



**RABBINIC
ALUMNI**

אין התורה נקנית אלא בחבורה ברכות ס"ג Chavrusa ישיבת רבנו יצחק אלחנן

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Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik To Join Faculty At RIETS



Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik

Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik, founder of Yeshivat Brisk in Chicago will return this fall to give shiurim at RIETS, where he taught for six years before leaving New York City in 1966. By returning to RIETS, Rabbi Soloveitchik is continuing a family tradition that dates back more than half a century. At least one member of the Soloveitchik family has been a Rosh Yeshiva at RIETS since 1929 when Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik z"l came to the yeshiva.

Prior to the founding of Yeshivat Brisk in 1974, Rabbi Soloveitchik was Rosh Yeshiva at Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, Illinois. He also gave shiurim at Yeshiva Chaim Berlin, Brooklyn, N.Y. and Yeshiva Tiferet Yerushalayim, New York City where he began his teaching career.

Rabbi Soloveitchik was born in Haslovitz, Poland and arrived in the United States in 1930—a few months after his bar mitzvah. He had studied with the renowned Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner z"l and came to RIETS at the age of 13 where he studied with his

Rabbinic Alumni Convention — November 4-6, 1986

The 42nd annual Rabbinic Alumni convention of RIETS will be held on Tuesday, November 4 through November 6, 1986 at the Homowack Lodge, Spring Glen, N.Y. The theme for this years' program will be: Responding to the Challenge: Leading our Synagogues in to the Future.

Last year, the convention sponsored a highly successful workshop dealing with problems of stress in the Rabbinate. This year, Rabbinic Alumni will sponsor a similar pre-convention program on Rabbinic stress, Tuesday morning, November 4, 1986. A panel of professionals will be present discussing techniques of stress management and methods of improving the communication skills of Rabbis.

The convention will open Tuesday afternoon with a shiur to be delivered by Rabbi Michael Rosenzweig, Rosh Yeshiva, R.I.E.T.S. who will speak on "Shemittat Kesafim and Peruzbul", a timely issue for the forthcoming Shemitta year. Rabbi Rosenzweig will focus on the mechanism of peruzbul and how various Takkanot Chazal function. The Tuesday evening program will include Rabbi A. Mark Levin who will speak on "Reaching Out to Opposite Ends of the Spectrum—Can it Work?" Rabbi Levin will discuss whether a Rabbi can satisfy the diverse religious, educational and social needs of non-practicing orthodox affiliated synagogue members who have returned to their communities.

father, R. Moshe Soloveitchik z"l and his brother, Rabbi Yoseph Dov. Soloveitchik. Rabbi Soloveitchik earned his Bachelor of Arts degree and received semikha from RIETS in 1940; he later completed a degree at New York University School of Law.

Wednesday morning, Rabbi Moshe Tendler, Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS will address the convention. The title of his shiur will be "Horaah achar Horaah: Interface of Emet and Shalom—when you see it differently." Rabbi Tendler will examine an array of issues including the authority of a Rav to change synagogue minhagim and the problems encountered when a Rabbi disagrees with his Rabbinic colleagues. Wednesday afternoon, a symposium will be conducted highlighting communal and Rabbinic responsibilities regarding gittin. Among the panel will be Rabbi Zevulun Lieberman, Congregation Beth Torah and Dr. Deborah Eiferman, Associate Professor in Guidance and Counselling at Brooklyn College and Vice-President of G.E.T. The evening program will feature Dr. Norman Lamm who will present his annual address to the alumni.

Thursday morning, Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Rosh Yeshiva, R.I.E.T.S. will deliver a shiur on "Honesty and Integrity in the Shul and School." Rabbi Schachter will explore the parameters of preparing a recommendation for an individual seeking placement in a school, employment or a shidduch? How should Rabbis represent their true beliefs to parents, congregants or potential donors, and the ethics of firing an employee in the middle of the year or after a lengthy period of service?

Rabbi David Stavsky will be serving as this year's convention chairman with co-chairmen Rabbi Moshe Bomzer and Rabbi Shmuel Goldin. As in previous years, the RIETS Family Shabbaton will follow the convention. Reservations and information may be obtained by contacting the Director of Rabbinic Alumni, Rabbi Yitzchak Rosenbaum at 212-960-5263.

Eulogy for Rabbi Nison Alpert

Iyar 17, 5746-May 26, 1986

by Dr. Norman Lamm

"V'asher yagorti yavo li, that which I feared is come upon me" (Job 3:25). Despite the absence of the element of surprise, the demise of Rabbi Nison Alpert has shocked all of us, leaving us devastated and bereft.

Only a short while ago, from this very platform, Rabbi Alpert eulogized his mentor, teacher, and *rebbe*, the late much lamented Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, of blessed memory. There is one sentence in that tribute which I shall never forget: "Reb Moshe was the most normal of all the *gedolim*." That very statement tells us as much about the *talmid* as about the *rebbe*. Reb Nison was brilliantly, extraordinarily normal. Like an artist, or perhaps an alchemist, he pulled together a wide range of unusual talents and superlative characteristics, and balanced them exquisitely, so that the result was a masterpiece of normalcy and human decency.

Reb Nison was, of course, an unusually capable *talmid hakham*. His scholarship had both breadth and depth. What a pity that he passed away just as he was poised at the threshold of his most creative and productive years! More important: his learning penetrated his very being.

The *baal ha-Tanya* adds to the classical distinction between the Written Law and Oral Law, that there are two kinds of Written Law or *Torah shebektav*. One is the usual writing, ink upon parchment (*d'yo al gabei kelaph*), such as our usual *Sifrei Torah*. The second is represented by the two tablets or *lukhot* which Moses brought down from Sinai. Here the words were not written, but engraved—*chakikah*. The difference between these two forms of the Written Law is that the first consists of two separate substances, ink and parchment, brought together, whereas the second involves only one substance or *chephtzah* (*Lekutei Torah*, *Bechukotei*).

The Torah that Reb Nison learned and taught was not that of writing, but of engraving: He and his Torah were one *chephtzah*, they merged into one substance. Torah became part and parcel of his personality. When my late and much lamented predecessor, Dr. Samuel Belkin, of blessed memory, invited Reb Nison to our Yeshiva and gave him immediately a high *shiur*, it was because Reb Nison Alpert was a man who not only possessed Torah, but became identified with it. Torah was not *written* on the tablets of his heart, but *engraved* upon them. It is this special quality of a fully integrated Torah personality that he radiated as Rosh Yeshiva, as Head of the Kollel *Le'Horaah*, and as co-

editor of the Jubilee Volume of Halakhah recently published in honor of our 100th anniversary.

Rabbi Alpert was not only a *talmid chacham*, a wise scholar, but also a *talmid hechakam*, the disciple of a great sage. His discipleship to Reb Moshe Feinstein was an extremely important part of his life. His devotion to Reb Moshe was not only intellectual and scholarly, but emotional and spiritual as well.

It is worth, in this connection, quoting a passage from the Zohar (III, 287) which has special relevance as well for Lag Ba'Omer which we welcome tonight:

On the day that R. Shimon bar Yohai was to depart from the world, the Sages came to visit him, and the house was filled. Whereupon, R. Shimon began to weep, and said: "Once before I was on my death bed, and only my student R. Pinchas b. Yair came to see me all by himself. He was surrounded by a flame before me. Now I see that the fire has ceased and the house is full . . ."

R. Shimon taught by his distress that greatness does not always follow numbers; that the passion of holiness often characterizes single individuals rather than the crowds.

Reb Moshe had many fine students, amongst them many brilliant *talmidei hakhamim*. But Reb Nison was the R. Pinchas b. Yair to Reb Moshe's R. Shimon bar Yohai. When he served Reb Moshe as his greatest disciple, he shown, he radiated—he was enveloped in a blaze of Torah.

However, fire comes in two kinds: one is the fire that is characteristic of the *mizbeach*, the altar; it is a fire that consumes the sacrifice that is laid upon it. The second is the fire of the *menorah*, the candelabrum. This fire does not consume; it illuminates and enlightens.

Rabbi Alpert's flame was that of the *menorah*. It was not the fire of zealotry, but that of love which, as King Solomon taught us, *Mayim rabim lo yochlu lechabot et ha-ahavah*—many waters cannot extinguish such love. His flame was not raging, but soft. He sought not to overwhelm, but to persuade, not to frighten but to inspire. An ordinary *lamdan* can sometimes rise to the level of being enveloped in the flame of the *mizbeach*. But one who accepts the responsibility of rendering decisions, of being a *posek*, requires the more deliberate, subtle, softer, glowing light of the *menorah*. The *posek* must bank the flames of his intellectual passion, and learn halakhic moderation in order to be able

to render a decision which accords with the truth of Torah: *havo metunim b'din*, this too Reb Nison learned from his Rebbe, Reb Moshe. And so he had not only depth but also breadth.

This little *licht'l* of personal warmth will always remain with us who cherished him as the unforgettable impression he made upon us. He was a man of exquisite sweetness to colleagues and students alike. What a great father and husband he must have been! His warmth was more than a personal disposition or temperament, but a divine gift. Otherwise, I wonder if he could have succeeded in keeping it so constant. Clearly, he had to fight in order to maintain such a balanced generosity, kindness, warmth. He led a difficult life—years of administering to a sick father, the loss of a young son which broke his heart as well as that of his wife and children. Oh, how many *nisyonot* did Reb Nison have to endure! And yet, he never became bitter; he succeeded brilliantly in character as well as in intellect.

A few months ago Reb Nison shared with me an insight—I do not know if he quoted it in the name of someone else or it was his original interpretation—which is eminently worthy of repetition here. The *Talmud* (*Hag. 14b*) tells of the four giants amongst the *tannaim* who were privileged to enter the *Pardes*, the "orchard" which is the symbol for esoteric learning. One glanced—and died. Another glanced—and lost his mind. A third entered—and lost his faith, becoming a heretic. Only the fourth, R. Akiva, entered and departed in peace: *nichnas b'shalom v'yatzah b'shalom* (such is the variant reading in Midrash R. Shir ha-Shirim). Why, asks Reb Nison, did R. Akiva deserve to be the only one to "leave in peace?" Because, he answered, he was also the one who "entered in peace." Only if you come with peaceful intentions will the result be peaceful and whole.

Reb Nison did not realize it at the time, but all of us who were privileged to hear him now understood it quite well: He was speaking about himself as much as about anyone else. He was a *nichnas b'shalom*, he came into the world, to his Yeshiva, to every relationship that he established—with a gift of gentleness, kindness, good will, peacefulness. And now, at the end of his all too brief sojourn on this tormented planet, he is also a *yatzah b'shalom*, he departs in utter peace, leaving his admiring, respecting, loving, cherishing family, colleagues, and students bereaved and filled with grief.

V'yanuach b'shalom al mishkavo, amen.