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DR. LAMM :

Torah and Derekh Eretz: "Where Do We Go From Here?"

The following is a summary of a lecture given by YU President Dr. Norman Lamm at a conference entitled "The Impact of Samson Raphael Hirsch." The conference inaugurated the Samson Raphael Hirsch Professorship in Torah and Derekh Eretz which has been established by Jacques and Hanna Schwalb. The summary was prepared for publication by Larry Yudelson.

It's puzzling that Hirsch and his thought weren't accorded full study at Yeshiva until now, since YU is, in many ways, a fulfillment of Hirsch's vision. Hirsch was one of the true giants of Jewry. He tried to formulate a Jewish humanism, a "synthesis" under the slogan of "Torah im Derekh Eretz."

I have never been pleased by either formulation, "Torah im Derekh Eretz" or "Torah u Mada." "Torah im Derekh Eretz" seems to be too broad. The Talmud uses this phrase to refer to anything from business to manners to conjugal relations. It does not specifically describe the world of culture. "Mada," particularly in modern Hebrew, refers to the natural sciences, and is too narrow. Culture is far greater than science alone.

"Hokhma" is a better term. According to the medrash, "yesh hokhma bagoyim." You can find it among the nations. Professor I. Twersky has shown that the Rambam refers to *hokhma*, even where the Gemara only used *Torah*. For example, in *Makkot*, the Gemara says that a father is *patur* for killing his son if he did it to educate him in Torah or a trade, since he was doing a *mitzva*. The Rambam adds *hokhma*. He considers it a *mitzva* to teach one's child *hokhma*. We see that Torah is not synonymous with *hokhma*, and *hokhma* is not synonymous with *umanut*, trade. It is not the same as accounting, insurance, or computers.

Both Hirsch and YU agree that Torah and *Hokhma* have a common divine origin. They represent the word of God and the world of God respectively. Both are created by divinity, and worthy of study and research. They both reach back to the goal of coming close to *HaKadosh Barukh Hu*. Of course, Torah is preeminent.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Whereas Torah is essentially fixed, culture (science, art, technology, philosophy) is constantly changing. The problematica for Hirschians in 1984 is not the same as for Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in 1894. Strangely, Orthodox Jews today seem to be recoiling from the effort to live with the outside world. This is true in both East and West Washington Heights. So, where do we go from here? The following four points should be explored:

1) The Communal realm. *Torah im Derekh Eretz*, as manifest in the Breuer's

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Shavuot—Matan Torah

A synopsis of one section of a Chumash Shiur given by the Rov Shlita on June 3, 1981 in Furst Hall-501.

By NATI HELFGOT

Two episodes appear in the Chumash before it reaches the climax of Matan Torah. Immediately prior to Chap. 19-20 of Sefer Sh'mot the Torah presents the visit of Yitro and his relationship to the Jewish people, culminating, with the verse "and he went to his land" (Ch. 18, v. 27), on which Chazal comment (in the Mechilta) "he returned to convert his family to Judaism." Before the story of Yitro, the Torah presents the sudden attack of Amalek at Refidim. Prior to Matan Torah, the Jew must be cognizant of these two episodes; both deal with non-Jews and their relationship to the Jewish people. However, why is it so crucial that we be aware of them as we enter the momentous event of revelation?

On the verses in Sidrat Ki Tisah, Ch. 34 "And God said to Moshe, 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone, similar to the first ones...and you shall ascend Mount Sinai in the morning...and no man shall ascend with you...neither shall the sheep nor cattle graze near that mountain'" Chazal (in the Tanhuma) comment that the Almighty says,

"the first *luchot* as they were given over with lightning and thunder and in the presence of multitudes the evil eye acted upon them. Therefore, there is nothing better than giving the second set in private in *tzniut*."

The question that arises is why then did the Almighty for the first revelation prefer a public display to that of a modest revelation? Apparently, the Almighty wanted the whole world to know of the two *luchot* that were given to Moses. Revelation had to be in public, in front of the eyes of all the nations, so that they should know that there is a transcendent God who created the world, takes care of it and reveals himself to man. Ultimately that is the message of the "Shofarot" passage in the Rosh HaShanah liturgy. Thunder and lightning and spectacle are integral parts of this revelation to the whole world. Therefore while the Torah was given to Knesset Yisrael, there is clearly a universal aspect to this first Matan Torah (in this light we more fully understand the famous Midrash which relates that the Almighty offered the Torah to the various nations of the world). Of course, no one was ready to accept the Torah. This acceptance will be finally realized, and only realized, at

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Hamevaser Elects New Governing Board

After a brief deliberation, the 1983-84 Governing Board of *Hamevaser*, lead by Shalom Stone, elected a new Editor-in-Chief for the fall term of the 1984-85 year. Isaac Corre, last year's Coordinating Editor was unanimously elected Editor-in-Chief.

Isaac, a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and a Skokie Yeshiva graduate, is a Y.C. history major and an IBC Jewish History major.

Daniel Lehman, a Y.C. senior and outgoing vice-president of YCSC, has been chosen as Associate Editor. He is a philosophy major learning in Rav Parnes' shiur.

Larry Yudelson, a computer science major from Rochester, N.Y. will serve as Senior Editor. Last year Larry was the Feature Editor of *Hamevaser*.

Saul Rube, the new Executive Editor, is a Y.C. English major who learns in Rav Parnes' shiur. Next year Saul will also be President of the English Honors Society.

Gidon Rothstein and Nati Helfgot were chosen as Managing Editors. Gidon and Nati are among *Hamevaser's* most prolific contributors.

Joey Lipner, an English major, and Yossie Prager, a biology major, were chosen as Feature Editors.

Jonathan Feldman, the new News Editor, is a transfer student from Cornell University who will be studying in BRGS. Yosef Shmidman, a pre-med major, and Yehuda Najman, a pre-med and English major, will be Coordinating Editors.

Aviva Ganchrow, a SCW Junior will be

Contributing Editor.

Five members of the 1983-84 Governing Board will be graduating this June. Shalom D. Stone, Editor-in-Chief, will be attending New York University Law School; Moshe Orenbuch, Associate Editor, will be working as an accountant at Deloit Haskins & Sells; Alan Stadtmauer and Steven Cohen will be in S'micha; and Norman Saffra will be attending medical school.

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Semikha—Yesterday and Today

By DANNY ROSENTHAL

Semikha. Many of us use the term, yet few of us know about its history and how the Yeshiva University program differs from its predecessors. To address this issue properly, it is necessary to examine the institution of Semikha, and its development over past centuries.

Semikha began when Moshe Rabbeinu placed his hands on the head of Yehoshua. Yehoshua so endowed his students with authority and they so authorized their Talmidim until traditional Semikha came to an end, probably sometime between the Fourth and Eighth centuries. A few attempts were made at restoring this Semikha, including one by Yaakov Berav in the 15th century in Safed. They were all unsuccessful.

Yeshivot were established in medieval Europe, and Roshei Yeshiva were authorized to give documents of Semikha to their pupils. Communities there and in the Middle East were often focused around a distinguished Rabbi, such as the "Chacham Bashi," chief rabbi of the Ottoman empire. Central authority was dissolved, though, with the uprooting of many European yeshivot in the 14th and 15th centuries, necessitating an institutionalized Semikha to insure validity of credentials.

The 18th century ushered in the beginnings of the Haskalah movement, a development which shook the "Orthodox" world. The traditional Jews reacted to the Haskala by increasingly divorcing themselves from secular material and studies.

In the first half of the 19th century, several European governments decided to only recognize the Semikha of those who also received secular training. Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary for instance, instituted such requirements in 1820. The traditional leaders, unwilling to deal with secular materials, refused to meet these requirements and a greater schism was established between them and the Haskala Jews.

During the latter half of the 19th century, an attempt was made at bridging the gap between the two schools of thought, with the founding of the Hildesheimer Seminary in Berlin. The Hildesheimer Seminary was created for the training of Orthodox Rabbis, incorporating secular knowledge and scientific methods in the process. The Hildesheimer Seminary produced many great *talmidei chachamim*, including Rav David Tzvi Hoffman, Dr. Eliezer Berkovits, Rav Yechiel Weinberg and Dr. Yosef Burg.

With mass emigration of European Jewry to the United States, the synagogue took on tremendous significance in Jewish life. As Jews arrived in a strange land, they desired communal institutions where they could meet with emigrants of their own lands, with whom they shared common backgrounds and languages. Securing this purpose, the synagogue became both a religious and social center. As leader of the synagogue congregation, the rabbi took on a functionary

role. He was a communal leader, ceremonial official and liaison between his own congregation and the Jewish and gentile communities at large. It was essential for these rabbis to be cosmopolitan and knowledgeable in general communal affairs. Yet, the two schools of thought persisted in the training of rabbis.

Yeshivat Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan, tried to bridge the gap between these two attitudes by employing the "Yeshiva" approach of Eastern Europe in learning, [unlike the Hildesheimer Seminary], while training students with skills required to serve the American Jewish community efficiently. Therefore, while RIETS taught talmidim halacha, it also required its students to have received college educations. In this manner, Yeshiva trained rabbis capable of serving as Torah Jews, while concurrently reaching out to the entire Jewish community.

Over recent years, several changes have come about in the trend of American Jewry concerns. As a higher percentage of the Jewish community has become knowledgeable in areas such as Nidah and Eruv, and "*ba'al habatim*" increasingly educated in many areas of Jewish law, higher demands are being placed on rabbis. Reflecting this change, Yeshiva's Semikha program has been intensified, and the Shimush program in particular has been solidified.

The changing RIETS program is consistent with the history of Semikha, reflecting the needs of changing societies.

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Torah and Derekh Eretz

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community, has better communal organization, a result of the German sense of community as opposed to the communal chaos in American Jewry. *Torah u Mada* is in danger of losing its identity by being dissolved in a sociological soup called "Modern Orthodoxy." People assume that keeping kosher, keeping shabbos, and earning a B.A. gives one free membership to the *Torah u Mada* society. *Torah u Mada* must stand for uncompromising devotion to *mitzvot*, and must not be mistaken for flippancy.

2) It is necessary for Jews to strive for Torah. *Torah u Mada* must not be viewed as a denial of legitimacy to those who spend time in Torah alone. What must be done is to find a place for exclusive Torah studies in the rubric of *Torah ve'Hokhma*. Rav Kook spoke about 2 movements: one inward, a deepening of the spirit, and the other outward, relating the inner spirit to the outside. Just as the first is embodied in traditional yeshivot, the second is embodied in the university. *Madah* is not meant to make up for a lack of Torah. It is not needed because the "Torah data base" is limited, but in order to create something new in the realm of the spirit. According to Rav Kook, the Sacred vitalizes everything. There is nothing absolutely profane or secular. There is only the holy and the not-yet-holy. *Chas v'shalom* to infer that there is no

difference between them. We must allow *kodesh* to strengthen itself and then to sanctify the profane. If *keddusha* just intensifies, without the second, outward stage, Torah remains sterile and hasn't fulfilled its function. The Torah-only track, as represented by the *kollelim* in YU, is justified and demanded. We need the awareness, though, that the end result of kollel is going out. (This is not identical with the *Torah lishmah* attitude of Rav Hayim Volozhin).

3) In the course of the resurgence of the right wing, Torah-and-Hokhma has been called *bidi'aved*, de facto and not de jure. It was appropriate, it was claimed, to Western Europe, but it is no longer applicable.

Such an attack is obscurantist, since it ignores Spanish, Provencal, German, and American Jewry. *Torah ve'Hokhma* is not a compromise, but a *derekh*.

We must learn to respond to the patronizing position that secular studies are kosher only for *parnasah*. Is their devotion to Torah so fragile that they will sell out for a few thousand more dollars a year? They should defy the civil authorities, since high school literature and history too aren't kosher. That would be consistent—and a denial of the wholeness of Torah, if it would make Torah a cripple.

4) I would like to see an effort to trace a *Torah ve'Hokhma* approach to the heart of Eastern European *machshava*. One of the

fundamental differences between Hasidim and Mitnagdim was how they viewed the world. Mitnagdim emphasized the transcendent nature of God, His separateness. Hasidim were immanentistic. *Elokut* infuses the world. The world exists within Divinity.

To Hasidim, all of the world has potential for divinity. There are realms of the *reshut*, of the permissible. Just as we can cook, tie our shoes, and sell insurance for the glory of God, so too can we learn secular studies *le'shem shamayim*.

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