

The Arbesfeld Yom Rishon
**Final Program of the
Year**

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*Rabbi Samson Raphael
Hirsch, Rabbi
Soloveitchik & Their
Contrasting Views of
Yeshiva University*

The learning at this program is dedicated L'zecher Nishmat
ר' יהודה צבי בן הרב משה (Judah Mayefsky)
And החבר שמעון בן שלמה (Simon Adler)



Rabbi Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff
ה' סיון תשס"ט • May 31, 2009

(1 תלמוד בבלי – מס' ברכות (לה):

תנו רבנן: ואספת דגנך, - מה תלמוד לומר - לפי שנאמר: (יהושע א') לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיו, יכול דברים ככתבן? תלמוד לומר: ואספת דגנך - הנהג בהן מנהג דרך ארץ, דברי רבי ישמעאל; רבי שמעון בן יוחי אומר: אפשר אדם חורש בשעת חרישה, וזורע בשעת זריעה, וקוצר בשעת קצירה, ודש בשעת דישה, וזורע בשעת הרוח, תורה מה תהא עליה? אלא: בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום - מלאכתן נעשית על ידי אחרים, שנאמר: (ישעיהו ס"א) ועמדו זרים ורעו צאנכם וגו'. ובזמן שאין ישראל עושין רצונו של מקום - מלאכתן נעשית על ידי עצמן, שנאמר: (דברים י"א) ואספת דגנך; ולא עוד, אלא שמלאכת אחרים נעשית על ידן, שנאמר: (דברים כ"ח) ועבדת את אויבך וגו'. אמר אביי: הרבה עשו כרבי ישמעאל - ועלתה בידן, כרבי שמעון בן יוחי - ולא עלתה בידן. אמר רבא רבא לרבנן: במטותא מינייכו, ביומי ניסן וביומי תשרי לא תתחזו קמאי, כי היכי דלא תטרדו במזונייכו כולא שתא. אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי יהודה ברבי אלעאי: בא וראה שלא כדורות הראשונים דורות האחרונים, דורות הראשונים עשו תורתן קבע ומלאכתן עראי - זו וזו נתקיימה בידן, דורות האחרונים שעשו מלאכתן קבע ותורתן עראי - זו וזו לא נתקיימה בידן.

(2 תלמוד בבלי – מס' שבת (לג):

איתבו תריסר שני במערתא. אתא אליהו וקם אפיתחא דמערתא, אמר: מאן לודעיה לבר יוחי דמית קיסר ובטיל גזרתיה? נפקו. חזו אינשי דקא כרבי זורעי, אמר: מגיחין חיי עולם ועוסקין בחיי שעה! כל מקום שנתנין עיניהן - מיד נשרף. יצתה בת קול ואמרה להם: להחריב עולמי יצאתם? חזרו למערתכם! הדור אזול. איתבו תריסר ירחי שתא. אמרי: משפט רשעים בגיהנם - שנים עשר חדש. יצתה בת קול ואמרה: צאו ממערתכם! נפקו, כל היכא דהוה מחי רבי אלעזר - הוה מסי רבי שמעון. אמר לו: בני, די לעולם אני ואתה. בהדי פניא דמעלי שבתא חזו ההוא סבא דהוה נקיט תרי מדאני אסא, ורהיט בין השמשות. אמרו ליה: הני למה לך? - אמר להו: לכבוד שבת. - ותיסגי לך בחד? - חד כנגד זכור, וחד כנגד שמור. - אמר ליה לבריה: חזי כמה חביבין מצות על ישראל! יתיב דעתייהו. שמע רבי פנחס בן יאיר חתניה ונפק לאפיה, עייליה לבי בניה הוה קא אריך ליה לבישריה, חזי דהוה ביה פילי בגופיה, הוה קא בכי, וקא נתרו דמעת עיניה וקמצוחא ליה. אמר לו: אוי לי שראיתך בכך! - אמר לו: אשריך שראיתני בכך, שאילמלא לא ראיתני בכך - לא מצאת בי כך. דמעיקרא כי הוה מקשי רבי שמעון בן יוחי קושיא - הוה מפרק ליה רבי פנחס בן יאיר תריסר פירוקי, לסוף כי הוה מקשי רבי פנחס בן יאיר קושיא - הוה מפרק ליה רבי שמעון בן יוחי עשרין וארבעה פירוקי.

(3 תלמוד בבלי – מס' מנחות (צט):

אפילו לא שנה אדם אלא פרק אחד שחרית ופרק אחד ערבית, קיים מצות (יהושע א') לא ימוש (את) ספר התורה הזה מפיו. אמר רבי יוחנן משום ר"ש בן יוחי: אפי' לא קרא אדם אלא קרית שמע שחרית וערבית - קיים לא ימוש, ודבר זה אסור לאומרו בפני עמי הארץ. ורבא אמר: מצוה לאומרו בפני עמי הארץ. שאל בן דמה בן אחותו של ר' ישמעאל את ר' ישמעאל: כגון אני שלמדתי כל התורה כולה, מהו ללמוד חכמת יונית? קרא עליו המקרא הזה: לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיו והגית בו יומם ולילה, צא ובדוק שעה שאינה לא מן היום ולא מן הלילה ולמוד בה חכמת יונית. ופליגא דר' שמואל בר נחמני, דאמר ר' שמואל בר נחמני א"ר יונתן: פסוק זה אינו לא חובה ולא מצוה אלא ברכה, ראה הקב"ה את יהושע שדברי תורה חביבים עליו ביותר, שנאמר: (שמות לג) ומשרתו יהושע בן נון נער לא ימיש מתוך האהל, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: יהושע, כל כך חביבין עליך דברי תורה? לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיו. תנא דבי ר' ישמעאל: דברי תורה לא יהו עליך חובה, ואי אתה רשאי לפטור עצמך מהן. אמר חזקיה, מאי דכתיב: (איוב ל"ו) ואף הסייתך מפי צר רחב לא מוצק תחתיה? בוא וראה שלא כמדת הקדוש ברוך הוא מדת בשר ודם, מדת בשר ודם אדם מסית את חבריו מדרכי חיים לדרכי מיתה, והקדוש ברוך הוא מסית את האדם מדרכי מיתה לדרכי חיים, שנאמר: ואף הסייתך מפי צר, מגיהנם שפיה צר שעשנה צבור

(4 שו"ת הרמ"א (תשובה ז')

תחילה אענה מה שהרעיש אדוני את העולם עלי בהביאי במכתבי הראשון דבר חכמת היונים וראש הפילוסופים, ועל זה כתב אדוני שהתורה חוגרת שק כו'. אומר שזו מחלוקת ישנה בין החכמים ולא אצטרך להשיב עליה, כי כבר תשובתו הרמתה מונחת בקרן זווית ערוכה בתשובת הרשב"א, מה שהשיבו חכמי פרויבניצא להרשב"א ז"ל על זו (ח"א סי' תיח) ואף הרשב"א ז"ל לא כתב שם אלא לאסרה בינקותו של אדם קודם שילמד חכמת התלמוד, והוא הבשר ויין (ברמב"ם: לחם ובשר) שכתב הרמב"ם בספר המדע פ"ד מהלכות יסודי התורה (הלכה יג. מן פ"ד עד פה באותיות רש"י ובסוגריים בד"א). ומי לנו גדול מהרמב"ם ז"ל שעשה ספר המורה שכולו אינו אלא מזה המין. ואף כי כתב בתשובת בר ששת (שו"ת הריב"ש סימן מה, עיין עליו הערה /מס' עשרים ואחת/ בסימן ו) שהוא לא עשאו אלא כדי להשיב לאפיקורוס כידוע למעלתו, באמת אומר שיש לי בזו שתי תשובות בדבר, ושתיהן אמיתיות לפי מעוט השגתי. וזה, כי הם לא חששו אלא ללמוד בספרי היונים הארורים, כגון ספר השמע ומה שאחר הטבע כמו שזכרן שם בתשובה הנזכרת. ובזה הדין עצמם, כי חששו פן יבא להמשך אחריהם באיזה אמונה מן האמונות ויתפתה בינם שהוא יין תנינים ודעות מופסדות. אבל לא אסרו ללמוד דברי החכמים וחקירתם במהות המציאות וטבעיהן כי אדרבה על ידי זה נודע גדולתו של יוצר בראשית יתברך, והוא פירוש שיעור קומה שאמרו עליו כל היודע כו', ואף כי למקובלים דעת אחרת בזו אלו ואלו דא"ח = דברי אלקים חיים = ואף כי חכמי אומות העולם אמרו, כבר אמרו במגילה פ"ק: כל מי שאומר דבר חכמה אף באומות נקרא חכם. וכזה עשו כל החכמים שהביאו דברי החוקרים בספריהם, כאשר גלוי לכל מספר המורה ובעל העקידה (לר' יצחק ב"ר משה ערמאה) ושאר מחברים גדולים וקטנים. כל שכן מי שאינו נכנס לעמקם לבניית המופתים להוציא דבר מתוך דבר כמוני, רק מביא מה שכתבו שאין ראוי לחוש לזה כלל. והשנית, אף כי אם נאמר שאסרו ללמוד בכל ספריהם גזירה משום דברים האסורים שבהם מ"מ בספרי חכמינו ז"ל אשר מימיהם אנו שותים, ובפרט הרב הגדול הרמב"ם ז"ל בזה לא עלה על שום דעת לאסור. כי בודאי אין לחוש בספריו לשום דעת בטלה כמו שהעיד עליו בעל בחינת עולם באמרו: סוף דבר לבי האמן מה

שהאמין סוף הגאונים בזמן וראשם במעלה הוא הרמב"ם כו'. ואף כי מקצת החכמים חלקו עליו ושרפו ספריו, מ"מ כבר נתפשטו ספריו בכל חכמים האחרונים ז"ל, וכולן עשו אותן לראשם עטרה להביא ראייה מתוך דבריו כהלכה למשה מסיני...

(9) רמ"א – יו"ד (רמז: ד)

הגה: וי"א שבתלמוד בבלי שהוא כלול במקרא, במשנה וגמרא, אדם יוצא ידי חובתו בשביל הכל. (טור בשם ר"ת וע"פ ע"ל סי' רמ"ה ס"ו). ואין לאדם ללמוד כי אם מקרא, משנה וגמרא והפוסקים הנמשכים אחריהם, ובזה יקנה העולם הזה והעולם הבא, אבל לא בלמוד שאר חכמות. (ריב"ש סימן מ"ה ותלמידי רשב"א) ומ"מ מותר ללמוד באקראי בשאר חכמות, ובלבד שלא יהיו ספרי מינים, וזהו נקרא בין החכמים טיול בפרדס. ואין לאדם לטייל בפרדס רק לאחר שמלא כריסו בשר ויין, והוא לידע איסור והיתר ודיני המצות (רמב"ם סוף מדע ס"פ ד' מהל' יסודי התורה).

(10) רמב"ם – הל' סנהדרין (ב: א)

אין מעמידין בסנהדרין בין בגדולה בין בקטנה אלא אנשים חכמים ונבונים, מופלגין בחכמת התורה בעלי דיעה מרובה, יודעים קצת משאר חכמות כגון רפואות וחשבון ותקופות ומזלות ואיצטגנינות ודרכי המעוננים והקוסמים והמכשפים והבלי ע"ז וכיוצא באלו כדי שיהיו יודעים לדון אותם, ואין מעמידין בסנהדרין אלא כהנים לויים וישראלים המיוחסים הראויים להשיא לכהונה, שנאמר והתיצבו שם עמך בדומין לך בחכמה וביראה וביחס.

Bernard Revel: Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy (pp. 210-211) (5)

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BERNARD REVEL

greatly multiplied. In addition, European rabbinical leaders and professors also sought to gain admittance to the United States as nonquota immigrants. The Immigration Act of 1924 provided for the entry of any person who had been a "minister of any religious denomination, or professor of a college, academy, seminary, or university" for at least two years before his application for admission to the United States and wished "to enter the United States solely for the purpose of continuing this vocation."¹

By 1939 Revel's attempts to bring these students, rabbis, and professors to the United States represented a frantic race against time. Among the European yeshiva graduates saved by Revel during this last period were Rabbis Joseph Arnest and Samuel Volk. Rabbi Arnest had previously studied in the yeshivot of Navardok, Kremenchug under Rabbi Baruch Ber Leibowitz, Slobodka, and Telshe. At Telshe he was ordained by its *rosh hayeshiva*, Rabbi Joseph Leib Bloch, and his son and successor, Rabbi Abraham Bloch. In a letter recommending Arnest to Revel, Rabbi Abraham Bloch wrote:

We have witnessed the fulfillment of Rabbi Baruch Ber's prediction that Rabbi Joseph Arnest would become one of the well-known *Gaonim* of Israel and that many will be guided by the light of his Torah. . . . He propounds brilliant interpretations to difficult Talmudic passages.

Rabbi Arnest became a *rosh yeshiva* at the Yeshiva after his 1939 arrival.

Rabbi Volk was a graduate of the Ponevez, Slobodka, and Telshe yeshivot. At Telshe he became a disciple of its *roshei yeshiva*, Rabbis Chaim Rabinowitz and Joseph Leib Bloch. In a letter to Revel requesting his aid in obtaining a visa for Volk, Rabbi Kahane-Shapiro of Kovno declared: "Rabbi Samuel Volk is on a par with great Torah luminaries. He has written many elucidating commentaries on the Talmud and is especially proficient in the Talmudic sections that discuss the laws of sacrifice and ritual purity." Rabbi Volk also joined the Yeshiva faculty shortly after arriving in 1939.

Some of the famous rabbinical leaders brought here by Revel during this time were Rabbis Joseph Breuer and Mendel Zaks.

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Dr. Breuer, a grandson of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, arrived from Belgium in February 1939. He received his rabbinical training at the Frankfurt Yeshiva, headed by his father, Rabbi Solomon Breuer. He later served as rabbi of the Klaus Synagogue of Frankfurt, and in 1926 succeeded his deceased father as dean of the Frankfurt Yeshiva. In America he was to become the spiritual leader of the Orthodox German community that settled in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan.

Rabbi Mendel Zaks was *rosh hayeshiva* of the Radin Yeshiva established by his father-in-law, the Chofetz Chaim. While in the United States in 1938, Rabbi Zaks was given a contract by Revel which would have enabled him to remain here, but he chose to return to his school in Radin. In 1940, while fleeing from Vilna to Japan, Rabbi Zaks appealed to Revel to renew his contract so that he would qualify for a nonquota visa:

Our souls have gone through much, and I am greatly perplexed—may God have mercy on us—and I plead with you to have mercy on me and on my dear family [and to send me the necessary papers]. Many things depend upon this that I cannot write about. . . . I am being brief when I should be lengthy. However, I depend upon your perceptiveness since more than what is actually written here is being said. May the merit of my sainted father-in-law help us and all the House of Israel that currently is undergoing so much trouble and tribulation.

Revel renewed his contract in a lengthy telegram. Later that year Rabbi Zaks succeeded in coming to America. During the ensuing years he devoted himself to attempting to save his former European students. He also raised funds for the Yeshiva students who sought refuge in Siberia and Shanghai during the war. In 1942 Rabbi Zaks founded the Yeshivat Chofetz Chaim in Manhattan, and in 1945 he also joined the faculty of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

Among the professors saved by Revel were Doctors Aaron Freimann and Bruno Kisch. Dr. Freimann was a renowned bibliographer who had previously served as the librarian of the city and university libraries in Frankfurt. After arriving in America in 1939 he joined the staff of the New York Public Library as a consultant in bibliography and also lectured at the Yeshiva Graduate

בכשיהיה להם ליהנות... וזהו מה שיש

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The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (vol. 2, pp. 225-231) (8)

Yeshiva University

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Pumpeditha [in ancient Babylonia], I know that I am on firm and stable ground. In such endeavors there is perpetual truth. In the Yeshiva I am at home because I am grounded in the world of eternity.

21.02 Yeshiva University I

Related by the Rav in his address to the Yeshiva University Rabbinic Alumni, Yeshiva University, March 1, 1956. (Yiddish).

In addition to teaching at the Yeshiva, I consider myself a real friend of the institution. This is not just because I am a rosh yeshiva at Yeshiva University. It is much more than a matter of employment; it is, rather, that the Yeshiva redeemed my soul! It's true! You all know how difficult the American rabbinate is. The rabbi can lose his mind. The older European rabbis lost their heads in the slaughterhouses and butcher shops. The younger American rabbis lose them in cemeteries and wedding halls. Since I am half and half I would have lost my head in both places. Since I am half modern and half old-fashioned, I would have lost my head both in the slaughterhouse and the cemetery. [Laughter.]

The Yeshiva redeemed me and spared me from such a destiny. These last fifteen years [1941–56] I have been privileged to avoid falling in the sense of the fall of "the Nephilim [giants] were on the earth in those days" [Genesis 6:4]. In my whole life I have not accomplished as much spiritually as I have in these past fifteen years! There are days and nights when I do not leave my desk. I struggle to understand a [passage from the] *Bet Shmuel* [commentary on the *Shulhan Arukh*, Even ha-Ezer], the Ramban [Nahmanides] on the Torah, the *Milhamot [ha-Shem]* of the Ramban on the Rif [Rabbi Yitzhak Alfasi], or a midrash. My wife will testify to this. For this ability to devote my time to the study of Torah I am thankful to the Yeshiva. However, my real gratitude to the Yeshiva is because of another reason.

I may have very few good traits, but one trait which I do possess is my inability to imitate anyone else. I always want to be

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21.01 Boston to New York

Related by the Rav in his address at the convention to mark the merger of the Mizrahi and Ha-Poel ha-Mizrahi movements in the United States in 1957. Published in Ohr ha-Mizrach [2], p. 28. (Hebrew).

I am only a guest in New York. I regularly fly back and forth from Boston to New York. While aboard the plane I am often overwhelmed by the achievements of modern technology. The speed and exactness of the flight of the aircraft exemplify these accomplishments.

At times, when observing these technological strides, I feel lost as I fly between the heavens and the earth. Man loses his independence, and I feel like a worthless object in the vastness of the universe. "When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers . . . what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him?" [Psalms 8:4–5].

After the plane lands at LaGuardia Airport, I go directly to the Yeshiva. I immediately enter the world of Abaye and Raba. It is a different world with totally dissimilar surroundings. If you should ask how I feel with this sudden change in my environs when I enter the Yeshiva, I will respond that it is a superb transition. When I enter the world in which the same topics are discussed that were analyzed in the academies of Sura and

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myself and to display my unique dignity of having been created in the image of God. The glory of the individual is exemplified by the singularity of every human being. This concept is the motto of my life. I never wish to wear the mask of another person in order to ingratiate myself with the masses. I know the statement of the sages that "If I am not for myself, then who is for me?" [Avot 1:14]. What our sages mean is that if I am not myself, I will not succeed in acting like someone else.

I came to the United States and was thrown into Boston as a rabbi. It was difficult. Laymen like to advise their rabbis. This is true about the laity in Boston and even about my congregants in Congregation Moriya [on the Upper West Side of Manhattan]. They advised me to Americanize and to adjust myself to the new American circumstances. They wanted me to fit in. I fought them bitterly. I knew that I would lose my originality if I tried to be what I was not. I would lose my uniqueness, and ultimately the Divine Image within me. I do not like to do what others can do better or just as well. I wish to do that which I am unique at! This is not an expression of haughtiness; no, it is a fulfillment of my intrinsic human dignity and individuality.

Even when it comes to talmudic study I follow the same principle. I had a great rebbe—my father. My father had an even greater rebbe—Reb Chaim. I learned a great deal from my father. I can declare, like R. Eliczer: "Much Torah have I learned, yet I have but skimmed from the knowledge of my teachers much like a dog lapping from the sea" [Sanhedrin 68a]. As much as I received from my father, I still manage to pass it on to my students in my own unique fashion. I utilize my own vocabulary. True, I must say about my father and grandfather that "we drink their water" [i.e. benefit from their learning; Baba Metzia 84b]. Yet I am writing my own Sefer Torah [Torah scroll], and I have my own unique *ketav yad* [handwriting].

I do not enjoy it when my students speak in clichés and simply parrot the concepts of Brisk. The same with my homiletical lectures. I do not utilize the rabbinical sources and quotations that

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others generally use in their sermons. I rejoice in being alone and individualistic. If I am found wanting, then my achievements may very well be inconsiderable. However, if I am a pygmy, at least I am a pygmy who possesses the Divine Image. I must chart my own course. Our sages refer to Abraham as the "only one" [Sanhedrin 93a] because he was unique and paved a new way for mankind. I am always attracted to those Gedolei Yisrael [rabbinical scholars and leaders] who charted new courses. The same is true in my relationship with institutions. I am impressed by institutions that are pacesetters and innovative. In the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University, I have discovered such an institution. This school is unique, and it is imbued with the honor and dignity of man created in the Image of God. This is the secret of my love for and commitment to the Yeshiva.

In order to explain what characterizes the uniqueness of the Yeshiva, I must utilize an historical parallel. In the last century there was Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch [1808–1888] in Germany. He was unique in both his intellectual ability and his emotional sensibility. He had an aesthetic appreciation and understanding of life. He struggled with the same problem we have today in the United States: how to preserve Torah Judaism in a secular environment. Rabbi Hirsch accomplished great things in Germany. Our problems today are even more profound and complex than those that he faced. Rabbi Hirsch struggled in 1860; today it is 1956 and we have so many more technological advances. Yes, we are attempting to solve our problems. We have made a start. What is the difference between our approach and that of Rabbi Hirsch? He developed an aesthetic and tasteful synagogue service that would appeal to the German Jew. He strove to unite fear of God with universal concepts. Rabbi Hirsch set as his goal the training of German Jews who would be frum [pious] and have universal understanding. However, in addition to combining the fear of God with worldly culture, the Yeshiva wants above all to stress the importance of the study of Torah. Our goal is to educate a generation of Torah scholars with secular knowledge. Rabbi Hir-

sch was satisfied to attract the youth to the synagogue, in which he developed a beautiful and aesthetic Judaism. This is exactly what many Orthodox Jews wish to do in New York. They want Judaism to be built on ceremony and beautiful sentiments. For example, they stress the lighting of Sabbath candles, the white tablecloth for the Sabbath table, the decorating of the sukkah, and transporting the etrog in a silver case. They desire a decorous prayer service and insist that all the worshipers sing together when the Torah scroll is removed from the ark!

Rabbi Hirsch succeeded in these endeavors. He insisted that his followers not shave during the three weeks [of mourning for the destruction of the Temple] and during sefirah [the period of mourning between Passover and Shavuot]. Many German Jews observed the entire Torah as a result of Rabbi Hirsch's efforts. They were careful about both minor and major laws. I lived for many years in Germany, and I observed these Jews. I knew a Professor Eugen Mittwoch [1876–1942], who was a professor of Oriental languages at the University of Berlin.¹ I saw him come to the university on Tishah be-Av in slippers and with a three-week beard. You have no idea how deep his commitment to Judaism had to be to do this. To wear a yarmulka at the University of Berlin was not like wearing one at Columbia University today.

These were great accomplishments in Germany. This type of Judaism was truly blossoming in the twenties and the early thirties when I was there. Tragically, it was cut down right after the start of its bloom. Many cultured, observant Jews were developed by this approach. Nevertheless, German Jews lacked the knowledge of Torah. All-encompassing dedication to the study of Torah was not stressed. German rabbis were frum. There is much we can learn from their piety and observance. They were zealous in safeguarding the Orthodox character of their synagogues. However, these German rabbis only knew a small portion of the *Shulhan Arukh* and the Bible. They studied such popular halakhic volumes as the *Hayyei Adam* [by R. Abraham Danzig, 1810, based on *Shulhan Arukh*, Orah Hayyim] and the *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* [by R.

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The truth is that there is no real synthesis in the world. If there is a contradiction between Torah and secular endeavor, then synthesis is not possible. If there is a thesis and anti-thesis, then no synthesis is possible. In general, a synthesis is very superficial. It is apologetic, it imitates others and the individual loses his uniqueness. In synthesis no one succeeds. Even our great teacher Rabbi Moses ben Maimon [Maimonides] did not succeed in his attempts at synthesis. The greatness of the Yeshiva is that it is a real Yeshiva and on the second level a proper academic institution. Both divisions function without synthesis and compromise.

My students go from my shiur on the first floor of the Yeshiva building to their college classes on the third floor. In my class, they study in depth such talmudic topics as whether the signatures of the witnesses or the witnessing of the actual delivery make the get [divorce document] effective [Gittin 23a], or whether going over the writing on a get document can validate the get [Gittin 20a]. Then they go upstairs to their college classes, where they study theories in mathematics and physics. I am proud when my student is both a Torah scholar and a good college student. If there were a synthesis, both achievements would be weakened!

In this concept, our Yeshiva is unique. It is not like other yeshivot. It is not like Israeli institutions. Let us not allow the Israelis to rebuke us. They have much to learn from us. Their so-called modern institutions have not produced Torah scholars. I am not overwhelmed by wonder at the establishment of a religious university [Bar-Ilan University]. It can be named after the Vilna Gaon, not just after Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan [1880–1949; leader of religious Zionism]. Such an institution does not produce Torah scholars. The Catholics also have religious universities. I do not like to imitate others! We have a Yeshiva, and because the times demand it, we also have a university. These two divisions will not be synthesized. They will remain two institutions. It may be like a man with two heads, but it is better to have two heads than not to have one. [Laughter.]

Solomon Ganzfried, 1864, an abridged *Shulhan Arukh*). They had some slight knowledge of how to decide questions of Jewish law and also knew a little Jewish philosophy. They excelled in their external deportment, and their synagogues were graced with an aura of dignity.

There are many Jews in the United States, and among them our own rabbinical graduates, who desire that the Yeshiva follow the same course. They feel that the Yeshiva should stress the externals and produce "professional rabbis." Such rabbis would resemble the incense altar in the Tabernacle. They would emit a pleasant fragrance. However, they would never enter the Holy of Holies and achieve the knowledge of Torah represented by the Tablets in the Ark of the Covenant [which stood in the Holy of Holies]. I am certain that the Yeshiva would have an easier time raising funds if it followed this path.

The Yeshiva has another goal, however, and this is its greatness. It seeks to achieve the contents of the Ark of the Covenant. The Yeshiva's ultimate goal is to produce true rabbinical scholars. I do not wish to exaggerate, but I feel that the Yeshiva has the finest talmudic faculty in the world. No Yeshiva, including those in the State of Israel, has such an outstanding faculty. The roshai yeshiva here deliver lectures that could have been presented to the students in the Volozhin Yeshiva. I know what I am talking about in this respect. The language of the Yeshiva is the same as that utilized in all the yeshivot in consonance with the traditional approach to the study of the Oral Torah. Rabbinic literature is studied in full depth, and our goal is to educate first-class rabbinical scholars. Simultaneously, we wish to give these Torah students secular academic ability.

I have heard criticisms against the Yeshiva that we have not yet achieved the proper synthesis between Torah study and secular endeavor; between fear of God and worldliness. We have not achieved what the German Orthodox Jews called "Torah with derekh erez [worldly occupation]" [Avot 2:2]. I claim that the true greatness of the Yeshiva is that it does not have this synthesis.

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This uniqueness of the Yeshiva is another reason why I am loyal to this institution. It is a reflection of my own thinking and commitment.

1. On Professor Eugen Mittwoch, see Mordechai Eliav and Esriel Hildesheimer, *Beit ha-Medrash le-Rabanim be-Berlin, 1873–1938* (Jerusalem: Leo Baeck Institute 1996), p. 79.

21.03 Yeshiva University II

Related by the Rav in his address at the Hag ha-Semikhah (Rabbinical Graduation Convocation) on April 12, 1970. The address was described in the Commentator (Yeshiva University's undergraduate newspaper) on April 15, 1970; and excerpted and published in the Commentator, March 22, 1994, pp. 8–9.

Yeshiva is an institution which has been opposed and challenged for a long, long time. This opposition to the Yeshiva is a result of the uniqueness of its singular contribution to American Jewish life. You will ask me, In what does this uniqueness express itself? What is it? I will answer you that its uniqueness is an idea, or, if you wish, a faith. If you wish to say so, the uniqueness consists of an adventure. What is this idea, faith, or adventure? It is the concept that the Yeshiva has proclaimed in three words: "It is possible!" That is the motto of the Yeshiva. What is possible? If you ask this question, I will tell you. It is possible to be a Jew, a loyal committed Jew, living a Jewish life. It is possible to be a talmid hakham, a scholar, because intellectual achievements play a great role in Judaism. One can be a scholar, a Jew committed to Torah she-be'al peh [the Oral Tradition] and Torah she-bikhtav [the Written Tradition]. One can be a Jew committed to the past, present, and future of Jewish history. A Jew committed to the eschatological vision of Aharit ha-Yamim [the end of days], and, at the same time, a member of modern society. A useful member, trained in all the skills, and able to live in the midst of modern society and not to retreat. Such an individual takes pride in the fact that he is singular and unique as a Jew. This is the idea that the Yeshiva has proclaimed in