



**Pardes**  
PROJECT

**WALLS**



3:2

**MANY OF THE TOPICS INCLUDED  
IN THE PARDES CURRICULUM  
ARE FAR-REACHING AND HAVE  
BROAD RAMIFICATIONS.**

**THE INTENT OF PARDES IS TO  
PROMOTE SENSITIVITY AND  
SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH  
EXPOSURE TO A VARIETY OF  
TORAH SOURCES.**

**IT IS NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW  
OF PARDES TO ARRIVE AT  
CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO  
DECISIONS OF HALACHA.**

**PLEASE CONSULT YOUR RABBI  
FOR PERSONAL DECISIONS.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**F**or centuries the Walls of Jerusalem have symbolized the strength and unity of the Jewish people. Their beauty and grandeur are a source of inspiration. But walls do more than merely shelter that which is within; they also separate that which is within from external influences. And so, the Jewish people, throughout their long exile, maintained the Walls of Jerusalem in the form of the walls of the ghetto that separated Jews from their non-Jewish neighbors, and helped preserve the Jewish people as a nation.

But with the emancipation movement of the 19th century, the walls of the ghetto began to crumble and while in exile, Jews began to flee their "holy cities." They became involved in business, the arts, science and philosophy. And every area they touched, this small sequestered people made important contributions to the world.

Yet, at the same time, new ghetto walls were erected — this time between Jew and Jew. Between those who felt that the essence of

Judaism still lay in the people's uniqueness and separation, and those who felt that Jews best fulfill their roles by being out in the world. Between those who claim that the true Jewish vision was lost, and those who claim that it was found. Many angry words and accusations have been hurled between these two positions, and this may well be the basis for the debate that tears at Jewish unity today.

### **Rabbi Eliezer Shore**

## **HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?**

**1** A newly married couple turns to you for advice. They have been invited to join a group of four traditional Jewish couples who will establish their homes in a town that has many Jews, but no Jewish institutions. Both, the young husband and wife, are recent professional school graduates, and the town offers many attractive career opportunities. The couple had intended to live in a Jewishly active community and raise their family to have strong Jewish values. One spouse believes that the move would offer them great opportunities to grow as Jews and to learn of the ideas and insights of Jews with varying backgrounds. The other spouse is terrified that moving to a community with no formal Jewish institutions will weaken their, and their future children's Jewish commitments. What would you advise them?

**2** As one who prides himself on being tolerant and open minded, you often encourage your eleven year old to be exposed to the world. You let your child read all kinds of literature and watch a wide range of TV programs. But when you decide

to install an Internet monitoring device, your pre-teen protests because your credo has always been, "all knowledge is good knowledge." But is it?

**3** Your son refuses to return to the United States after a post high school year studying in Israel. He declares that he has no further interest in pursuing secular studies and that religious studies alone will sustain him. He further rejects participating in the heathen world of the United States that you have called home. He does, however, need some money for new clothes and food. You are devastated by his rejection of your world and your life style, both of which you always considered to be of the highest degree of Jewish observance and commitment. You are further wary that the isolationism and narrow mindset that he is adopting is foreign to the wholesome and integrated Judaism that you have been taught to cherish. You are inclined to demand your son's return home, while your spouse argues that your son is mature and independent, and that the choices made by your son may, in fact, serve him well.

It is customary to recite the following prayer before entering into a Torah discussion.

**Shulchan Aruch O.H. 110**

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ואלקי אבותי שלא יארע דבר תקלה על ידי ולא אכשל בדבר הלכה וישמחו בי חברי ולא אומר על טמא טהור ולא על טהור טמא ולא על מותר אסור ולא על אסור מותר ולא יכשלו חברי בדבר הלכה ואשמח בהם. כי ה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה. גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך.

**M**ay it be Your will, Hashem my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that You illuminate my eyes with the light of your Torah and that You save me from all stumbling blocks and errors, whether it be in discussions of what is prohibited and what is permitted or in monetary matters, whether it be in any other Halachic decisions or just in theoretical study. I pray that I do not make any mistakes, and if I do, my study partners should not take delight in them. I pray that I should not proclaim the impure pure or the pure impure, the permitted forbidden or the forbidden permitted. I pray that I should not derive joy from the errors of my study partner. Open my eyes and allow me to see the wonders of Your Torah because it is from G-d that all wisdom comes forth, it is from His mouth that I will acquire wisdom and understanding. Amen.

## PREFACE

*If you rent a room in which to live a settled life, and then rent another room in a hotel in order to live as a tourist, you are certainly leading a "double life." But if you rent two rooms in one apartment, you have not a double life but a broad life... That, my dear friend, is your obligation in the world: to place in the center of your life the "One"...and every new point that you acquire will simply serve to broaden the circle, and its unity will remain.*

**Letter from Rabbi Yitzhak Hutner, Pachad Yitzchok; Igros, letter 94.**

**Source, p. 27 Biography, p. 15**

## DISCUSSION POINTS

**1** *And you shall be holy to Me, for I the L-rd am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.*

**Leviticus 20:26**

**Source, p. 28**

*And now, says the L-rd...I have given you to be a light unto the nations, that My salvation may be to the ends of the earth.*

**Isaiah 49:6**

**Source, p. 28**

**2** As long as we were exposed to such a soulless, impersonal confrontation on the part of non-Jewish society, it was impossible for us to participate to the fullest extent in the great universal creative confrontation between man and the cosmic order. The limited role we played until modern times in the great cosmic confrontation was not of our choosing. Heaven knows that we never encouraged the cruel relationship, which the world displayed toward us. We have always considered ourselves an inseparable part of humanity and we were ever ready to accept the Divine challenge, "Fill the earth and subdue it," and

the responsibility implicit in human existence. We have never proclaimed the philosophy of *contempus or odium seculi*. We have steadily maintained that involvement in the creative scheme of things is mandatory.

**Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, Tradition, v. 6 n. 2, Spring-Summer 1964  
Biography, p. 18**

But...

**3** This sense of a fate-laden existence of necessity give rise to the historical loneliness of the Jew. He is alone both in life and in death.... Let the sociologists and psychologists say what they may about the incomprehensible alienation of the Jew. All their explanations are vain and empty speculations which do not shed any intelligible light on this phenomenon. Jewish loneliness is part of the framework of the covenant of faith that was made in Egypt....

Even if a person achieves the pinnacle of social or political success, he will still not be able to free himself from the chains of isolation. This paradoxical fate has preserved both the separateness and the uniqueness of the Jew despite his supposed integration into his foreign, non-Jewish environment.

**Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, Kol Dodi Dofek  
Biography, p. 18**

**4** It is human nature for a person's opinions and actions to be influenced by his friends, acquaintances and the ways of his fellow countrymen. Therefore, a person should associate with the righteous and sit by the sages continually, in order to learn from their deeds. He should distance himself from the wicked, who walk in darkness, so as not to learn from them...If he is in a country where the customs are perverse and the citizens do not follow the correct path, he should move to a country where the people are just, and act properly. And if all the countries he knows about act unjustly, as is the case today, or he is not able to move...he should dwell alone, as it says, "He sits alone and is silent" (Job 3,28). And if there are sinners who do not allow him to live in his country unless he joins them and follows their evil ways, he should go

live in caves, thickets, and deserts rather than follow them...

**Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Hilchos Da'os 6:1**

**Source, p. 29 Biography, p. 19**

**5** In retrospect, the insight of Rabbi Moses Sofer has been stunningly vindicated. Chasidim had already adopted it. It came to be taken up by Samson Raphael Hirsch as well. Judaism would survive precisely if faithful Jews...dissociated themselves from the rest of the Jewish world. In the protected enclaves of the Yeshivah, or the Chasidic community, or the Hirschian school-synagogue nexus, they could pursue a life of religious intensity strong enough to resist the tide of secularization and assimilation. The world of tradition was collapsing around them. What else could be done but conserve a "saving remnant"? The more independent they were of the general Jewish community, the more free they were to develop an elite that would eventually emerge, in an age more congenial to tradition, as heirs of the Jewish future. [It took almost two centuries.] But that, in the last two decades, is precisely what has happened. To these heroic figures, who guarded tradition's flame against the cold extinguishing winds of modernity, Judaism owes an eternal debt. But there was a price to be paid. The price was the atrophy of the concept of "the congregation of Israel."

**Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of England, Arguments for the Sake of Heaven, pp. 181-182**

**Biography, p. 23**

**6** Israel was only sent into exile to accept converts.

**Talmud Pesachim 87b**

**Source, p. 30**

When G-d wants to bring a new reality into existence, He needs to connect a "new planting" that was not part of the original, for if it was originally there, it would not be something new. Therefore, when G-d wanted to bring the seed of the Moshiach into the world, he had to attach a new thing. This is because it is not possible to bring a new concept or new experience into the world except through the non-

Jews. And the further a nation is from Israel, the better it is to produce a new existence. Thus it is from Amon and Moav that this new existence will come, for there are no nations further from Israel than they. As it says, "They shall not come into the congregation of the L-rd" (Deuteronomy 23:4). This is not like any other nation. Therefore, it is fitting that Moshiach should come from them, for he [will create] a new existence.

**Maharal, Netzach Yisroel, chap. 32**

**Source, p. 31 Biography, p. 19**

**7** Just as every nation has its own unique type of evil, so does it have its own unique spark of holiness from which it draws its life, as the verse says, "And You give life to them all" (Nechemia 9:6). For without this, they could not exist. This life force from G-d is certainly good. The purpose of exile is for Israel to absorb this good...and when they do, the good becomes part of them.

**Rabbi Tzadok HaKohein of Lublin, Tzidkas Hatzadik 256**

**Source, p. 32 Biography, p. 21**

**8** The highest level of our love for all creatures must be the love of humanity, which should extend to all its members. Despite the differences of religion and ideology, despite the differences of race and environment, one should try to understand the mentality of the various nations and factions as much as possible, in order to appreciate their character and nature. Then one can know how to base the love of humanity on foundations that lead to actual deed.

Only when the soul is enriched by the love of all creatures and all humanity can the love of [Israel] be elevated to its lofty station and attain greatness, both in spirit and in practice. It is a mean eye that causes one to see only ugliness and impurity in everything beyond the bounds of Israel, the unique nation. This is one of the most awful, debased forms of darkness. It damages the entire edifice of spiritual virtue, the light of which every sensitive soul seeks.

**Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaKohen Kook, Midos HaRayah, Ahavah 10**

**Biography, p. 21**

But...

**9** It was upon the ten tribes to establish the holiness of Israel in the world. Judah and Joseph held different opinions. Joseph claimed that the purpose of Israel's holiness was to intermingle with the non-Jews and to teach them the way of G-d...and to bring holiness to the nations of the world. Judah, however, claimed that the holiness of Israel needed to be separate from the nations. "A people who dwell alone" (Numbers 23:9) — lest they mix with the nations and learn their ways. He saw that from Ephraim would come Yeravam, who set up idols [in Israel] as a result of his assimilation. Judah was actually correct, for the path of Joseph is dangerous for the preservation of the Jewish people as a whole. Therefore, Judah said, "What benefit is there in killing our brother and covering his blood?" If it is G-d's will that a path such as Joseph's should exist in the world, what good will it do to kill him? "Let us sell him to the Ishmaelite." Let Joseph face assimilation among the nations, then we will see what will come from his opinion.

**Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaKohen Kook, Shu'os Reiyah, Vayeshev 1930**

**Biography, p. 21**

**10** [The Jewish people] took counsel and agreed to associate with the Egyptians and not be overly separate from them, so that they should not be regarded as foreigners and strangers among them. They hoped that the Egyptians' hatred would lessen. This certainly makes sense. The Holy One, however, had to restore the difference by reviving hatred in the Egyptians' hearts. This was not a form of punishment at all, only a way of protecting the Jews from assimilating among them. It was all for the good.... We have seen this with our own eyes. During this long exile in Hungary and Romania hatred toward the Jew increases daily. This defies the laws of nature and logic.... The reason for this is that, as the distinction between Jew and Gentile breaks down by the Jews not keeping the Torah and its commandments, G-d increases the hatred to keep the distinction alive.

**Rabbi Yosef Ber Soloveitchik in Beis HaLevi, Shemos**

**Source, p. 33 Biography, p. 16**

**11** Rabbi Yossi ben Kisma said: "Once I was walking on the road, when a certain man met me. He greeted me, 'Shalom,' and I returned his greeting, 'Shalom.' He said to me, 'Rabbi, from what place are you?' I said to him, 'I am from a great city of scholars and sages.' He said to me, 'Rabbi, if you would be willing to live with us in our place, I would give you a fortune in dinars, precious stones and pearls.' I replied, 'Even if you were to give me all the silver and gold, precious stones and pearls in the world. I would only dwell in a place of Torah.' And so it is written in the Book of Psalms by David, King of Israel: 'The Torah of Your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.'"

**Pirkei Avos 6:9**

**Source, p. 34**

Rabbi Yossi was concerned about living in a place lacking Torah. Even though he could have moved there and made it into a place of Torah. Despite his high spiritual level, he saw that there was danger that they would influence him. We learn from this a very great thing. Spirituality is not spread by going to a place far from Torah, sitting with people in their place and to trying to influence them. Rather, a person should remain in his own place and try to draw others to him, and to shine upon them the light of his Torah. Because he is in a place of Torah, there is no great danger that he will be influenced by them, for his surroundings will protect him.

**Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Michtav M'El'yohu Vol. 2; pg. 112-113**

**Source, p. 34 Biography, p. 22**

**12** When all the other nations go into exile and become intermingled with their captors, they are regarded with love and esteem — more so than if they had remained separate. This is not true of Israel. When she is alone, and does not mix with the nations, she will dwell in peace and in honor. "All the people of the land will see that G-d's Name is called upon them," and no one will disturb her.

**Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Judah Berlin, HaEmek Davar, Bamidbar 23:9**

**Source, p. 35 Biography, p. 24**

**13** The purpose of a wall is not only to prevent negative forces outside the city from entering, but also to unite the inhabitants of the city within, so that they become one — the people of the city. The breaking of the wall not only allows negative influences from without to enter it also opens up an exit from the city, that divides the unity and permit the people of the city to leave. Spiritually, the walls of Jerusalem were meant to unite the Jewish people in a perfect love of Israel.

[However,] there is also a benefit to the breaking down of the wall, drawn from the side of holiness. For it means the end of the measurement and limitation of the walls of Jerusalem. [Thus fulfilling] the verse, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited like unwalled towns because of the multitude of men and cattle that shall be in her; for I will be to her a wall of fire round about, says the L-rd, and will be the glory in the midst of her" (Zecharia 2:8-9).

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, Likutey Mamarim,**

**17 Tammuz 5747**

**Biography, p. 25**

**14** *Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, who makes a division between the sacred and the mundane, between light and darkness, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six workdays. Blessed are you G-d, who separates the sacred from the mundane.*

**Havdalah prayer recited at the conclusion of Shabbos**

**Source, p. 35**



## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner (1906-1980)**

**R**av Hutner was a founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Pachad Yitzchok in Har Nof Jerusalem, Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, and Kollel Gur Aryeh, which have produced thousands of disciples. Though a brilliant Rosh Yeshiva whose lectures on Talmud were dazzling, he expended greater efforts on his discourses on morals and ethics and on demonstrating the spiritual power of the Yomim Tovim (Jewish Holidays) and Yomim Noraim (High Holy Days). This came from his recognition

that though there were many Roshei Yeshiva capable of delivering illuminating Talmudic lectures, there were very few who could provide guidance in the non-halachic 'aspects' of Torah and Avodah (worship); who could provide a body of principles that made Judaism exciting, challenging, and inspiring.

Recognizing the critical importance of creating well-rounded disciples prepared to communicate the power and depth of Judaism he concentrated his efforts in this area. In 1949 he began publishing his discourses on morals and ethics which he subtitled,

Divrei Torah B'Inyanei Hilchot Deot V'Chovot Halevovot, a phrase formerly used by Rav Kook, who exercised a profound influence upon him.

He combined brilliance of intellect with intense passion and once remarked, "I speak poetry and they wish to hear prose." He was interested in all areas of knowledge and was the antithesis of provincialism. He said that contradictions did not bother him and once proudly recalled having had R. Amram Blau and R. Tzvi Yehudah Kook in his waiting room at the same time.

As a young man he wrote *Torat Hanazir* on the Rambam *Hilchot Nezirut*. He wrote a profound commentary (*Kovetz Heaerot*) on *Rabbeinu Hillel on the Safra*. His discourses on *Yomim Tovim* and *Shabbat* (*Pachad Yitzchok*) are collected in seven volumes. In addition there is a volume of letters and a *Memorial* (*Sefer Zikkaron*) volume which contains a 130 page biography.

**Rabbi Yosef  
Ber Soloveitchik  
(1820-1892)  
The Bais HaLevi**

**R**abbi Yosef Ber Soloveitchik (hereafter R.Y.B.S.) was the great grandson of Rabbi Chaim Volozhin (foremost disciple of the Vilna Gaon and founder of *Yeshivat Volozhin*) and the great grandfather of Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik (1903-1993). Living during a period of great turbulence and transition, he represented the highest level of scholarship, absolute loyalty to tradition and extraordinary sensitivity for the plight of the poor and unfortunate.

R.Y.B.S. was possessed of one of the great minds of his time, and in 1854 was invited to become co-Rosh *Yeshiva* of *Volozhin* together with the *Netziv* (R.N.T.Y. Berlin). However, it became apparent that the two giants were temperamentally incompatible and after serving in the *Yeshiva* for ten years the *Bais HaLevi* felt it necessary to leave. In 1865 he became Rabbi of *Slutzk*. One of his first acts after arriving in his new position was to visit the *chedarim*, and, when observing the impoverished state of many children, arranged for lunches to be served which were paid for by the

community. His son, R. Chaim Soloveitchik, renowned for his creative genius, but who was also known for his extraordinary acts of kindness, once compared himself to his father, stating that while he himself responded to peoples' needs, his father made sure to discover on his own what their needs were. While in *Slutzk*, R.Y.B.S. was deeply involved in communal affairs and also taught Torah to some of the great minds of the generation (e.g. R. Yosef Rosen the *Rogotchover*, R. Zalman Sender Shapiro). He was a fierce opponent of the *Maskilim* and it was because of the undue influence of a well-known *Maskil* that he left *Slutzk* in 1874 and moved to *Warsaw* where he lived in great poverty. When Rabbi Y.L. Diskind left for *Eretz Yisrael* in 1878, Rabbi Soloveitchik was offered the rabbinate of *Brisk*. He remained there until his death, when his son R. Chaim succeeded him.

It was said of the *Bais HaLevi* that his fear of sin was comparable to an ordinary person's fear when his life is in danger. His personal life was full of tragedy, but this did not break his powerful spirit and sense of justice. His works are characterized by their consistent brilliance and originality. In *parshat Bo*

he posits the fascinating thesis that the *mitzvot* do not flow from their seeming reason, but rather the reasons arise because the *mitzva* existed in the Torah which preceded the world. In his youth he lived in *Brod* for a time where R. Shlomo Kluger was rabbi and the latter enjoyed discussing Torah with the young scholar. When R.Y.B. was leaving R. Shlomo said to him, "you have always resolved my difficulties (*kushiot*) but I have one difficulty you cannot resolve: how difficult for me is your parting."

In 1892 the government insisted that the *Volozhin Yeshiva* should extensively revise its curriculum to include a substantial amount of secular studies, much of which must be studied in the morning hours. The agonizing question arose whether to comply and totally transform the character of the *Yeshiva* or permit the *Yeshiva* to close. Some of the greatest leaders were called into session. Some of the assembled were inclined to agree to the changes. Whereupon with tears in his eyes the *Bais HaLevi* spoke up expressing his sharp disagreement: "We are duty bound to teach Torah and bequeath our heritage to the next generation in the way of our forefathers, not by new, unacceptable

means. We cannot assume responsibility for such changes. Let He who gave the Torah do His!" **M.G.**

### **Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik (1903-1993)**

**R**abbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik was born into a family already known for its great Torah learning. His grandfather and father, emphasized a thorough analysis of Talmud, and it is in this way that Rav Soloveitchik studied and taught his own students. He was awarded a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin, and then settled in Boston in the early 1930's. He became Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshiva University, and gave weekly shiurim to senior students, while delivering philosophy lectures to graduate students. His accomplishments in both Halachic study and secular study made him a unique Torah personality to Torah scholars all over.

His limitless expertise in and appreciation of secular disciplines never lessened his total devotion to Torah study. Indeed Torah study was the central focus of his life and his teachings. His public historic shiurim in memory of his great father, Rav Moshe Soloveitchik,

and his public shiurim between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur organized by the Rabbinical Council of America known as Kinus T'Shuva, were attended by thousands of Torah students from all groupings in the Torah community. Thus he was one of the leaders of the generation.

He never engaged in pejorative or invectives when speaking of non-orthodox Jews. He was polite and respectful to others. Yet he was firm and inflexible in protecting and advocating the Mesorah of Torah tradition. His ruling, written by him, that one is not allowed to pray in a house of worship that violates Halachic standards even if it would result in not fulfilling the Mitzvah of Tekiath Shofar is an illustration of his strong stand on Torah and Mesorah.

This can also be seen from his opinion that while dialogue with non-Jewish faiths may be necessary, it may not deal with theological topics. This was a historic principle which guided his disciples in all their dealings with non-Jewish clergy, and continues to this very day.

His teachings and shiurim are responsible for literally thousands of men and women in the educational and academic community today. **F.S.**

### **The Rambam (1135-1204)**

**M**oses Maimonides is known as the greatest Jewish philosopher and codifier of Jewish law in history. Born in Cordova, Spain, he was forced to flee from fanatical Moslems at the age of thirteen, where he traveled with his family to North Africa, and ten years later to Palestine. As a result of the devastation left by the Crusaders, Palestine was virtually uninhabitable, forcing the family to move to Fostat (current day Cairo). Throughout these journeys, the young Maimonides had concentrated on Torah studies under the guidance of his father, and by the time he reached Fostat had become a famous scholar. Supported by his merchant brother, the Rambam was able to write copiously, gaining international acclaim in both Jewish and secular fields of knowledge. After the tragic death of his brother, the responsibility of supporting his family fell on the Rambam's shoulders, and through his fame he was appointed chief physician of the Sultan. Despite the immense workload that was required, not only with his responsibilities to the royal family, but to the entire Egyptian community as

the official Nagid (royally appointed leader), and to the halachic questions of world Jewry known as responsa, the Rambam was remarkably able to complete some of his greatest Jewish works, including his philosophical work *The Guide for the Perplexed* and his magnum opus the *Mishna Torah*—the great codification of all Jewish law. While he was considered an undisputed leader of world Jewry at the time, there was bitter opposition to much of his works because they incorporated much of Aristotelian philosophy that went against the traditional purist ideology of much of Ashkenazic Jewry, and others believed his codifications would make much of the role of the rabbi and the oral tradition obsolete. **A.B.**

### **Rabbi Judah Loeb, The Maharal of Prague (1525-1609)**

The Maharal was one of the most seminal thinkers in the post-medieval period. He developed an entirely new approach to the aggada of the Talmud and it is likely that no previous author devoted so much space to the interpretation of the non-halachic thought of the

rabbis of the Talmud. He was held in great esteem by his contemporaries and has had a profound impact on all streams of Judaism. Rabbi Kook stated that the “Maharal was the father of the approach of the Gaon of Vilna on the one hand, and of the father of Chasidut, on the other hand”. He has been described as a Kabbalist who wrote in philosophic garb.

The Maharal castigated the educational methods of his day where boys were taught at a very young age and insisted that children must be taught in accordance with their intellectual maturity. Thus, Talmud and certainly Tosafot should be introduced only when the child is developmentally capable of fully comprehending what is being taught. He recommended that the system proposed in Pirkei Avot be followed.

One of his leading disciples was R. Yom Tov Heller, author of the classic mishnaic commentary, Tosafot Yom Tov, who, in his introduction informs us that the Maharal greatly encouraged group study of the Mishna. Maharal may have been the founder of Chevra Mishnayot.

The Maharal was one of the staunch defenders of the tradition and of the undisputed wisdom of

Chazal and wrote a critique of Azriah de’Rossi’s Me’or Einayim. At the same time, he was fully conversant with the scientific knowledge of his time as well as friendly with some of the contemporary eminent scientists. His disciple, David Ganz, worked in the observatory of Tycho Brahe, the distinguished astronomer.

His works include a major commentary on Rashi’s commentary on the Pentateuch, volumes on Passover in all its facets, on exile and redemption, on Torah, on Pirkei Avot, on drashot Chazal and on development of character.

The Maharal was held in esteem by Jew and non-Jew alike and was summoned for an interview with Emperor Rudolph II, though the subject of the interview is still the subject of speculation.

At one time it seemed that the Maharal was best known for a fictitious creation, that of a golem. However, with the passage of time it seems that his true enduring creations have become an integral part of the Jewish intellectual and spiritual heritage.

### **Rav Tzadok HaCohen (1823-1900)**

**R**av Tzaddok, as he was known amongst Chassidim, was one of the most prolific authors in the history of the Chassidic movement. Born into a non-Chassidic rabbinic family, Rav Tzadok became famous as a child prodigy authoring articles and books which later became classics. Later in life, Rav Tzadok became Chassidic and became a Chassid of the Izbitcher Rebbe. Having excelled in both the Chassidic and non-Chassidic world, Rav Tzadok’s writings became a synthesis of analytical logic and mysticism. Eventually, Rav Tzadok became the Rebbe of Lublin. His writings are treasured by scholars everywhere. **Y.H.**

### **Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook (1865-1935)**

**T**he first chief rabbi of what was then Palestine, Rabbi Kook was perhaps the most misunderstood figure of his time.

Born in Latvia of staunch Hasidic and Mittnagdic stock, he retained throughout his life a unique blend of the mystical and

the rational. He was a thorough master of the entire Halachic, Midrashic, philosophic, ethical, and Kabbalistic literature. But more important, he brought to bear the entire tradition upon the contemporary scene. He saw the return to Eretz Yisrael as not merely a political phenomenon to save Jews from persecution, but an event of extraordinary historical and theological significance. Rabbi Hutner once said that Rav Kook peered down on our world from great heights and hence his perspective was unique.

Above all, Rav Kook pulsed with a sense of the Divine. And, he sought to reach those who had strayed. He once quoted the rabbinic dictum that one should embrace with the right hand and rebuff with the left and commented that he was fully capable of rejecting, but since there were enough rejecters, he was fulfilling the role of embracer. On the other hand, he was never tolerant of desecration of Torah, as will be clear to any objective student of his life and works.

Though keenly aware of the huge numbers of non-observant Jews, he had a vision of the repentance of the nation. His concept of repentance envisioned in addition to the repentance of the individual,

a repentance of the nation as a whole; a repentance which would be joyous and healing. He refused to reject Jews as long as they identified themselves as Jews. In a noteworthy exchange with his great friend, admirer, and opponent, Rabbi Yaakov David Willowski, Rav Kook explained the two components of a Jew: his essential nature — the pintele yid, and the path he had chosen in exercising free will. Even if the second element were weak, as long as the first was not repudiated, there was still hope.

He called for and envisioned a spiritual renaissance where “the ancient would be renewed and the new would be sanctified.” His vision of repentance disdained fear and apprehension and looked forward to “the poet of Teshuva, who would be the poet of life, the poet of renewal and the poet of the national soul waiting to be redeemed.”

Perhaps he was that poet.

Rav Kook's printed works to date are in excess of 30 volumes with many works still in manuscript. There are a number of translations into English of a small fraction of his works.

### **Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1891-1954)**

**R**abbi Dessler was born into a family steeped in the Musar movement founded by Rabbi Israel Salanter and he remained a Musar personality for his entire life. However, his thought went considerably beyond the ordinary concerns of other Musar thinkers and he integrated other systems and confronted different problems as well.

Most of Rabbi Dessler's education took place at the Kelm Talmud Torah where his father had been an outstanding disciple of R. Simcha Zissel. The family resided in Homel where Eliyahu had the opportunity to meet outstanding Chabad thinkers. In 1929, he became a rabbi in London and in 1941 accepted the directorship of the Gateshead Kollel. Over the years, he became familiar with Kabbalistic and Hasidic thought, particularly the thought of Rabbi Tzadok HaCohen and the Tanya.

His essays and letters have been collected in four volumes (several volumes under the title *Strive for Truth* have been edited and translated into English by Rabbi Aryeh Carmel). His topics include perennial questions such as

free will and faith as well as contemporary problems in education, evolution and how to respond to the Holocaust.

His personal character and modesty complemented and affirmed his thought. On the last Sukkot of his life he visited the sukkah of the Chazon Ish. The Chazon Ish, upon seeing Rabbi Dessler, rose and rushed toward him. Not imagining that he was coming toward him, Rabbi Dessler turned to the door to see who the distinguished guest was that the Chazon Ish was so honoring.

### **Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks**

**R**abbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks is the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth. Previously he served as, Principal of Jews' College, London, the world's oldest rabbinical seminary, where he also held the Chair in Modern Jewish Thought. He received his rabbinic ordination from Jews' College as well as from London's Yeshiva Etz Chaim. He has been rabbi of the Golden and Marble Arch Synagogues in London.

Rabbi Dr. Sacks was educated

at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, where he obtained first class honors in Philosophy, he pursued postgraduate studies at New College, Oxford, and King's College, London.

Dr. Sacks has been Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the University of Essex, Sherman Lecturer at Manchester University, Riddell Lecturer at Newcastle University, and Cook Lecturer at the Universities of Oxford, Edinburgh and St. Andrews. He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Cambridge, Middlesex, Haifa, Yeshiva University, New York and the University of Liverpool, and is an honorary fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and King's College, London.

The Chief Rabbi is a frequent contributor to radio, television, the national press and the author of eleven books.

### **Office Of The Chief Rabbi**

## **Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (1817-1893)**

### **The Netziv**

**T**he Netziv was Rosh Yeshiva of the famed Volozhin Yeshiva for almost 40 Years until it was closed by the Russian government in 1892. Founded by R. Chaim of Volozhin, the Yeshiva flourished, increasing from 100 to 400 students.

As a young man the Netziv was undistinguished, but by virtue of his extraordinary diligence grew to become one of the greatest scholars and leaders of his time. The prevalent method of Talmudic study was that of deep analysis of the sugya (topic) at hand. The Netziv's approach was to immerse himself in all the relevant passages from the entire Tannaitic literature, always striving to go back to the earliest sources. Similarly, he paid special attention to the Gaonic literature and the earliest Rishonim, who were closer to the Talmudic period. He believed only in this manner could the text being studied be properly understood. His approach was strongly encouraged by R. Dovid Luria.

The Netziv emphasized study of Chumash and Nach and gave a shiur on the weekly parsha every day after morning prayers. He was

an early supporter of the Chovevei Tzion movement and strongly supported the resettling of Eretz Yisroel. However, he was opposed to the selling of the Land for the Shemittah year. Contrary to the view of Rav Hirsch he opposed separate communities.

During the Netziv's time in Volozhin the Yeshiva produced great scholars, including R. Issur Zalman Meltzer, The Dvar Avrohom, Rabbi A. Shapiro, R. Avrohom Y. Kook, R. Moshe M. Epstein and R. Zelig R. Benges.

The Netziv's works include his famed commentary on the Sheiltos of Rabbi Achai, his Commentary on Commentary on the Song of Songs and Meishiv Davar, a collection of his responsa.

The Maskilim could not bear the success of the Yeshiva and constantly sought its demise. Their continuous barbs were noted by the government who demanded that the Yeshiva curriculum and hours of study be completely revamped. It is often said that the Yeshiva was closed because of the Netziv's refusal to permit secular subjects to be studied. The fact is that the government's demands were such that, if adopted, the Yeshiva would have totally lost its character. For example, one of the demands was that

secular subjects be studied until 3:00 p.m. and that night study cease.

Left with no choice the Netziv felt compelled to close the Yeshiva. His entire existence was linked to the Yeshiva and after its closing his health began to decline. He passed away less than two years after the closing. His two sons were Rabbi Chaim Berlin and Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan. **M.G.**

## **Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)**

**T**he seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, eldest son of the saintly Kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, Rav Yekaterinoslav; fifth in direct paternal line from the Tzemach Tzedek; son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz.

As the leader of one of the largest Chassidic groups in the world, the Rebbe expended a great deal of time and effort on outreach. "Chabad Houses," Outreach Centers, can be found on college campuses and in Jewish communities throughout the world. These centers conduct classes, distribute literature on Judaism and promote Mitzvah observance. A Chabad house can be found almost any-

where in the world where there is a pocket of Jewish families.

The Rebbe was a renowned Torah Scholar and authored many Halachic, Chassidic and homiletic works. **Y.R.**

אהובי חביבי,

מכתבך לאחר חזרתך לחו"ל הגיעני לכוון. האמת ניתנה להאמר כי הרבה נהייתי מקריאת מכתבך זה. הנאה זו צמחה משני שרשים: א) מפני שתוכן הדברים וסגנונם ערוכים בטוב טעם דעת; ב) מפני שהנך מתבטא בגילוי לב על הנפתולים אשר בגשמיותך. והנני בזה להגיד לך כי לפי דעתי הנפתולים הללו שהנך דן עליהם במכתבך מקורם היא תפיסה מוטעת בענין הנידון. הרושם הכללי המתקבל מדבריך הוא כי זו היא הנחה פשוטה אצלך כי "secular career" היא "double life". למותר להגיד לך כי מעולם לא הייתי מסכים בשום אופן ל-"double life". אמנם מי ששוכר לו חדר בבית לחיות בו חיי תושב, ושוכר לו עוד חדר במלון לחיות בו חיי אורח, בודאי שיש לו double life, אבל מי ששוכר לו דירה בת שני חדרים יש לו broad life not double life. זכורני שבקרתי פעם בירושלים בבית החולים של ד"ר וואלאך שליט"א וראיתיו כשהוא נגש לחולה שהיה עומד להכנס לחדר-נתוח ושאל לו על שם אמו בכדי להתפלל עליו לפני הנתוח. כשספרתי את זה לאחד המיוחד מבין גדולי ירושלים זצוק"ל התבטא, כמה צריך לקנאות ביהודי זה שיש לו הזדמנות כל כך גדולה לשמש כלי שרת לכבוד שמים! הגידה נא לי האמת, אהובי חביבי, האם אמירת פרק תהלים לשלמו של חולה על ידי הרופא העומד לעשות את הנתוח, האם זה הוא double life?

ואתה חביבי יקירי חלילה לך מלראות את עצמך בראי כפול של חיים כפולים. כל המאריך ב"אחד" מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו. ארדבא, כל חיך צריכים להיות בבחינת המאריך ב"אחד" – אחד ולא כפל. צד לי מאד עליך חביבי אם נקודה זו נעלמת היא מעיניך. המון נקודות המפורזות זו תחת זו בודאי שיש בהן משום ריבוי, אבל אותו המון הנקודות עצמו כשהוא מסודר מסביב לנקודה אחת העומדת במרכז הרי זה עגל אחד. זו היא, חביבי, חובתך בעולמך להעמיד במרכז חיך את ה"אחד" ואז אין עליך לדאוג כלל לכפלות. כל נקודה חדשה שתרכוש לך רק תרחיב את העגל אבל האחדות אינה זהה ממקומה. מצטער אני על שלא הבנת את כל זה עד עכשו. ומתוך צערי הנני דן אותך לכף זכות כי רק מצב רוח של רגע שם בפיד את הדברים אשר זכרת במכתבך. חזק ואמץ חביבי, עלה והצלח יקירי, ורכב על דבר צדק ועשה את כל הצלחותיך לבסיס לריבוי כבוד שמים.

המתפלל להצלחתך

יצחק הוטנר

## SOURCES

כִּי וְהֵייתֶם לִי קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי  
 יְהוָה וְאֲבָנַל אֶתְכֶם מִן־הָעַמִּים  
 לְהִנּוֹת לִי:

Isaiah 49:6

וַיֹּאמֶר נִקְל מְהִינְתֶּךָ  
 לִי עֲבֹד לְהַקִּים אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יַעֲקֹב וּנְצִירֵי [וּנְצִירֵי ק] יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשְׁיב  
 וּנְתִיתֶיךָ לְאֹר גֹּלִים לְהִנּוֹת יִשׁוּעָתִי עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ:

מדע הלכות דעות פיז

עב

## פֶּרֶק שְׁשִׁי

א דָּרָךְ בְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם" לְהִיּוֹת נִמְשָׁךְ בְּדַעוֹתָיו וּבְמַעֲשָׂיו אַחַר  
 רָצוֹ וּנְחַבְרָיו וְנוֹהֵג בְּמִנְהַג אֲנָשֵׁי מְדִינָתוֹ. לְפִיכֵךְ צָרִיךְ  
 אָדָם לְהִתְחַבֵּר לְצַדִּיקִים וְלִישָׁב אֶצֶל הַתְּקָמִים תָּמִיד – כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּלְמַד  
 מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם; וְיִתְרַחֵק מִן־הַרְשָׁעִים הַהוֹלְכִים בַּחֲשָׁךְ – כְּדֵי שֶׁיֵּאָר יִלְמַד  
 מִמַּעֲשֵׂיהֶם. הוּא שֶׁשְׁלֵמָה אוֹמֵר: הֲלָךְ אֶת־תְּקָמִים יִחַסֵּךְ וְרַעָה  
 כְּסִילִים יִרְעֵי (משלי יג, כ). וְאוֹמֵר: אֲשֶׁרֵי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הֲלָךְ  
 בְּעִצַּת רְשָׁעִים וְגו' (תהלים א, א). וְכֵן אִם הָיָה בְּמִדְיָנָה שְׁמִנְהַגוּתִיָּה  
 רָעִים וְאִין אֲנָשִׁיָּה הוֹלְכִים בְּדָרָךְ יִשְׁרָיָה, לָךְ לְמָקוֹם שֶׁאֲנָשִׁיָּה צַדִּיקִים  
 וְנוֹהֲגִים בְּדָרָךְ טוֹבִים. וְאִם הָיָה כְּלִי־הַמְדִינּוֹת שֶׁהוּא יוֹדֵעַן וְשׁוֹמֵעַ  
 שֶׁמוֹעֲתָן נוֹהֲגִים בְּדָרָךְ לֹא טוֹבָה, כְּמוֹ זְמַנֵּנוּ, אוֹ שֶׁאִינוּ יְכוֹלִים לְלַמֵּד  
 לְמִדְיָנָה שְׁמִנְהַגוּתִיָּה טוֹבִים מִפְּנֵי הַגִּיסוֹת, אוֹ מִפְּנֵי הַחֲלִי – יֵשֵׁב  
 לְבֵדוֹ יְחִידִי, כְּעִנְיָן שְׁנֵאמַר: יֵשֵׁב בְּדָד וַיִּדָּם (איכה ג, כח). וְאִם  
 הָיָה רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים שֶׁאִין מְנִיחִים אוֹתוֹ לִישָׁב בְּמִדְיָנָה, אֵלָּא אִם  
 כֵּן נִתְעַרְבַּר עִמָּהֶם וְנוֹהֵג בְּמִנְהַגָּם הַרַע – יֵצֵא לְמַצְרוֹת וּלְחַנְחִימִים  
 וְלְמַדְבָּרוֹת, וְעַל יְגִהֵג עִצְמוֹ בְּדָרָךְ חַטָּאִים, כְּעִנְיָן שְׁנֵאמַר: מִי־  
 יִתְנַגֵּי בַמְדָּבָר מִלֶּזֶן אוֹרְחִים (ירמיה ט, א).







[ט] אמר רבי יוסי בן קסמא: פָּעַם אָחַת הִיָּיתִי מְהַלֵּךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ, וַפְּגַע בִּי אָדָם אֶחָד, וְנָמַן לִי שְׁלוֹם, וְהִחְזַרְתִּי לוֹ שְׁלוֹם. אָמַר לִי, רַבִּי, מֵאַיִן מְקוֹם אָתָּה? אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: „מֵעִיר גְּדוּלָה שֶׁל חֻכְמִים וְשֶׁל טוֹפְרִים אֲנִי.“ אָמַר לִי: „רַבִּי, רְצוֹנָךְ שֶׁתְּדוּר עִמָּנוּ בְּמִקְוֵי מִנְיָן וְאֲנִי אֲפִן לָךְ אֶלֶף אֶלְפִים דִּיגְרִי וְזָהב וְאַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת.“ אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: „אִם אָתָּה נוֹתֵן לִי כָּל כֶּסֶף וְזָהב וְאַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם, אֲנִי דָר אֶלָּא בְּמִקְוֵם תּוֹרָה.“ וְכֵן פְּתוּב בְּסֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים עַל יְדֵי דָוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל: „טוֹב לִי תוֹרַת פִּיךָ מֵאֶלְפֵי זָהב וְכֶסֶף.“<sup>1</sup> וְלֹא עוֹד אֶלָּא שֶׁבִּשְׂעֵת פְּטִידָתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם אֵין מְלֻיָּן לוֹ לְאָדָם לֹא כֶּסֶף וְלֹא זָהב וְלֹא אֲבָנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת, אֶלָּא תּוֹרָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בְּלִבָּר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: „בְּהִתְהַלֵּךְךָ תִּנְחָה אֶתָּה, בְּשִׁבְרֵךָ תִּשְׁמַר עֲלֶיךָ, וְהִקְצֹוֹת הִיא תְּשִׁיחָךָ.“<sup>2</sup> „בְּהִתְהַלֵּךְךָ תִּנְחָה אֶתָּה“ — בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה; „בְּשִׁבְרֵךָ תִּשְׁמַר עֲלֶיךָ“ — בְּקִבְרֵךְ; „וְהִקְצֹוֹת הִיא תְּשִׁיחָךָ“ — לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. וְאֹמַר: „לִי הַכֶּסֶף וְלִי הַזָּהָב, וְאִם יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת.“<sup>3</sup>

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Michtav M'Eliyohu Vol. 2; pg. 112-113

בכל הדורות כשהיה חסרון ברוחניות כלל ישראל גרם זה הסתר-פנים, וגזירות קשות באו על ישראל. וכן הוא בגזירת שמד סיבתה בחסרון שבדור. גזירת השמד הראשונה היתה בימי היונים, שהם היו הראשונים שרצו להשפיע על ישראל בהשכלתם ולהחשיך אור תורת ישראל. כדאי בבב"ד (ב' ה'): "וחשך על בני תהום — זו מלכות יון שהחשיכו עיניהם של ישראל בגזירותיהם". ונבאר סיבת גזירות השמד. איתא בפרק קנין תורה "מעשה בר' יוסי בן קיסמא שהיה מהלך בדרך, פגע בו אדם אחד ואמר לו רצונך שתדור במקומי ואני נותן לך וכו', אמר לו אפילו אתה נותן לי כל זהב וכסף שבעולם אין אני דר אלא במקום תורה". הרי שחשש רבי יוסי לדור במקום שאינו מקום תורה, אף על פי שלכאורה יוכל להשפיע שם ולהפכו למקום תורה; כי לגרות כל גדול מדרגתו ראה בזה סכנה שגא הוא יישפע מהם. דבר גדול מאד למדנו כאן — שאין דרך השפעת הרוחניות ללכת אל הרחוקים ואתורה. להתיישב עמם במקומם ולהשתדל להשפיע עליהם שם, אלא הוא ישאר במקומו וישתדל לקרב אותם אליו ולהשפיע עליהם מאור תורתו. או מכיון שהוא נמצא במקום תורתו אין כל כך סכנה שיושפע מהם כי סביבתו תגן עליו.

הן עם :

לברד ישכון. לא כדרך כל אומה ולשון כשהולכים  
צולה ומתערכים עם המגלים אוחס משיגים צוה  
לכבה והשיצות כל אחד צעיכס יותר משהיו נטרדים  
מהם. אבל לא כן עם ישראל כשהוא לברד. ואינו  
מתערכ עמהם ישכון צמחה וכבוד. וראו כל עמי  
הארץ כי הם ה' נקרא עליו ואין איש מתחרס עמו :

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, המבדיל בין קדש  
לחל, בין אור לחשך, בין ישראל לעמים, בין יום השביעי  
לששת ימי המעשה. ברוך אתה, יי, המבדיל בין קדש לחל.