was not directly involved with causes but he always encouraged people to do things. I wanted to go into the *rabbonus* and the Rav said to me, 'I don't want you to go to *rabbonus*; you have too much to offer to *klal Yisrael* and I don't want you serving in one particular place; that's not for you.' In learning I never had experiences like being in his shiur. He opened my mind tremendously. Dr. Belkin, a *talmid* of the Chofetz Chaim, always offered his services to me as well.

"The Chofetz Chaim also understood the notion of *shtadlanus*. Reb Aharon was asked a very interesting question from one of his *talmidim*: 'Rebbe, you are



building Lakewood. Everyone is coming out against you. There's so much opposition, how do you build in such a climate?' Reb Aharon responded with the following story. He was with the Chofetz Chaim when a tremendously difficult edict was passed in Poland that forbade yeshiva attendance. The government wanted to close all the yeshivos. That would have been the end of Torah in Poland. The Chofetz Chaim called a meeting of all the rabbonim in Poland and instructed them to approach the local ministers to beg them to change the edict. A week later the rabbis returned. All reported that the minis-

ters could not do anything since the prime minister was so powerful. They all feared him. Then the Chofetz Chaim said, 'Which of you are willing to go with me to the prime minister?' No one raised their hand. The Chofetz Chaim then said, 'Then I will go by myself.' The Chofetz Chaim was very old at the time and he asked Reb Aharon to escort him on one side and Reb Elchonon Wasserman *hy'd* on the other side, since he literally could not stand by himself. Reb Aharon reported that the three walked in to the prime minister's quarters and the Chofetz Chaim made an unbelievable presentation. The prime minister was very taken by the Chofetz Chaim and agreed to cancel the decree. When they departed, Reb Aaron turned to the Chofetz Chaim and said, 'Rebbe, all the ministers were afraid, all the rabbis were fearful. How did you have the guts to go in there?' The Chofetz Chaim said, 'HaKadosh Baruch Hu promised us, *lo yamush Torah mipichah umipi zaracha umipi zerah zaracha me'atah v'ad olam*. I walked in with the feeling that HaKadosh Baruch Hu was with me and I knew that I could not fail.' Reb Aaron then turned to his *talmidim* and said, 'Everything I do in life I understand that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is with me because of this *pasuk*, as difficult and challenging as it may be. No one can stop me because Hashem is with me.' He was fearless in everything that he did."

Rabbi Bunim shared one of his successful interventions on behalf of *klal Yisrael*. "I was involved with obtaining money for schools and hospitals abroad from the U.S. government via PL4 80 funds. While we were able to get some money for some religious schools in Israel, the Israeli government was very opposed to this venture. In January of 1967, a little after these tense negotiations, I received a call on a

Sunday morning from the then Israeli ambassador to the United States, Avraham Hartman. He told me that I needed to come to Washington immediately, as it was a situation of life or death. I was very frightened and boarded the next flight to D.C. I came to his office on a freezing cold day and he admitted that he did not know how I felt toward him given the fact that the Israeli government tried to thwart my work with the schools and hospitals. I told him 'We can have all kinds of differences, but I was taught that when it comes to *klal Yisrael*, my heart is with you fully.' I heard Reb Aharon's words ringing in my head.

"Ambassador Hartman told me that while he could not share details with me, Israel needed to buy the new Phantom Jets and the new tanks from the U.S. The three most prestigious people who had the greatest clout with President Johnson struck out trying to convince him of the need. Ambassador Hartman told me that if Israel cannot get them, all of Israel is in jeopardy. He told me that I was his last chance since I was very close with Senator George Smathers of Florida, who was a true confidante and best friend to President Johnson. He wanted me to approach him first thing the next morning.

"I came to Smathers the next morning. He saw me and said, 'Amos, something is wrong. You have never seen me without an appointment.' I said, 'Remember a few years ago you gave me your private home phone number in case I needed something at 3 a.m.? Although it's 9:00 a.m., it's 3 a.m. to me.' I then told him the whole story. He told me, 'just like you came to me without an appointment, I'll go to Johnson without an appointment. Sit in my office.' An hour later he returned and said, 'we struck out. Johnson

told me that Russia is watching everything the U.S. is doing in the Middle East. If we send arms into the Middle East, Russia could escalate and create a war. Therefore he won't do it.' I realized that this was a moment in history of '*mi yichyeh umi yamus*.' I started to cry uncontrollable, like a baby. Smathers said, 'I've never seen you like this. You're going to get sick.' I told him, 'During the War, 6 million died and no one was able to help. Now when 3.5 million Jews in the state of Israel will perish because of these excuses, how do you think I should feel?' Smathers said, 'Can you make a deal with the president on behalf of the State of Israel?' I couldn't tell him that I would have to check with Harman, so I answered '100 percent.' *Ma she'avad'ti avad'ti*. He told me, 'remember that you told me that. If you promise me that you will go outside and take a walk and control yourself, I have an idea; I'll go back to the president and try to make a deal.' I came back in an hour and he said, 'we have a deal. I told Johnson to send the arms to Germany and then the Germans will ship them to Israel. Are you OK with that?' I told him '100 percent.' I went back to Harman and he kissed and hugged me and told me 'you don't know what you did here!' It was those jets and tanks that were used on the front lines in the '67 war. To me this story was the biggest *hashgacha* I could have ever had. Reb Aharon was really and truly behind me during those meetings. *I mamesh* felt his presence. He pounded into my head what *klal Yisrael* means! He indoctrinated all of his students with this feeling of *klal Yisrael*, just as he indoctrinated me.

"My own feeling is that you do not see the *mesirus nefesh* today that we saw in those days. They were different times of course with different responsibilities, but basically the younger people today are involved in their own communities, not in the totality of *klal Yisrael*. There are very few people that are involved in the totality of *klal Yisrael*. You look today at Chinuch Atzmai; how many people feel an *achrayus* for this organization which services 80,000 children? There is something missing and lacking in the feeling of *achrayus* today. I feel very strongly about this and it bothers me very much. Local problems are so significant and weighty; people exert all of their efforts locally and don't have time for the issues related to the totality of *klal Yisrael*. It's a question of more *mosdos* and *aniyei ircha kodmin*. The casualties of this are the *mosdos* dealing with a more general Jewish population. There needs to be an orientation in the yeshivas about *klal Yisrael*. This must be done.

"The young men in the *semikhah* program thinking about *askanus* have to understand that they are undertaking a life of *mesirus nefesh*. You can't say, 'I



(L-R) Rabbi Amos Bunim, Mr. Irving Bunim z"l, and Rabbi Aharon Kotler zt"l

am going to try and I hope it will succeed, it may happen, it may not.' If you are not prepared to go in 100 percent with *mesirus nefesh*, then you will not succeed. You must enter the field knowing that my life will be to build Torah, whether it is in *chinuch*, in *rabbonus* or trying to be a *baal habus*. If you don't have it, you will never succeed. The only

way that you can teach *mesirus nefesh* is to demonstrate it and live it. I saw that *mesirus nefesh* from Reb Aharon. *Eino domeh shmia'a l're'iyah*. '*Shimusha gadol milimude'ha*.' That's what it means." ■

*Rabbi Amos Bunim '52R graduated magna cum laude from Yeshiva College, receiving awards in Talmud, ethics, political science, Latin and service. On June 1, 1954, he was the youngest clergyman to open*

*the 83rd Congress. He was associate chairman of the board of Torah Umesorah (National Society for Hebrew Day Schools) from 1956 to 1982, and chairman of the board of Torah Academy for Girls (TAG), Far Rockaway, N.Y. from 1963 to 1982. From 1965 to 1985, he was president of the Kennedy Foundation in Israel, and since 1972, has been national chairman of the Sh'or Yeshuv Institute, Far Rockaway, N.Y. At present, he is national co-chairman of Chinuch ATzmai; chairman of the Board of Governors of Beth Medrash Govoha, Lakewood, N.J.; and president of Garden Fabrics Corporation.*

## ADVOCACY — CONDUCTING THE BUSINESS OF NETZACH YISRAEL

**Rabbi Michael Miller**

"The central figures in my life were my parents. Clearly my father, Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller '41R z"l, in so many ways, was a role model in my professional career, and both my parents in my personal life. My father's role in Jewish life is well known and documented. At home, he was very much a father. At a certain stage in my life I wanted to be a Jewish professional and I wasn't certain how to go about making the transition from student to Jewish organizational pro. When I asked the question at YU, they told me, 'You're a Miller; you should get *semikhah*!' I don't think that was the wrong path; I had the *zechus* of learning with the Rav, and those years steeped in *limud Torah*, prepared me in great part for a role that I would play down the road in the military chaplaincy and pulpit. Being able to draw from *Chazal* also helped me reach my goals in the community at large. Torah relates to any situation.

"While my father is the central figure of influence in my professional life, I have also learned a lot from Malcolm Hoenlein, who was my boss and mentor and whom I succeeded here at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY).

I consider what I do here as *avodas hakodesh*, not in the classical sense, but in the universal sense. I'm a RIETS *musmakh* heading up a secular organization. I use my rabbinic title only when it's appropriate; when I'm meeting with clergy of other faiths dealing with community relations issues, or if I'm traveling, a clerical title evokes more respect. Otherwise I do not use it, because I don't want people to start guessing where I received my ordination. I work for *klal Yisrael*. In the *hesped* I delivered for my father, I mentioned that 'Dad used to speak to us about Jewish destiny, *netzach Yisrael lo yishaker*.' The Rav z"l would speak of how the past, present and future embody the continuum of Jewish life. I speak to my staff all the time about our commitment to perpetuating the destiny of the Jewish people. One of the reasons my father was so beloved, a term people use to describe

him all the time, was because he was an embracing rabbi. He felt comfortable both with the Orthodox community — or whatever term is being used today — and outside of it.

My charge to anyone entering this field is that if you do not feel challenged, you are not doing enough. I think that the Jewish professional's job is never done. Just look at the needs in the community. With the advent of the Internet, there is no sleeping time; the world is constantly awake on your computer screen. The challenges that we face are constant. My charge/admonition to those who want to enter this field is not merely 'be prepared to work very hard,' but rather 'be committed and dedicated' to working very hard. '*Hafoch ba v'hafoch ba d'kula ba*' not just in the framework of Torah, but also in the framework of *klal Yisrael*; delving deeply into every concern and every issue. We can't solve them all but we can't desist from finding others who can address that which we aren't able to accomplish. On a personal note, the longer I do this work, the more daunted I am by how much there is to be done. I share this challenge with the first-year RIETS *semikhah* students when I speak to them. When I interview potential employees, I tell them that I'm looking for a level of dedication and commitment at the JCRC beyond the standard, regardless if we are hiring an administrative assistant or a senior professional. We are not in this field to make money. We are here to advance the interests of *klal Yisrael*. On a recent Sunday morning when we ran a large pro-Israel rally in 25-degree weather, no one on my staff complained about the bitter cold. They and our devoted lay-leadership understand the role that we are playing is *avodas hakodesh* as they define it. If we can change one person's orientation or impression about Israel as a result of a rally, or communicate to our friends in the political arena, or our partners in the ethnic/religious communities, let alone our enemies, that we stand in solidarity with Israel during these difficult times, we will have achieved something. The level of identification with those goals is



Rabbi Michael Miller with his late father, Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller, z"l

what this agency is all about and what I am focused on accomplishing. It truly is *mesirus nefesh*. It is a link which is *nafshi* which indeed emanates from the soul, as my father would say.

"When I assumed the professional helm of this organization in 1986, I was informed that there were *kavod hameis* issues in local cemeteries that held themselves out as Jewish. We successfully put an end to those problems, and proceeded to enter into negotiations over a period of nine years, during which time not one word appeared in the media about this. That's my style. If the Jewish community is a symphony, I see myself more as the conductor. The conductor decides when the violinist and drummer play, and when they don't; when the audience needs to hear a sound and when they don't. Sometimes silence on the surface is more important than the din of activity below the surface, where there could be a clamor that defies imagination. Nine years of keeping the cemetery issues out of the headlines helped us arrive at a written agreement with the cemetery owners. Mutual respect, for the living and the dead, was achieved through that process."

CHAVRUSA contacted Matthew J. Maryles, immediate past president of the JCRC-NY and a member of the Yeshiva University board of trustees, who offered the following observation: "A great conductor senses and hears the initial dissonance, but leads the orchestra to perfect harmony. Michael always seeks the common ground, whether among Jews of diverse backgrounds and interests, or with the other religious



Rabbi Miller speaks at a press conference in Ashkelon flanked by (L-R) Representative Gary Ackerman (Queens, N.Y.) and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

groups and secular organizations with which we share space. He is a beacon of light in seeking compromise and commonality in a world which is becoming more polarized and insular.”

“On September 20, 2001” Rabbi Miller related, “nine days after the World Trade Center tragedy, we gathered in the JCRC conference room with a highly regarded *chareidi* scientist who worked with the Israeli police on victim identification. Around the table were representatives of the RCA, Agudath Israel, and representatives from the Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements. We had two goals in mind with regard to the September 11 victims: to release the *agunos* so they could remarry, and to ease the minds of the families of the victims. They agreed on a plan that would jointly compile facts about the last hours and moments of the presumed deceased,

and then independently rule on those cases in their constituencies. As a result of their deliberations, an Orthodox Jewish detective from the NYPD was appointed to coordinate activities with the authorities. I continued to be overwhelmed by the scope of our work on behalf of *klal Yisrael* in life and in death.

“When I studied at YC, I was a *talmid* in Rav Aharon Lichtenstein Shlita’s shiur for two years. I still remember a demonstration that we held on campus. It was not for Israel or Soviet Jewry; it was in regard to starvation in Biafra. The speaker was none other than Rav Aharon. I remember lectures given in Furst Hall by Rav Aharon and others on the Vietnam War. There was a true air of activism. We associated ourselves with causes. Freedom for Soviet Jewry was a major movement brought to fruition so many years later. It appeared to me that after I and my contem-

poraries left campus, the students became more interested in academic achievement and less identified with causes. It’s not easy to get the car running after it has been idle for a lengthy period of time. Being a professional in that environment is very difficult. I’ve seen that change and I’ve witnessed the New York Jewish community alter dramatically. In the 1950’s when I was a child, there were 2 million Jews out of 6 million New Yorkers. Today there are less than 1 million Jews out of more than 8 million New Yorkers. Today there are 180 different ethnic communities in the New York metropolitan area. Neighborhoods that thrived with Jewish life no longer do. The neighborhood of my childhood up in the Bronx is essentially devoid of Jews. It’s a physical change, a change in orientation. The international situation on the ground has changed in Israel during my tenure here, with Oslo, post Oslo, the two Intifadas, the two Lebanon Wars, the current battle in Gaza, and on the local scene, we had September 11, the battle against global terrorism, the rise of anti-Semitism, and more. We have to vigilantly monitor the changes and adapt to them to ensure that the Jewish community is secure and vibrant. We need to be attentive to every nuance of change that we are encountering. ■

*Rabbi Michael S. Miller ’75R has served as the executive vice president and CEO of the JCRC since 1986. During his tenure, the JCRC has become widely recognized as the go-to strategic bridge builder, as it strengthens relations internal to the Jewish community and with the broad array of local ethnic, racial and religious groups. He began his career in 1976 as a U.S. Army Chaplain in Fort Knox, KY and was awarded the coveted Army Commendation Medal. He then accepted an appointment as spiritual leader of a congregation in Springfield, MA, where he played an active role in Jewish communal affairs. His training and experience served him well when, years later, he volunteered after the September 11th disaster and was certified as an American Red Cross Chaplain, working in the area of Ground Zero, and, subsequently, in the aftermath of the American Airlines flight #587 crash in Queens. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 1997 Martin Luther King, Jr. “Living the Dream” Award presented by then Governor George E. Pataki.*

## ACTIVISM – INSPIRING THE STRUGGLE AND ADVOCATING FOR THE HELPLESS

**Rabbi Charles Sheer**

“The genesis of my involvement with the cause of Soviet Jewry was an accident of persona. Jacob (Yaakov) Birnbaum, a German-born English citizen, came to America and lived near YU. He was director of the Manchester Jewish Community Council and began promoting the cause of Soviet Jewry. Yaakov met Rabbis Yitz Greenberg and Shlomo Riskin ’63R in Israel, who were captured by his message of activism and action. Yaakov came to

New York and literally knocked on dormitory doors to recruit volunteers and activists. This tall, strapping man came up to YU and spoke about the plight of Soviet Jewry. He is generally considered to be the founder of the Soviet Jewry protest movement, at least on the grassroots level. He felt that the established ‘adult’ Jewish organizations would not conduct and lead protests. The political thinkers in the American Jewish community were not convinced



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or committed to mimicking what happened in the African American community, i.e. public protest as a venue to social change. Mr. Birnbaum, who was about 15 years older than most of us, was *maschia* on all of us. I was captured by his passion and charisma. What he had to say made sense. I believed in the notion of public discourse to change society, both on principle, and given the recent success of the black community to accomplish its goals.

“Somehow I became the chairman of the Soviet Jewry committee, a student club at YU, which preceded the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ). At the end of 1964, the Yeshiva College Student Council investigated joining forces with SSSJ after reports emerged of synagogue and cemetery closings and shortages of religious items in the USSR. The first meeting of SSSJ convened in Philosophy Hall at Columbia on April 27, 1964 where a rally was planned for May Day, just four days away. I remember going to the old Stern dorm where we used stencils to paint words such as ‘Let My People Go’ on oak-tag placards. Over a thousand protesters joined the cause on May 1 outside the Soviet Mission. SSSJ eventually supported branches at Brooklyn College, Queens College, Columbia and of course at Stern College for Women. Yaakov had a knack for attracting talent. Malcolm Hoenlein was then a 19-year-old graduate student in Philadelphia, who brought the struggle to the City of Brotherly Love. Rabbi Joseph Telushkin ’73R joined a few years later and was the co-president of the YU SSSJ chapter in ’67 and ’68. Other household names in the Jewish community became active such as Dennis Prager, Yossi Klein Halevi and Rabbi Avi Weiss ’68R. For the famous ‘Jericho March’ in 1965 — so named because the protestors circled the Soviet Mission with *shofarot* — Birnbaum urged Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach z”l to write *Am Yisrael Chai*, which became the musical anthem to our cause.

We knew that luminaries such as the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the Skulener Rebbe opposed protesting and embarrassing the Soviet government. They felt that *shum* (noise in Russian) would be counter-productive. At that time we became aware of the now famous letter from the 18 observant (Soviet) Georgian families urging us to engage in *shum*. They pledged to emigrate to Israel even if they needed to walk. No non-student organizations supported protesting.

“At that time, I was an undergraduate in Rav Gorelick zt”l’s *shiur*. I didn’t go to speak to the Rav; one of the more senior students went to seek the Rav’s opinion on the matter. The Rav said, ‘What did [Professor Moshe] Decter say? This is a question



for a political scientist, not for me to *pasken*.’ Decter promoted activism. The question of diplomacy versus activism raged for years. After receiving *semikhah*, I remember debating Rabbi Shalom Kowalski z”l, the prominent rabbi of the Young Israel of Hillcrest, at an RCA convention. Rabbi Kowalski, a dean of the American rabbinate, was opposed to our activism. I felt that I held my own, despite my anxiety over debating such a powerful and iconic figure.

YU was very supportive of the Soviet Jewry committee and SSSJ. Yeshiva really provided the context for the SSSJ to become an organization. The Jewish adult community came into the protest movement kicking and screaming; but they did ultimately come. I was then on the board of the Greater New York Conference of Soviet Jewry and the SSSJ representative to the National Conference of Soviet Jewry. Rabbi Dr. Israel Miller z”l and *yibadel l’chaim* Rabbi Hershel Schacter ’41R, headed the American Committee of Soviet Jewry. Rabbi Haskel Lookstein ’58R became a major player in the New York Conference, and Kehilath Jeshurun became heavily involved as a result.

“Most of the rabbinic leadership in the movement came from YU. Rav Aaron Lichtenstein was very supportive. He never opposed or critiqued the very infrequent demonstrations during *sefer*. There were rabbis from other denominations involved, but the dominant role from the outset and throughout the movement were YU *musmakhim*. This is to YU’s credit. One can state, that, in various ways, the early Soviet Jewry movement primed the Jewish community for its public and political responses to the ’67 war.

When my professional career brought me to Columbia, I invited Columbia provost Dr. William DeBary to place a phone call to a Moscow refuse-

nik named Vitali Rubin. They were both experts in Confucius, and DeBary was fully supportive of helping Rubin in his effort to emigrate. DeBary invited Rubin to teach at Columbia. At one point we heard that Vitali was in the hospital. He had suffered a mild heart attack, due to the brutality of the KGB. Glenn Richter, the long-time national coordinator of SSSJ, obtained the phone number at Vitali’s hospital bed. I passed it along to Provost DeBary who called him in the hospital. To our surprise, the call got through to Rubin. I transcribed the conversation and sent it to the New York Times. It appeared in the next day’s paper, providing ‘*protek-sia*’ for Rubin. The Soviets realized that the world was watching this effort on behalf of Rubin.

“In terms of my recent work at HealthCare chaplaincy, I endeavour to play an activist role, but in a different fashion. People think the role of the rabbi is *shev v’al taaseh* — *shiur, psak, drasha*. I recently spoke to RIETS *semikhah* students along with my HealthCare chaplaincy colleague Rabbi David Keehn ’94R. Rabbi Keehn said to the guys that, ‘when you look back at your career, the things that people will remember will be your compassionate presence with them in the hospital or at a loss, not your brilliant *drashot* and moving *shiurim*.’

“What I learned from my experience with SSSJ is the importance of being an advocate. I attempted to serve as an advocate during my years at Columbia. What does advocate mean? My work at Columbia Hillel expresses it. My work now is to learn how to become an advocate for the patient to the medical community. Two weeks ago, I visited a patient in a hospital who did not understand the diagnosis he was given. I asked the patient if he would like me to speak to the medical staff so he could understand what his treatment protocol was, etc. A rabbi can serve his *baal-habus-patient*’ as a *meturgeman* to ask if they are satisfied with the care they are receiving

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in the hospital, and to help resolve problems patients might be having understanding their care. This too is advocacy.

“In September of 2003, Natan Sharansky visited Columbia. I realized that my students only knew him as an Israeli politician, not the man who ‘feared no evil’ while spending years in a solitary prison cell in the USSR. In his address to our Columbia students, he brought a strong message about activism, and the important role it can play for individuals and as a broader political tool. He told them that his jailers in the gulag would taunt

him and challenge him. ‘Who is arguing for your release? Only students and housewives?’ Sharansky then said to his audience, ‘That’s why I have come to the U.S. I want to tell the students and housewives that your activism saved my life.’ ■

*Rabbi Charles Sheer '67R is the Director of the Department of Studies in Jewish Pastoral Care at HealthCare Chaplaincy, a position he has held since 2007. Rabbi Sheer is responsible to develop educational programs for students at the Chaplaincy from the Jewish community and beyond. Prior to that time he served as Jewish chaplain at Columbia University for 34 years. Under his leadership, Columbia/Barnard Hillel became one of the largest and most active Hillels in the country, with over 55 student groups and projects. He oversaw a \$13 million capital campaign and the creation of the*

*six-story Robert K. Kraft Center for Jewish Student Life, dedicated in 2000.*

*He served as professor of Jewish studies (adjunct) at CCNY, and was honored by Yeshiva College with the Revel Memorial Award (1994) for outstanding leadership in religion and religious education, and by Columbia (1989) for his service to the university.*

*Rabbi Sheer was ordained at Yeshiva University in 1967 and was a Kollel Fellow for advanced Talmud study for three years. He received his master's degree in Talmudic literature from the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies at YU, and was awarded a Gottesman Fellowship for three years during his graduate studies. After his ordination he served as associate rabbi at the Riverdale Jewish Center. During those years he was a fellow at Yeshiva University in a research program headed by Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein.*

## Klei Kodesh and the Capitol

By Rabbi Dr. Barry Freundel

In the introduction to my book, “Contemporary Orthodox Judaism’s Response to Modernity”, I tell the story of how the phrase “family values” became part of American political vocabulary. Very briefly, I gave a drasha using that term on a Shabbat morning when then Vice President Dan Quayle’s chief speechwriter (a member of my congregation at that time) was in attendance. She borrowed the phrase for a big speech he was about to give — and the rest, as they say, is history.

This story, which might have happened to any pulpit rabbi, happened to me, because of the three Ls of rabbinical influence—location, location, location. When you serve a congregation in downtown Washington, D.C., located approximately a half mile from the White House, opportunities like this are naturally more frequent than if one serves almost anywhere else.

In 20 years as the rabbi of Kesher Israel, the Georgetown Synagogue, I have enjoyed many unique opportunities. Some are smaller events. For example, arranging to have some fishing wires strung on a national monument so that we could complete our community’s *eruv*, or arranging to have the elder George Bush include a quote from the *Hatam Sofer* in the document he signed that allowed us to build that same *eruv*.

On the other hand, some are more significant. The policy of “Don’t ask, don’t tell” in regard to “gays in the military” was developed from my article “Homosexuality and Halakha” that appeared in the “Journal of Halakha and Contemporary Society” and that was read by the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

So too Hilary Clinton read my article on “Health Care and *Tikkun Olam*” as she began her (unsuc-

cessful) attempt to change the health care system in this country. Similarly, I have been asked by various government officials to offer a Jewish perspective on many public policy issues, both in public classes and lectures, and in individual dialogue. In that regard, I testified for Congress on “cloning from a Jewish perspective,” and was a proud member of the theological commission of the Human Genome Project. This commission examined the religious implications of mapping the human genome from different faith perspectives.

The Joe Lieberman phenomenon deserves special mention here. Many Jews were afraid of his being elected — but my experiences gave me a different view. Talking to reporters from everywhere and experiencing the reaction of people from all parts of America to his candidacy was heartening. There was no anti-Semitism that I saw except from the lunatic fringe that is always out there. Everyone else saw this as an extremely positive sign for Jews in this country. My father, (ob’m), who came from Germany in 1933, always believed that no Jew would ever be allowed to run for president or vice president in America. He would have cried tears of joy to see it actually happen.

Over the years, Senator Lieberman has asked me many important questions concerning how he, an Orthodox Jew, can function as a U.S. Senator. While I cannot share any of them, I can say that I have learned a lot from these questions about how things work in Washington.

His questions have found their parallel in many *she’eilot* asked by members of my congregation who work in remarkably sensitive governmental positions. Again the questions are confidential — but they have broadened my horizons and my knowl-



edge in ways I never anticipated when I came here.

Finally, I will mention one thing I and many of my colleagues in D.C. did not do. On the Yom Kippur after the Lewinsky scandal the Clinton team contacted a number of D.C. area synagogues asking if the president could come for services on the Day of Atonement. Happily, from my perspective, every one of these institutions, regardless of their denominational affiliation, refused to turn services on the holiest day of the year into the media circus that would have occurred if he had attended.

In short, the life of a rabbi in downtown Washington, D.C. is always interesting — both for the opportunities it provides — and for the experiences that you need to avoid. ■

*Rabbi Dr. Barry Freundel '75R serves as the rabbi of Kesher Israel, the Georgetown Synagogue, in Washington, D.C., and as assistant professor of rabbinics at Baltimore Hebrew University. He has taught seminars on government ethics on Capitol Hill and on medical ethics at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and served on the Theological Commission of the Human Genome Project. He is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law School, the University of Maryland at College Park and George Washington University. He is author of “Contemporary Orthodox Judaism’s Response to Modernity” as well as many scholarly articles and other publications. Rabbi Dr. Freundel holds a master’s degree from the Bernard Revel Graduate School and his Ph.D. from Baltimore Hebrew University.*



## Religious Leadership, Political Leadership and Halachah

Rabbi Michael J. Broyde

*Rabbi Broyde is the founding rabbi of the Young Israel of Toco Hills in Atlanta, a law professor at Emory University, and a dayan and chaver in the Beth Din of America.*



Not since pre-Talmudic times, when the Jewish people were more or less sovereign in their land has the norm been that religious and political leadership was one and the same. From the Talmudic era and onward, where the Jewish people have both lived alongside and under the governance of non-Jews,<sup>1</sup> the norm has been that rabbis have not served as political representatives of the Jewish people in secular government. From the perspective of Jewish law, this construct is not ideal both for the complexities it creates and the opportunities it neglects.<sup>2</sup> In fact, there were many periods of Jewish history where rabbanim were community leaders both religiously and politically. Rabban Gamliel in the time of the Mishna is an example, the *Roshi* and his son, the *Zichron Yehuda*, were such leaders in the golden age of Spain, and (as the Rav famously observed in his *hesped*) Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Lithuania was another.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, anyone who has glanced at the responses of the *Zichron Yehuda* sees that he is answering questions that no rabbi in America receives, and is giving answers that no contemporary rabbi can even imagine providing. Consider, for example, the problem presented in *Zichron Yehuda* 79, which contemplates how to appropriately punish a person who has assaulted a *dayan* of a rabbinical court in Spain. Rav Yehuda ben HaRosh first explains the halachic justification for the expanded jurisdiction of the *batai din* in Spain and the need to keep law and order within the Jewish community (since without such, the non-Jewish government will keep law and order independent of the will of the rabbis), and then the *Zichron Yehuda* authorizes the amputation of the assailant's hand(s)<sup>4</sup> as his punishment for the assault.

Even as authority of this type generally disappeared from the Jewish community by the end of

the medieval period, the basic idea and ideal that it would be better if temporal authority resided in rabbinically trained hands remained present. As the Rav zt"l observed with regard to the *kohein gadol* (whom he compared Rav Chaim Ozer to), just as he wore both the *Choshen* (which provided guidance on religious matters) and the *Urim* and *Tumim* (the gems which would light up to provide guidance on political and criminal matters), so too modern rabbis should seek both political and temporal authority.

Indeed, it is important to remember that halachah grants those rabbinic leaders who seek temporal authority greater leeway and license with regard to matters of halachah, in order to allow them to effectively interact with the secular world around them and thus be able to successfully fill their post. For example, *Tosaphot* notes that while Jews were generally forbidden to learn Greek in Talmudic times, the household of Rabban Gamliel was permitted to learn Greek as such was absolutely needed for communal leadership.<sup>5</sup>

Even more significantly, Rambam rules that a Jew who is involved with the secular government and interacts with its leadership, and who would be ineffective if dressed as a Jew, is allowed to violate the Torah prohibition of "following idolatrous (or gentile) practices," and dress in a manner that would otherwise constitute a violation of Torah law in order to be effective.<sup>6</sup> This halachah is also quoted in the *Shulchan Aruch* and is accepted as the standard recitation of the normative halachah.<sup>7</sup>

But the question is obvious: Why is a person allowed to violate a direct Torah prohibition in order to remain in a position of temporal authority? Maybe if the only way to allow temporal authority to be placed in rabbinic hands is if we allow them to violate halachah, then we ought to forsake any such authority altogether. Indeed, there have been those

voices within the Jewish and halachic tradition who maintain this exact position.<sup>8</sup> This question is posed by *Bet Yosef* directly, whereby he observes:

*Let me ask: Since according to Torah law this conduct is prohibited, and even lashes are given for its violation, where did the Rabbis find the authority to permit a Torah prohibition to those who are close to government? I answer: For the sake of saving the Jewish people, one can permit the violation when there are Jews in government standing in the breach....<sup>9</sup>*

Indeed, the three primary commentaries on the *Tur* give different explanations of this halachah. The *Bet Yosef* notes (as is mentioned above) that all violations are permitted since this conduct allows for Jewish lives to be saved in the long term. The *Bach* notes that only violations of *bechukotayhim* are permitted since halachah really only prohibits imitating gentile practice when one genuinely wants to be a gentile — which it is clear that this Jew does not.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, the *Drisha* notes that since the prohibition to imitate gentiles (as well as perhaps other prohibitions) were given over to the rabbis to establish the parameters) then these parameters exclude those who are governing for the benefit of the Jewish people.<sup>11</sup>

*Shulchan Aruch* quotes this halachah simply: "One who is close to government and needs to dress in their clothes and imitate them, all is permitted."<sup>12</sup> The *Levush* limits this authority by insisting that this right is limited to cases where the violation is not explicitly defined in the Torah, a comment that is echoed in the notes of the *Taz*, which would exclude (for example) eating not-kosher food in such cases.<sup>13</sup>

It is thus extremely important to understand what this notion of "one who is involved in government" establishes as a matter of halachah. Of course, a person may violate almost any dictate of Jewish law to save those in imminent danger; this is an obvious principle of halachah.<sup>14</sup> But halachah also recognizes that long-term involvement in certain types of politics and policies in certain cases allows a person to be close to the levers of power in a time of need — and if one is not close all the time, one cannot get close when an urgent need arises. Thus a Jew may join the government service and wear gentile clothes every day — day in and day out for decades, violating a Torah prohibition! — so that, when the day comes that he can save God's chosen people by doing the right thing, he is in the right place at the right time and wearing the right clothes.<sup>15</sup>

That rationale, I am sure, explains why many a chief rabbi has attended events in churches and why Rav

Shar Yashuv Cohen was sent to the funeral of the pope (which is a Catholic mass). History is full of similar examples, some of which are heart rendering examples of Jewish suffering.<sup>16</sup>

Most *musmakhim* of our yeshiva chose not to head down the path of this form of public service and leadership and indeed, the Orthodox community generally has only rarely seen its community members in this role in America (with some famous, but rare, exceptions). But, I think, we all need to recognize that besides the authentic Torah-based religious leadership all rabbis are called up to provide, Judaism ideally wants its *kohanim* (as the Rav calls rabbis) to be temporal political leaders as well, when they can. Certainly, we occasionally encounter members of our community, and even sometimes *musmakhim* within our yeshiva, who rise to the challenge of providing temporal leadership to our community molded through the prism of Torah and halachah. But yet, when we look closely at them, we sometimes find their conduct grates on us and appears foreign: these “court Jews” are metaphorically wearing “gentile garments” and sometimes even violating other *issurim* whose parameters were given over to the Rabbis, even if they look like Torah prohibitions.<sup>17</sup> They become tempting targets to scorn for those of us who crave religious role models who are purely *kodesh* and living only in the religious world without any temporal *tumah*.

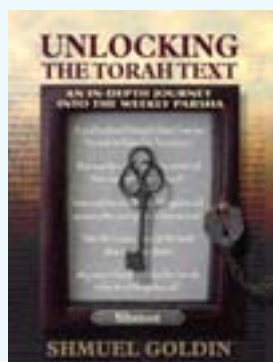
But I think this is mistaken, and these individuals should be admired, recognizing the fact that halachah sometimes allows people who represent the Jewish people in the secular world to appear to us as not fully compliant with halachah. We certainly ought to be thoughtful in our criticism, for if we criticize such Orthodox Jews, maybe they will not be present when we really need them. And that is the point of the *Bet Yosef* which was quoted above.<sup>18</sup>

We should be blessed to live in times where these struggles do not take place. But if we must live in such a world, halachah has a category for dealing with it. ■

### Footnotes

1. *Until the re-establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.*
2. *See for historical example, Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles (JPS 1994) at page 818.*
3. *Hesped for Rav Chaim Ozer Grozenski, Hapardes 14:7, 1941.*
4. *There is some ambiguity in the various editions of the teshuva as to whether one or both hands were amputated.*
5. *Tosafot, Menachot 64; 'Arur Adam'.*
6. *Rambam, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 11:3.*
7. *Shulkhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 178:2. Also see Mishnah Brurah 224:13 that 'stam bnei adam' can violate an issur d'rabbanan for kavod hamelekh.*
8. *Harav E. M. Schach, 'Bzot Ani Boteach' (Bnai Brak, 5722) 10-35. I am aware of a musmach of our Yeshiva who was approached by the Israeli government and asked to participate in a matter represented as vital to Israel's interest in a church worship. That musmach went to the Tzitz Eliezer zt"l to ask if he should do so, and Rav Waldenberg indicated that such was permitted based on both the psak of the Bet Yosef and that of the Drisha, if it really was vital to Israel's interest.*
9. *Bet Yosef Yoreh Deah 178,2 'mi shekarov'.*
10. *Bayit Hadash Yoreh Deah 178, 'mi'.*
11. *Prishah Yoreh Deah 178:8. See also Darkei Teshuvah 178:2*
12. *Shulkhan Arukh Yoreh Deah 178:2 Ibid.*
13. *L'vush, Yoreh Deah 178:2 and Ta"z 178, 5.*
14. *Shulkhan Arukh Yoreh Deah, 157.*
15. *See, however, what is written in responsa Panim Me'erot 2:79. See also R. Akiva Eiger Yoreh Deah 181 that both permit 'issurim d'Rabbanan.' See also Mishnah Brurah 224:13 and Darkei Teshuvah Yoreh Deah 178:2 and Mishnat Hakhamim hil. Avodah Zara simanim 44 and 53.*
16. *See Responsa K'tav Sofer 37.*
17. *See Be'er David, siman 24.*
18. *Many years ago I attended a memorial lecture given by Rabbi Yehuda Gershuni, commemorating the hanging of the Israel intelligence agent Eli Cohen by Syria. Rabbi Gershuni noted that Eli Cohen lived for many years as an Arab and that his conduct was mutar as saving many Jews permits such conduct, consistent with the view of the Bet Yosef.*

## New Sfarim from our Faculty



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by Rabbi Shmuel Goldin '76R  
Gefen Publishing, Jerusalem



### “Hagaddah Shel Pesach: Chazon L'yomim”

by Rabbi Yonoson Sacks '84R  
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### “Imrei Baruch: Eiruvim and Reshuyos”

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Machon Beer Hatorah



### “Divine Footsteps: Chesed and the Jewish Soul”

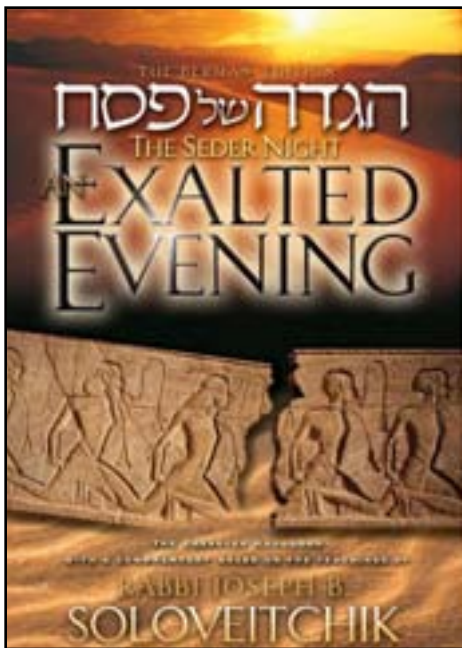
by Rabbi Daniel Feldman '98R  
Yeshiva University Press

## The Seder Night: An Exalted Evening The Passover Haggadah with a Commentary based on the Teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Edited by Rabbi Menachem D. Genack '73R

Reviewed by Rabbi Elchanan Adler

We are indebted to Rabbi Menachem Genack for gathering many of the Rav's teachings on the Haggadah and *hilchos Pesach* from diverse sources and assembling them under one cover. As Rabbi Genack notes in his preface, he has borrowed from the Rav's own written works appearing in the MeOtzar Harav series published by the Toras HaRav foundation, and primarily from the volume entitled "Festival of Freedom." In addition, material is drawn from various tapes of the Rav's shiurim, as well as from Rabbi



Genack's own *reshimot*, his lecture notes recorded over decades as he imbibed the Rav's teachings *ke'talmid lifnei rabo*. (Surprisingly, there are no excerpts from the "Siach ha-Grid Haggadah" which was compiled by the Rav's grandson, Rabbi Yitzchak Lichtenstein.) The result is a seamless commentary on the text of the Haggadah as well as the *mitzvos ma'asiyos* embedded in the *seder* as seen through the Rav's penetrating analysis, faithfully recorded and redacted by Rabbi Genack.

Rabbi Genack has eased the task of absorbing the Rav's teachings by arranging them as commentary

attached to salient headings, at times skillfully abridging the Rav's words. Each citation is thus self-contained and of palatable length, allowing the clarity and brilliance of the Rav's ideas to shine through in a user-friendly format.

Rabbi Genack notes in his preface how, in the Rav's view, the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzraim* is essentially an exercise in Torah study. Indeed, the approximately 170 citations collected by Rabbi Genack reflect a diversity of genres within Talmud Torah, ranging from halacha and classical *lomdus* to *hashkafa*, *d'rush*, *machshava*, *parshanut* and philosophy. Striking *chidushim* relating to the halakhic contours of *haseivah*, the role of *mezigah* (diluting, mixing and pouring a cup of wine) in establishing the status of *kos shel bracha*, and the transcendent, all-embracing character of *sippur yetzias Mitzraim* as manifested within the overall structure of the seder, appear alongside a treasure trove of philosophical and psychological insights into such concepts as slavery, freedom and time awareness. In this sense, the Haggadah successfully captures the Rav's holistic style of seamlessly blending halacha and *machshava* with a refreshing spirit of creativity. It will thus delight the *talmid chacham* familiar with the Rav's *derech* while fascinating the layman with its sweeping novelty. "*Kal ha'memashmesh bo motzai bo ta'am*" — this Haggadah is sure to nourish the intellectual appetites of all who partake of it.

One profound insight which recurs throughout this work and which resonated deeply for this writer is the manner in which the events of *yetzias Mitzraim* attest to the special regard that the *Ribono Shel Olam* shares for *klal Yisrael* even as they are mired in sin and defilement — the premium He attaches to their inner worth, the belief He holds out in their potential for growth, the degree to which He empathizes with their suffering and hears their prayers. The following five citations serve as a small illustration:

1. The Rav interprets the phrase "*bein Yisrael la'Amim*" listed among the distinctions enumerated in the havdalah service, as reflecting a differentiation which oftentimes only G-d can discern: "He saw sanctity in the abyss of the Jewish soul, even though it was full of profanity and sin, and therefore He saved His people" (P. 22).
2. Commenting on the phraseology "*Avadim Hayinu le'Phar'oh 'be'Mitzrayim*" — "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt," the Rav noted that the experience of slavery enveloped the Jews only in a political-economic sense but not on an existential level. This, the Rav explained, was the underlying message delivered to Moshe in the image of the burning bush: "From the outside, it looked just like

The approximately 170 citations collected by Rabbi Genack reflect a diversity of genres within Talmud Torah, ranging from halacha and classical *lomdus* to *hashkafa*, *d'rush*, *machshava*, *parshanut* and philosophy.

any other thorn bush in the desert; but inside that bush, in its hidden center, there was a fire burning. The ecstasy of the Jews for God, their commitment to His path, had never been extinguished in Egypt. It was rather invisible, covered up ... And once we penetrate unto the depths of a Jew, no matter how repugnant his exterior, no matter how subservient he is to the taskmaster, we will find him questing for freedom and searching for God. Within every Jew there is a burning bush" (P. 34).

3. The Rav quoted the following fascinating interpretation of his grandfather, Rav Chayim, on the verse "And so, too, the nation that will enslave them I will judge" (Gen. 15:14): "Rav Hayim of Brisk explained that if God's intent was that He Himself would judge the Egyptians, the words "*adin Anokhi*" would have been more precise. "*Dan Anokhi*," however, implies that God will not merely judge the Egyptians. A judge must be an impartial, dispassionate arbiter of the case. With respect to judging Israel's oppressors, God will not judge dispassionately. Rather, God will passionately advocate and seek judgment against Israel's oppressors. God will be a litigant. This is so because God and Israel are intrinsically connected. The Mishnah (Sanhedrin 6:5) states, "When man suffers, what expression does the Divine use? 'My head is too heavy for me, My arm is too heavy for me,' thus, God suffers along with man. When Israel is oppressed, God is oppressed. When Israel is oppressed, God becomes a litigant because He too is oppressed. God's reputation, as it were, is God's destiny. Thus,

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## Rabbi Dr. Emanuel Rackman, z"l

by Rabbi Haskel Lookstein '58R



The weekly portion which we will read this Shabbat begins with the description of Jacob's leaving Beersheva and going to Haran. Rashi, famously, quotes our Rabbis in asking why it was necessary for the Torah to use the word *vayeitzei* – "and he left." Of course he left Beersheva; that's where he was living. It would have been enough for the Torah to have said simply, *vayeileich Charana* — "he went to Haran," where his uncle Lavan was living.

The answer to the question, of course, is that *yetzi'at tzaddik min hamakom osah roshem* — the leaving of a *tzaddik* from a place makes an impression; for as long as the *tzaddik* is in a place he is its *hod* — glory; he is its *ziv* — beauty; he is its *hadar* — magnificence. When he leaves that place, some of the glory, the beauty, and the magnificence leaves with him.

The three descriptive nouns cited by Rashi, *hod*, *ziv* and *hadar*, suggest three critical areas in which Rabbi Rackman made a huge impact on our world, an impact that is inevitably diminished by his passing.

First, he was the glory of the rabbinate, a model of what a rabbi ought to be — an *eved lavdei Hashem*, a servant to the servants of the Lord. He lived a life of indefatigable service to his flock and to the Jewish world. He worked 24/7, just like an *eved* — a slave — works. No task was too menial for him to undertake; no challenge too intimidating for him to strive to meet.

He had a capacity for boundless self-sacrifice. He had no fear of ridicule for publicly taking on the tough issues. I remember him calling me frantically to come to a Rabbinical Council of America executive committee meeting in order to defend a colleague against what he considered unwar-

ranted efforts to apply sanctions to, or possibly to expel him. I, of course, came and sat next to him as he defended that colleague and pleaded with the members of the executive committee to reserve judgment and to practice tolerance. No one could challenge Rabbi Rackman's integrity and passion for fairness and justice. Needless to say, he stopped the entire effort in its tracks.

*Hu hodah* — he was the glory of the Modern Orthodox Rabbinate.

He was also *zivah* — he was the beauty of the public personality who was, nevertheless, committed first and foremost to family, to his devoted, brilliant, and aristocratic Ruth, of blessed memory, who was his partner and colleague in every facet of life and to whom he was incredibly devoted.

To his sons and daughters-in-law, in whom he took such pride and for whom he expressed such concern. I believe that one of the things that drove him late in life to take on the very complicated cause of the *agunah* was the fact that his daughter-in-law, Honey, of blessed memory, was so deeply involved in that cause. He felt he had to do something to relieve the plight of the *agunah* even though his efforts brought him much criticism and opposition.

He was an adoring grandfather. He was a loving brother-in-law to my aunt and uncle and very devoted to their children. "He and my father," Rabbi Rackman used to say, "had a brother-in-law in common, but not a common brother-in-law."

I recall his delivering the sermon at my Bar Mitzvah in March of 1945 wearing his Air Force Chaplain's uniform. What an impressive sight!

*Hu zivah* — his family commitment was a thing of beauty.

Finally, *hu hadarah* — he was magnificent in his leadership of Bar-Ilan University. I know something about the role of president and chancellor of Bar-Ilan from watching my father, of blessed memory, in those roles. Rabbi Rackman took those responsibilities and raised them exponentially. He gave academic leadership, religious direction, and moral and ethical focus to a great university, which he made even greater. He also worked day and night to build a sound philanthropic foundation through which to nourish and nurture Bar-Ilan's expansion and growth. The builders and supporters of Bar-Ilan University became his third congregation. He brought to them the same total devotion which he had brought to the members of Shaare Tefilla in Far Rockaway and to the Fifth Avenue Synagogue.

*Hu hadarah* — he brought to Bar-Ilan magnificence, splendor, and unparalleled excellence.

As he leaves our world, some of the glory of the Modern Orthodox rabbinate, some of the beauty of the Rackman family, and some of the magnificence of his service to Bar-Ilan and the community are diminished. This is inevitable in the passing of a modern-day patriarch. But his powerful contributions in each of these three spheres guarantee that his family, his beloved Bar-Ilan, and all of his disciples and colleagues in the rabbinate will continue to flourish and to thrive because of his life's work.

He was Menachem in life — a source of *nechama*, comfort, consolation and inspiration. May his family and community continue to be comforted and inspired as he goes to his eternal rest in his beloved Medinat Yisrael.

May his soul be forever bound up among the living. ■

*This hesped was delivered at Rabbi Rackman's funeral.*

## Rabbi Yakov (Jimmy) Gordon, z"l

by Bezalel (Buzzy) Gordon



The *or ha-ner* of the first night of Hanukkah, 5769, shone brightly and joyfully for my father. Surrounded by children and grandchildren, he and my mother celebrated their 23<sup>rd</sup> *hag urim* in Yerushalayim; he was *zoheh* to live a whole generation, complete with the birth of grandchildren and a great grandchild, in *ir ha-kodesh*, follow-

ing a career in the rabbinate in the United States.

By the second night of Hanukkah, the light was dimmed altogether. For his family, as well as many in his adopted community, the festival of lights was plunged into darkness.

Many scenes of a lifetime flash through the mind of a son during the week of *shiva*. I can recall with bittersweet feelings the moments when *avi mori*

was able to derive *nahat* from his *bekhor*, as well as from his three other children and nine grandchildren. Lamentably, like any parent, he suffered the occasional throes of *tz'ar gidul banim*, and I grieve also for those instances.

When your father is also your teacher and your rabbi, the roles are often difficult to separate out. Perhaps that is why I especially treasure those moments shared by any son with his dad: pitching

balls and strikes in the backyard, or playing word games in the car during long cross-country trips. What stands out especially is when he once ventured dangerously onto a sloping roof to retrieve a ball stuck in the gutter. While in retrospect I wish he hadn't taken that chance, at that moment he was the superhero every kid loves to see in his father.

Nonetheless, since my father was my teacher and rabbi, it is those lessons he taught me from our Jewish tradition that stand out during this time of mourning – and beyond.

Family reminiscences are an integral part of *shiva*, and one relative recalled the emotional message my father delivered to me on the *bima* on the occasion of my bar mitzvah. Amid the excitement, my adolescent mind failed to retain the words of wisdom he imparted; I could only recall the medium, and flinging my arms around him in an embrace when he had concluded. Later, he was disappointed to learn that I had not absorbed the lesson the first time around, so he repeated his charge — to live my life in accordance with three overriding principles: piety, humility and scholarship.

Needless to say, I did not forget a second time. But if I had, I needed only to look at how he lived his

life, always guided by these three middot.

There was another phrase that my father, a lover of language and a consummate wordsmith, liked to quote as an exemplar of proper conduct: *imitatio dei*, to strive to emulate God. Just as we humans were created *b'tzelem Elokim*, so did we have the obligation to be God-like in our actions.

When I reached adulthood and began traveling the world, he counseled me: "*B'makom she'en ish, hishtadel lih'yot ish.*" I am sure I did not consciously bring this to mind when confronted with such situations, but I like to think that I have behaved accordingly ever since.

Perhaps most poignant at this time is the explanation he gave me many years ago of the *pitgam*, "*tov yom moto mi-yom hivaldo*" (the day of a man's death is better than that of his birth). I remember struggling as a child to understand what seemed to be an absurdity: how could the day you die be better than the day you were born? "When you're born, no-one knows what you are destined to become," he told me. "When you die, everyone knows what kind of man you were."

Sadly, as I have just learned, it does indeed take *yom moto* to comprehend the true meaning of Chazal's

teaching. At least, I take comfort in the fact that, indeed, everyone who knew my father knew what kind of man he was. As a teacher, he was knowledgeable, articulate and patient; as a congregational and pastoral rabbi, he was approachable, eloquent and compassionate.

Of course, these were his public personae; not everyone can know what he was like as a father. In one particular role, however, his private life could not help but be revealed: as a husband, his tremendous love and devotion to his wife was evident in every interaction.

Finally, I was privileged to ghostwrite my father's entry in the Encyclopedia Judaica, recapitulating a lifetime of accomplishment, accolades and awards. Of all the scrolls and proclamations I reviewed in the process, he was proudest of a clipping of a simple Letter to the Editor published in the Detroit Jewish News as he was retiring from the pulpit and preparing *la'alot l'Eretz Yisrael*. In a few short paragraphs, a congregant praised Rabbi Gordon for being accessible, caring, and in a word — a *mensch*.

Certainly, a fitting appellation for a man who personified the saying, "*Ezahu m'khubad, ha-m'khabed et ha-briyot.*" ■

## Rabbi David B. Hollander, z"l

by Rabbi Max Schreier '52R



On the 24th day of Teves, Rabbi David B. Hollander was *niftar* at the age of 96. As one who knew him for 60 years, I was asked to write a few short paragraphs about this illustrious

rabbinic personality, who made a deep imprint on the local, national and world Jewish community. A *musmakh* of RIETS, he once told me about a *bechinah* that he took with Dr. Bernard Revel *zt'l*, when he came to the Yeshiva. Dr. Revel asked him which *masechta* he wanted to discuss, and Rabbi Hollander informed him that he knew Rashi's commentary on *Parshas Mishpotim*. Dr. Revel said that if you know Rashi on *Parshas Mishpotim*, that is equal to a *sefer* of *Gemora*. He received *semikhah* in 1942, and his *semikhah* was signed by Rabbi Soloveitchik *zt'l*. He was the rabbi of Mt. Eden Jewish Center in the Bronx for 36 years, and for the last 28 years, he was the rabbi of the Hebrew Alliance of Brighton in Brooklyn. In 1954 he was elected president of the RCA at a very memorable convention in Detroit. As president of the RCA, he led a delegation of the RCA to the Soviet Union, which approved his

request to allow the rabbis to visit the Jews there. It was the opening of relations between the American Jewish community and Soviet Jewry. Many missions followed the initial opening and Rabbi Hollander was successful in awakening a spark in the hearts of the Jews. His service in the Hebrew Alliance of Brighton allowed him to continue his teaching and guiding of masses of Russian Jews who reside in Brighton Beach.

Rabbi Hollander was a very inspiring *darshan*, and he spoke in communities throughout the United States, Canada, South and Central America, Israel, Australia, South Africa and literally wherever Jews lived.

He also wrote very eloquently thousands of columns in Yiddish and Anglo-American Jewish newspapers. His regular columns on the weekly *sedrah* appeared weekly in The Algemeiner Journal, The Jewish Press and other newspapers. In addition to classes in Talmud, Chumash and Jewish thought, he gave two sermons, one in Yiddish and one in English every Shabbos to the very end of his life. He fought stubbornly against the falsification of Judaism by deviationist groups and was instrumental in

getting major *roshei yeshiva* to issue an *issur* against belonging to mixed groups with non-Orthodox rabbis, e.g., the New York Board of Rabbis and the then existing Synagogue Council of America.

His beloved wife, Fay, was his partner for 60 years and typed all of his columns and his voluminous letters.

Rabbi Hollander became close to the Lubavitcher Rebbe *zt'l*, and the Rebbe convinced him that he must not retire. He would not allow the Mt. Eden Jewish Center to be sold to a non-Jewish house of worship. He was also close to the Satmar Rebbe *zt'l*, and was present in the Satmar Synagogue on *Hoshana Rabba*.

From his home in the Bronx, he was close to Yeshiva and he frequently was in Yeshiva and attended many events there. For decades he was a featured speaker at sermon seminars of the Rabbinic Alumni before the High Holidays, before Pesach and on other occasions. He had a profound influence on the sermon in the Modern Orthodox synagogue. He always contributed to Yeshiva, and retained a sense of gratitude

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Publications

**Rabbi Edward Abramson '73R** on the publication of his book, "A Circle in the Square: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin Reinvents the Synagogue".

**Rabbi Shalom Berger '84R, Rabbi Jack Bieler '74R, Rabbi Shalom Carmy '84R, Rabbi Jay Goldmintz '81R, Rabbi Mark Gottlieb '94R, Rabbi Jeffrey Kobrin '98R, Rabbi Dr. Gil Perl '07R, Rabbi Chaim I. Waxman** (among the seventeen Contributors) **and Rabbi Jeffrey Saks '95R** (among the three Responses) in the ATID publication of "Teaching Toward Tomorrow: Setting an Agenda for Modern Orthodox Education - A Symposium" edited by Rabbi Yoel Finkelman.

**Rabbi Shalom Carmy '84R** along with Eliezer L. Jacobs edited the book "Covenantal Imperatives: Essays by Walter S. Wurzburger on Jewish Law, Thought, and Community".

**Israel Drazin** on the publication of his thirteenth book, "Maimonides: The Exceptional Mind", published by Gefen, in Israel. This is the second volume of an anticipated series of four on Maimonides.

**Rabbi Chaim (Howard) Jachter '92R** on the publication of his new book, "Gray Matter Vol. 3: Exploring Contemporary Halachic Challenges".

**Rabbi Aryeh Moshen '75R** on the publication of the "Curricula for Orthodox Jewish Conversion's Mentors' Guide" by the Eternal Jewish Family.

**Rabbi Gidon Rothstein '92R** on the publication of his new book of stories, "Cassandra Misreads the Book of Samuel (and Other Untold Tales of the Prophets)".

**Rabbi Hyim Schafner '95R** on the publication of his new book, "The Everything Jewish Wedding Book".

Mazal Tov

**Rabbi Daniel '98R and Rivka Alter** on the birth of their daughter, Avigail.

**Rabbi David '01R and Chana Rochel Blum** on the birth of their son, Eliezer Lipa.

RIETS student **Amitai and Adeena (Kozak) Blickstein** on the birth of their son, Achiezer Ohavia.

**Rabbi Tanchum '01R and Yaffa Cohen** on the birth of a daughter, Tziporah Rivka. And to grandparents, RIETS Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Hershel '67R and Shoshana Schachter.**

**Rabbi Aaron '94R and Chanie Cohen** on the birth of their son, Yehoshua.

**Rabbi Chaim '82 and Susie Casper** on the birth of a grandson, Yonatan Moshe, to their children Shoshana and Aryeh Casper of Har Nof, Jerusalem.

**Rabbi Dovid '97R and Ruchi Cohen** on the birth of their son, Meir Simcha.

RIETS student **Avi-Gil Chaitovsky** on his marriage to Tamar Snyder of Staten Island, N.Y.

**Rabbi David '02R and Malka Flamholz** on the birth of their son, Baruch.

RIETS student **Yoni and Romeima Feiner** on the birth of their daughter, Chava Rena.

RIETS student **William Zev Felsen** on his marriage to Dr. Rebecca Anne Jaffe from Potomac, Md.

RIETS student **David Federgrun** on his marriage to Tsippy Degani.

RIETS student **Eli Gelernter** on his marriage to Yael Aeder of Kew Gardens Hills, N.Y.

Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Meir and Hilla Goldwicht** on the birth of a grandson, Yishai, to Zev and Orital Weinrot.

**Rabbi Nathaniel '89R and Rachel Helfgott** on the birth of their son, Yakir Noam.

**Rabbi Basil '73R and Sherri Herring** on the birth of two granddaughters: Daphna, to their children Aliza and Moshe Pilevsky; and Ahuvah, to their children Esther and Ari Herring.

**Rabbi Eric '07R and Dara Kotkin** on the birth of their daughter, Maayan Leah.

**Rabbi Zev '05R and Chani Karpel** on the birth of their daughter, Rina Yitta. Also to grandparents **Rabbi Zvi '81R and Robin Karpel.**

Chaplain **Rabbi Lowell S. Kronick '70R**, associate director for education of the National Veterans Affairs Chaplain Center, has won the William A. Nelson Award for Excellence in Health Care Ethics.

**Rabbi Joseph '45R and Pepa Karasick** upon the bar mitzva of their great-grandson, Elly Lipner.

**Rabbi Joel '71R and Penina Kutner** on the birth of two grandsons, Ori Mishael, to their children Micha and Shiri of Rimonim; and Malachi Uriyah to their children Opher and Anat of Jerusalem.

**Dr. David and Vivian Luchins '71R** on the birth of a granddaughter, Layla Kochava, born to their children, Menachem and Sarah Luchins.

**Rabbi Yisrael Lutnick '92R** on his marriage to Amy Rosen.

RIETS student **Ramon Lyons** on his marriage to Debra Brier of Kew Gardens, N.Y.

**Rabbi Aaron and Yael Leibowitz** on the birth of their son, Yair Avraham.

**Rabbi Alex '02R and Jordanna Mondrow** on the birth of their twins, Betzalel Shalom and Emunah Ashirah.

**Rabbi Shelley '04R and Deena Morris** on the birth of their daughter, Ahuva Shayna.

RIETS student **Ephraim Meth** on his marriage to Tzivia Tuchel from Fairfield, CT.

Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi David '71R and Shira Miller** on the marriage of their daughter, Shifra, to Kobi Yammer, the son of Rabbi Michael and Leah Yammer of Yeshivat Shaalvim.

**Rabbi Yechiel '00R and Adeena Morris** on the birth of their daughter, Tova Elisheva. And to grandparents, **Rabbi Dr. Gershon '72R and Mindy Gewirtz.**

RIETS Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Yaakov '79R and Peshi Neuberger** on the marriage of their son, Moti, to Avigayil Schwerd. And to Moti's grandfather, RIETS Dean Emeritus **Rabbi Zevulun Charlop '54R.**

**Rabbi Dale '82R and Ellen Polakoff** on the marriage of their daughter, Ilana, to Shlomo Barry of Brooklyn.

**Rabbi Baruch '01R and Leah Shifra Price** on the birth of their son, Avraham Simcha

Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Hershel and Chasida Reichman** on the birth of a grandson, Yaakov, to their son Moshe Nechemiah and Yael Reichman.

**Rabbi Dr. Bernhard '74R and Charlene Rosenberg** upon the marriage of their son, Yaakov, to Avital Kelin, daughter of Alan and Jackie Kelin.

**Rabbi Lawrence (Larry) '01R and Chaviva Rothwachs** on the birth of their daughter, Sarah Esther. And to grandparents, **Rabbi Benjamin '69R and Shevi Yudin.**

**Rabbi Martin '75R and Karen Rosenfeld** on the birth of a granddaughter, Moriah Idit, born to their children, Daniel and Shira Rosenfeld of Yad Binyamin.

RIETS student **Evan Rosenhouse** on his marriage to Susanne Goldstone from Long Beach, CA.

**Rabbi and Mrs. Elihu A. Schatz '57R** on the birth of three great-granddaughters: Shani Shilian to Chaya and Eliran Shilian; Naava Gilor to Ariel and Fraydel Gilor; and Inbal Gilor to Shilo and Yael Gilor.

Dean of the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration **Rabbi Dr. David '72R and Tova Schnall** on the birth of a grandson, Shraga Tzvi Hirsch, to their children Avi and Yonina Lerner.

**Rabbi Fabian '52R and Ruth Schonfeld** on the marriage of their granddaughter, Tova London, to Schmuel Belsh.

**Rabbi Ariel '06R and Rebecca (Halstuch) Schochet** on the birth of their daughter, Rena Bracha. And to great-grandparents **Rabbi Max '47R and Rhoda Lipschitz.**

**Rabbi Menachem '78R and Rina Schrader** upon the birth of a granddaughter, born to their children, Tirtza and Baruch Perlman.

**Rabbi Dov '96R and Yaffa Schreier** on the birth of their son, Elyahu Tzvi Nachman. And to grandparents, **Rabbi Max '52R and Toby Schreier.**

RIETS student **Dovid and Racheli Sukenik** on birth of their twins, Shaindel Fraydel and Aryeh Leib, in Yerushalayim.

**Rabbi Eliav '06R and Adi Silverman** on the birth of their son, Yonadav Mattityahu.

RIETS student **Noson Waitman** on his marriage to Tamar Ben Shmuel of Jerusalem.

**Rabbi Nisanel '92R and Ruth Yudin** on the birth of their daughter, Shalva Nili. And to grandparents, **Rabbi Benjamin '69R and Shevi Yudin.**

Condolences

**Rabbi Shlomo Appel '69R** on the loss of his father, **Rabbi Dr. Gersion Appel '41R.**

Debbie Baum, wife of our chaver, **Rabbi Shalom Baum '94R**, on the loss of her father, Bill Beres.

**Lois Blumenfeld** on the loss of her husband, **Alvin J. Blumenfeld**, a devoted member of the RIETS Board of Trustees.

**Rabbi Mordecai Feuerstein '72R** on the loss of his father Moses Feuerstein, a former president of the

Orthodox Union and a shtadlan extraordinaire on behalf of his local community and all of klal Yisrael. Condolences to **Rabbi Zev Reichman '02R** and **Rabbi Daniel Feldman '98R** who are each married to granddaughters of the late Mr. Feuerstein.

**Rabbi Dov Fischer '81R** on the loss of his mother, Shirley Fisch.

**Rabbi Sheilaim Furst '82R** and Rabbi Yitzchok Furst on the loss of their father, **Rabbi Harold Furst '47R**.

**Rabbi Marvin H. Goldman '65R** on the loss of his brother, Bernard Goldman.

The Gordon family on the loss of both **Rabbi James (Jimmy) '48R** and **Malka Gordon**, parents of **Rabbi Shmuel Gordon '81R**, brother and sister-in-law of **Rabbi Macy Gordon '56R** and uncle and aunt of **Rabbi Uri Avraham Gordon '86R**.

The family of **Rabbi Zev Gotthold '44R**.

Leba Grauer, wife of our chaver **Rabbi Seth Grauer '04R**, on the petira of her mother Sarah Rein.

**Rabbi Arnold (Yeshaya) Heisler '46R**, and Reuben "Ruby" Heisler on the loss of their brother, **Rabbi Jacob Heisler '43R**, husband of Harriet Heisler; father of Rebbetzin Faygie and RIETS Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Mordechai Willig '71R** and grandfather of **Rabbi Raphael Willig '98R**, **Rabbi Avraham Willig '02R**, **Rabbi Akiva Willig '06R**, **Rabbi Yehuda Willig '05R**, and **Miriam and Rabbi Gidon '05R Shoshan**.

Rebbetzin Fay Hollander on the loss of her husband, **Rabbi David B. Hollander '42R**.

**Rabbi Milton Kain '54R** on the loss of his sister, Hadassah Kain Adler.

**Rabbi Richard Kirsch '94R** on the loss of his mother, Beatrice Kirsch.

**Rabbi Yonatan (Yoni) Kohn '07R** on the loss of his father, Fred Kohn, husband of Charlotte Kohn.

RIETS student **Yoel Oz** on the loss of his father, Moshe Oz.

**Rabbi Bennett Rackman '66R** on the loss of his father, **Rabbi Dr. Emanuel Rackman '34R**.

**Rabbi Stanley Raskas '69R**, chairman of the Yeshiva College Board of Trustees, on the loss of his wife, Sheri Raskas, daughter of **Rabbi Murray '46R** and **Francine Grauer**.

**Rabbi Ely Rosenzweig '84R** on the loss of his father, **Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig '49R**, husband of Helen and great-uncle of **Rabbi Yonah Gross '06R**.

The Weinberg family on the loss of **Rabbi Charles Weinberg '45R**, former president of the RCA.

**Rabbi Baruch Witkin '68R** and the Witkin family on the loss of **Rabbi Jerome Witkin '61R**, former YU assistant director of admissions.

## Rabbi David B. Hollander, z"l

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for all that Yeshiva did for him. Rabbi Hollander was a *great baal tzedakah*. Together with his wife, he administered the Charles and Anna Elenberg Foundation which gave millions of dollars to the yeshivas and worthy causes over the years. He had regular contact with hundreds of rabbis who would call him and consult with him on what to say on holidays and special occasions.

From his early years in the rabbinate, he was a Zionist and champion of Israel. Rabbi and Mrs. Hollander visited Israel frequently and had regular contact with rabbinic leaders and government officials.

In the last few weeks of his life, he was hospitalized. I had the opportunity to see him daily, and he shared thoughts with me reflecting strongly the ideals for which he fought for so many years. He inspired yeshiva students to enter the rabbinate and to bring authentic Torah to the community. I became friendly

with him while a student at Yeshiva, and he gave me the opportunity to officiate at functions. He once asked me to speak in a shul in the Bronx, to represent him in an appeal for UJA. Later, when I was in the rabbinate, he asked me to represent him at the installation of a rabbi. I am certain that there are quite a few others whom he befriended and involved in communal work.

In later years, he would always say that you have to justify your actions and your thoughts to G-d before whom an accounting has to be given.

Yeshiva has given to the community some very illustrious rabbis. Certainly, Rabbi Hollander was one of them. For all that he did in the course of a long and productive life, he will continue to be a source of inspiration to many. May his dear wife, Fay, and his brother, Fred, be comforted. We all say *yehi zichro baruch*. ■

## The Seder Night: An Exalted Evening

*continued from page 19*

God's promise to Abraham was an assurance that God would not merely sit and judge the Egyptians, but "*dan Anokhi*," God will advocate and litigate Israel's cause because Israel's cause is also God's cause" (P. 56).

4. In analyzing the Torah's description of how Hashem "saw our pain" (Ex. 2, 25), the Rav explains that this refers not to prayers and cries which were expressed verbally but to prayers of the heart which were borne in silence:

"Such was the case here, where Israel's travails included the most private of domains. However, God, who sees everything, is cognizant of these afflictions and it is with respect to these calamities that the author of the Haggadah cites the verse 'And God took cognizance of them.' God hears the cries and suffering contained within a person's heart and provides salvation for all of his troubles" (P. 74).

5. The Rav sees this notion reflected in the verse *Va-yeda Elokim* – "And God took note" (Ex. 2, 25) which he interprets as follows: "He experienced their travail, their pain, their suffering, their humiliation. It is complete sympathy, compassion, and involvement. Similarly, "*Ki yadati* their sorrows" (Ex. 3:7) means "I

felt their pain." "*Adam yada* Eve his wife" (Gen. 4:1) means that he loved her and they were intimate" (P. 75).

The "harsh" criticism that might be leveled at this work is what appears to this reviewer as a technical shortcoming in the layout. The font of the Haggadah might have been sharpened or placed in bold type so as to better distinguish it from the commentary. As it stands, the printed page has a rather drab monotonic appearance attenuating its readability. It is hoped that this aesthetic flaw, along with a small number of typos, will be remedied in the second printing. Needless to say, this concern is negligible in relation to the work's enormous significance.

Kudos to Rabbi Genack, as well as to all those who made the publication of this work possible — especially the Berman family - for affording us a tiny glimpse of what it might be like to experience the intimacy of sitting at the Rav's seder table and listening to him expound the timeless messages of the Haggadah. As with all the Rav's works, this commentary should be explored and discussed in depth, in the spirit of Talmud Torah. Given such effort, it promises to transform the *leil haseder* into a truly exalted evening. ■