

"THE YESHIVA UNIVERSE"

Our world is beset by baffling confusion. Unlike the Seder night, when ideas are clear and concepts are pure and values are uniform and practices are standard, when כִּלְיֵי תְּהֵא
3 מ פסח or פסח ; our times and our society are a mixture of good and evil, of pure and impure, of hametz and matzah, characterized by strife and struggle, by ambivalence and dilemma.

On all sides we are assailed by competing ideologies and mutually exclusive value systems, shriekingly laying claim to our loyalties. Each asserts with dogmatic confidence its own rightness and, in this age of the collapse of standards, with the pretense to absolute virtue. Licentiousness pretends to be just another and legitimate form of morality, in this case the "New Morality"; how is a young person to know which to choose? Pornography parades as literature, obscenity is disguised as realism, nudity proclaims itself art; how are we to judge? Big power cynicism is presented as the impartial arbitration of objective justice; to whom are we to appeal? Children, impressed by television, sooner or later learn the phoniness in so many of the commercials, and they conclude that "everything is a fake." This ubiquitous cynicism soon insinuates itself into every aspect of their lives, and the result is -- an overwhelming confusion which reaches to every level of existence.

During the month of Ellul, our custom is to sound the Shofar every morning in order *לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין ה' וְבֵין שָׂטָן*, to "confuse Satan." Now, at the other end of the year, it seems that Satan is doing quite well for himself in confusing us...

What is needed, therefore, is the exercise of one particular faculty of the human psyche: the power to discern and discriminate and distinguish between the real and the fictional, the genuine and the artificial, right and wrong, licit and illicit. In a word, we need: havdalah. When we recite this prayer, we bless God who distinguishes *בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחול, בֵּין אור לְחשך* -- between sacred and profane, light and dark, Israel and the nations, Sabbath and weekday. Jewish practice calls for us to recite this havdalah on Saturday nights and at the end of holidays, not only over a cup of wine, but also during the Amidah of the evening prayer which marks the transition from holy-day to week-day. And the Talmud requires that the havdalah be recited specifically in the blessing which begins *אֵלֹהֵינוּ הוּא הַמַּגִּיד חֵן וְחֶסֶד*, in which we pray to the Almighty for the gift of wisdom and knowledge and understanding. What is the relevance of havdalah to this specific blessing? The Rabbis answer: *אֵין אֵין חֵן וְחֶסֶד*, "if there is no knowledge, whence the ability to distinguish?" In other words, the ability to discern between different values, to discriminate and to distinguish between competing claims, and there-

fore the ability to emerge whole from the confusions that reign in life, requires daat -- special insights and intellectual gifts.

And yet, if we examine the passage of the havdalah carefully, we remain with the question: why so? Apparently, it should be rather easy to make these distinctions. Any child can tell the difference between light and dark; reference to identity of the parents will tell us if one is Jewish or non-Jewish; the difference between the Sabbath and weekdays is nothing more complicated than consulting a calendar; and even the distinction between sacred and profane is not overly taxing -- who cannot tell apart, for instance, a Sefer Torah from a novel? Why, then, the special requirement for daat or knowledge, for intellectual graces, in order to perform havdalah?

The answer is that for those who are superficial or who dwell in only one realm, daat is indeed unnecessary. If we associate only with kodesh (holiness), Israel, ore (light), and Sabbath, or only with hol (the profane), the nations, hoshekh (darkness), and weekday, it is easy to discern distinctions and life is much less confusing. The full agnostic has few problems. There is little to confuse him. He swallows all of contemporary life, and therefore he has no difficulties in trying to tell apart its various strands. Similarly, at the other end of the spectrum, the Jew who does not step out of his self-imposed boundaries of the

sacred, of Israel, of the light of Torah, rejects all that is new and secular and alien in the contemporary culture, and he too has little to confuse him.

However, daat is needed and havdalah is vital for those of us who choose to live in both realms and will reject neither -- for those of us who opt both for light and darkness, for Israel and the nations, for Sabbath and weekdays, for the sacred and the profane.

This category describes most of us, who are known by the somewhat unfelicitous name "Modern Orthodox," who will not succumb to the blandishments of the materialistic and hedonistic and agnostic society, and yet refuse the easy comforts of intellectual ghettoization; who believe that the function and the mission of the Jew in the world is to illuminate the hoshekh (darkness); to sanctify the hol (profane); to bring the Jewish message to the nations; and to introduce the warmth and meaningfulness of the Sabbath to all the days of the week. For us, who are involved in this great mission, was the dictum of the Rabbis meant: im ein daat, havdalah minayin. It is we, who straddle both worlds, who are therefore subject to the danger of confusion, and who therefore need the special divine gift of daat or knowledge, insight, in order to be able to perform havdalah, always to distinguish between the light and the dark, even when we try to il-

illuminate the shadows of life; to know what separates the holy and the profane, even when we try to consecrate the secular.

Educationally, the highest expression of this point of view is Yeshiva University. For Yeshiva is more than a university; it is truly a universe, a microcosm of the American Orthodox world -- its vices and its virtues, its faults and its merits, its promises and its potentials, its currents and sub-currents. No other place in the world offers such a combination: a Yeshiva and a graduate school of science, an Erna Michael College for Men and a Stern College for Women; a Talmudic Kollel and a medical school...

The ideal of Yeshiva is: kiddush ha-hol, the sanctification of the profane and the illumination of the dark and the Judaization of the general. It is Yeshiva, therefore, which strives most mightily for that daat to keep havdalah, to be able at all times to discern and distinguish, to avoid confusion in a terribly confusing world.

This vast educational complex, this "Yeshiva Universe," is something new in Jewish history: new institutionally, and even new ideologically, although we have respectable precedent.

In introducing the havdalah on Saturday night, we quote a verse which comes from this morning's Haftorah, the 12th chapter of Isaiah: וְיָשְׂמְחוּ בְּיְהוָה בְּיֹם הַהוּא, "With joy shall

you draw waters out of the wells of salvation." The Targum, or Aramaic translator, rendered that verse as: וְהָיָה לָכֵן וְהָיָה לָכֵן וְהָיָה לָכֵן, "And you shall receive a new teaching in joy from the chosen of the righteous." Yeshiva University represents that וְהָיָה לָכֵן, that new teaching: the joining of sacred to secular and the sublimation of the Dark as it is bathed in the glory of the Light. This "new teaching" is the vision of some of the greatest Jewish scholars, the וְהָיָה לָכֵן וְהָיָה לָכֵן, of our and of past generations -- and it is one which, because of the implied risks, constantly requires daat and increasing havdalah in order to save our generation from confusion.

But if Yeshiva's task is to "draw the teachings out of the wellsprings of the Sages," it must turn to us, to the lay community, and draw support from the wellsprings of our generosity.

We at The Jewish Center have always been the greatest supporters of the Yeshiva University. Our involvement with the Yeshiva is legend.

Now is not the time to slacken in our efforts, but, on the contrary, to quicken our support. If the whole experiment of Yeshiva means something to us, we must help.

If we want our youth to find the guide for the way out of its confusion, we must assist.

If we want our children, wherever they are, to be inspired by the examples of Yeshiva's student body, which almost alone amongst American universities, has remained an island of sanity in the midst of the waves of vandalism and paroxysms of madness -- composed of equal parts of idealism and wildness-- that have inundated American academia -- we must not stand aside.

We cannot give the same as before. With prices rising all about us, as we know from our own personal experience, we must keep in mind that the same holds true for the cost of quality education. Therefore, our contributions must rise accordingly.

There is a beautiful and charming Jewish custom, that when we make havdalah, we spill some of the wine as we cause the cup to overflow. The reason for this is given in the Talmud: פ"ד
ה"א ה"ב ה"ג ה"ד ה"ה ה"ו ה"ז ה"ח ה"ט ה"י ה"יא ה"יב ה"יג ה"יד ה"טו ה"טז ה"יז ה"יח ה"יט ה"כ ה"כא ה"כב ה"כג ה"כד ה"כה ה"כו ה"כז ה"כח ה"כט ה"ל ה"מ ה"מא ה"מב ה"מג ה"מד ה"מה ה"מו ה"מז ה"מח ה"מט ה"נ ה"נא ה"נב ה"נג ה"נד ה"נה ה"נו ה"נז ה"נח ה"נט ה"ס ה"סא ה"סב ה"סג ה"סד ה"סה ה"סו ה"סז ה"סח ה"סט ה"ע ה"עא ה"עב ה"עג ה"עד ה"עה ה"עו ה"עז ה"עח ה"עט ה"פ ה"פא ה"פב ה"פג ה"פד ה"פה ה"פו ה"פז ה"פח ה"פט ה"ק ה"קא ה"קב ה"קג ה"קד ה"קה ה"קו ה"קז ה"קח ה"קט ה"קכ ה"קכא ה"קכב ה"קכג ה"קכד ה"קכה ה"קכו ה"קכז ה"קכח ה"קכט ה"קל ה"קלא ה"קלב ה"קלג ה"קלד ה"קלה ה"קלו ה"קלז ה"קלח ה"קלט ה"קס ה"קסא ה"קסב ה"קסג ה"קסד ה"קסה ה"קסו ה"קסז ה"קסח ה"קסט ה"קע ה"קעא ה"קעב ה"קעג ה"קעד ה"קעה ה"קעו ה"קעז ה"קעח ה"קעט ה"קפ ה"קפא ה"קפב ה"קפג ה"קפד ה"קפה ה"קפו ה"קפז ה"קפח ה"קפט ה"קצ ה"קצא ה"קצב ה"קצג ה"קצד ה"קצה ה"קצו ה"קצז ה"קצח ה"קצט ה"ר ה"רא ה"רב ה"רג ה"רד ה"רה ה"רו ה"רז ה"רח ה"רט ה"רס ה"רסא ה"רסב ה"רסג ה"רסד ה"רסה ה"רסו ה"רסז ה"רסח ה"רסט ה"רע ה"רעא ה"רעב ה"רעג ה"רעד ה"רעה ה"רעו ה"רעז ה"רעח ה"רעט ה"רפ ה"רפא ה"רפב ה"רפג ה"רפד ה"רפה ה"רפו ה"רפז ה"רפח ה"רפט ה"רצ ה"רצא ה"רצב ה"רצג ה"רצד ה"רצה ה"רצו ה"רצז ה"רצח ה"רצט ה"ש ה"שא ה"שב ה"שג ה"שד ה"שה ה"שו ה"שז ה"שח ה"שט ה"שס ה"שסא ה"שסב ה"שסג ה"שסד ה"שסה ה"שסו ה"שסז ה"שסח ה"שסט ה"שע ה"שעא ה"שעב ה"שעג ה"שעד ה"שעה ה"שעו ה"שעז ה"שעח ה"שעט ה"שפ ה"שפא ה"שפב ה"שפג ה"שפד ה"שפה ה"שפו ה"שפז ה"שפח ה"שפט ה"שצ ה"שצא ה"שצב ה"שצג ה"שצד ה"שצה ה"שצו ה"שצז ה"שצח ה"שצט ה"ת ה"תא ה"תב ה"תג ה"תד ה"תה ה"תו ה"תז ה"תח ה"תט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תע ה"תעא ה"תעב ה"תעג ה"תעד ה"תעה ה"תעו ה"תעז ה"תעח ה"תעט ה"תפ ה"תפא ה"תפב ה"תפג ה"תפד ה"תפה ה"תפו ה"תפז ה"תפח ה"תפט ה"תצ ה"תצא ה"תצב ה"תצג ה"תצד ה"תצה ה"תצו ה"תצז ה"תצח ה"תצט ה"תק ה"תקא ה"תקב ה"תקג ה"תקד ה"תקה ה"תקו ה"תקז ה"תקח ה"תקט ה"תקס ה"תקסא ה"תקסב ה"תקסג ה"תקסד ה"תקסה ה"תקסו ה"תקסז ה"תקסח ה"תקסט ה"תקע ה"תקעא ה"תקעב ה"תקעג ה"תקעד ה"תקעה ה"תקעו ה"תקעז ה"תקעח ה"תקעט ה"תקפ ה"תקפא ה"תקפב ה"תקפג ה"תקפד ה"תקפה ה"תקפו ה"תקפז ה"תקפח ה"תקפט ה"תקצ ה"תקצא ה"תקצב ה"תקצג ה"תקצד ה"תקצה ה"תקצו ה"תקצז ה"תקצח ה"תקצט ה"תל ה"תלא ה"תלב ה"תלג ה"תלד ה"תלה ה"תלו ה"תלז ה"תלח ה"תלט ה"תלס ה"תלסא ה"תלסב ה"תלסג ה"תלסד ה"תלסה ה"תלסו ה"תלסז ה"תלסח ה"תלסט ה"תלע ה"תלעא ה"תלעב ה"תלעג ה"תלעד ה"תלעה ה"תלעו ה"תלעז ה"תלעח ה"תלעט ה"תלפ ה"תלפא ה"תלפב ה"תלפג ה"תלפד ה"תלפה ה"תלפו ה"תלפז ה"תלפח ה"תלפט ה"תלצ ה"תלצא ה"תלצב ה"תלצג ה"תלצד ה"תלצה ה"תלצו ה"תלצז ה"תלצח ה"תלצט ה"תמ ה"תמא ה"תמב ה"תמג ה"תמד ה"תמה ה"תמו ה"תמז ה"תמח ה"תמט ה"תמס ה"תמסא ה"תמסב ה"תמסג ה"תמסד ה"תמסה ה"תמסו ה"תמסז ה"תמסח ה"תמסט ה"תמע ה"תמעא ה"תמעב ה"תמעג ה"תמעד ה"תמעה ה"תמעו ה"תמעז ה"תמעח ה"תמעט ה"תמפ ה"תמפא ה"תמפב ה"תמפג ה"תמפד ה"תמפה ה"תמפו ה"תמפז ה"תמפח ה"תמפט ה"תמצ ה"תמצא ה"תמצב ה"תמצג ה"תמצד ה"תמצה ה"תמצו ה"תמצז ה"תמצח ה"תמצט ה"תנ ה"תנא ה"תנב ה"תנג ה"תנד ה"תנה ה"תנו ה"תנז ה"תנח ה"תנט ה"תנס ה"תנסא ה"תנסב ה"תנסג ה"תנסד ה"תנסה ה"תנסו ה"תנסז ה"תנסח ה"תנסט ה"תנע ה"תנעא ה"תנעב ה"תנעג ה"תנעד ה"תנעה ה"תנעו ה"תנעז ה"תנעח ה"תנעט ה"תנפ ה"תנפא ה"תנפב ה"תנפג ה"תנפד ה"תנפה ה"תנפו ה"תנפז ה"תנפח ה"תנפט ה"תנצ ה"תנצא ה"תנצב ה"תנצג ה"תנצד ה"תנצה ה"תנצו ה"תנצז ה"תנצח ה"תנצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז ה"תסעח ה"תסעט ה"תספ ה"תספא ה"תספב ה"תספג ה"תספד ה"תספה ה"תספו ה"תספז ה"תספח ה"תספט ה"תסצ ה"תסצא ה"תסצב ה"תסצג ה"תסצד ה"תסצה ה"תסצו ה"תסצז ה"תסצח ה"תסצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז ה"תסעח ה"תסעט ה"תספ ה"תספא ה"תספב ה"תספג ה"תספד ה"תספה ה"תספו ה"תספז ה"תספח ה"תספט ה"תסצ ה"תסצא ה"תסצב ה"תסצג ה"תסצד ה"תסצה ה"תסצו ה"תסצז ה"תסצח ה"תסצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז ה"תסעח ה"תסעט ה"תספ ה"תספא ה"תספב ה"תספג ה"תספד ה"תספה ה"תספו ה"תספז ה"תספח ה"תספט ה"תסצ ה"תסצא ה"תסצב ה"תסצג ה"תסצד ה"תסצה ה"תסצו ה"תסצז ה"תסצח ה"תסצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז ה"תסעח ה"תסעט ה"תספ ה"תספא ה"תספב ה"תספג ה"תספד ה"תספה ה"תספו ה"תספז ה"תספח ה"תספט ה"תסצ ה"תסצא ה"תסצב ה"תסצג ה"תסצד ה"תסצה ה"תסצו ה"תסצז ה"תסצח ה"תסצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז ה"תסעח ה"תסעט ה"תספ ה"תספא ה"תספב ה"תספג ה"תספד ה"תספה ה"תספו ה"תספז ה"תספח ה"תספט ה"תסצ ה"תסצא ה"תסצב ה"תסצג ה"תסצד ה"תסצה ה"תסצו ה"תסצז ה"תסצח ה"תסצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז ה"תסעח ה"תסעט ה"תספ ה"תספא ה"תספב ה"תספג ה"תספד ה"תספה ה"תספו ה"תספז ה"תספח ה"תספט ה"תסצ ה"תסצא ה"תסצב ה"תסצג ה"תסצד ה"תסצה ה"תסצו ה"תסצז ה"תסצח ה"תסצט ה"תס ה"תסא ה"תסב ה"תסג ה"תסד ה"תסה ה"תסו ה"תסז ה"תסח ה"תסט ה"תסע ה"תסעא ה"תסעב ה"תסעג ה"תסעד ה"תסעה ה"תסעו ה"תסעז

bolic act, to all members of our family, that this week we shall make every effort to be relaxed and generous and tranquil. Usually, the "master of the household" becomes upset and angry if money, even small amounts, is wasted in one way or another during the week. All too often, it is these financial trivia, that cause so much aggravation of the normal tensions of living. At havdalah time, therefore, we purposely spill a little wine, as if it were just water, in order to show that this week we shall make every effort to exercise our generosity, not to be angry, not to withhold, not to be stingy. We shall try to open our hearts -- and that is the greatest siman berakhah, sign of blessing.

I ask you now, at our annual Passover appeal for Yeshiva University: show your joy in giving, and in giving more than usual.

Let your generosity flow like water.

As we appeal for an institution that teaches daat for havdalah, that which can give directions to us out of the pervasive confusion that surrounds, I appeal to you as well: do it in the right spirit -- with joy, with gladness, without begrudging.

הוֹצֵא מִן הַכֶּלִי , draw from your possessions and your substance "with joy."

And may it be, for you and us and all Israel, a siman berakhah, a sign of unending blessing.