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The Relationship Between Teacher and Student
in the Yeshivah Model:
Past, Present and Future

Deborah S. Kaiz

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination.

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion
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Referee, Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman

With appreciation to the many teachers who have been
a part of my life: for the relationships we formed and the thoughts
they inspired within me.
And to my students whom I have taught,
who have been some of my most influential teachers of life and living.

With special appreciation to Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman,
for encouraging words, exciting conversations, and most importantly,
for all the wisdom he shared with me.

My teachers have been many. My relationships with these teachers
have been great. They include my friends and family, my
congregants, my educators and my rabbis.
You have been my role models and my mentors;
many of you have been my inspiration for this thesis.

With appreciation and love to the teachers in my life
who have affected me more than any others: my parents,
for many hours of discussion and debate, support and concern.
I could not possibly have completed both this thesis and this process
without both of you.

RABBINIC THESIS DIGEST

The Relationship Between Teacher and Student in the Yeshivah Model: Past, Present and Future

This thesis examines the relationships between teachers and students in the yeshivah model of schooling throughout the past, present and future of Jewish history. It is based on the premise that Reform modern Jews are able to learn from both the positives and the negatives of the traditional yeshivah model. As Reform Judaism is beginning to "turn back to tradition" in so many different ways, it is important to include in that change the traditional Jewish school model.

Part I of this thesis provides a historical overview of the relationships between teachers and students throughout the history of the Jewish people. Within each of these chapters there is a focus not only on the relationships between teachers and students, but also on the schools in general and the conditions of the life of the Jewish people during that time period, in that given location. It begins with an overview of this relationship from Biblical times until the more modern era. It then focuses on four specific time periods in specific locations: 15th-18th century Poland, the Chasidic Movement in Eastern Europe, the Mussar Movement in Eastern Europe and the American Yeshivah Movement.

The second part of this thesis confronts the yeshivah world, specifically the relationships between teachers and students within this world, as it exists today. I interviewed a number of individuals who were once students of a variety of *yeshivot* to better understand their personal experiences in the yeshivah and their relationships with their teachers.

In the final part of this thesis, I review basic educational perspectives related to the relationships between teachers and students and apply this information, and all that was learned previously in this thesis, to a creation of

several ideal models of Jewish education in the future of Judaism. Included in these chapters are the creations of an ideal supplemental school, day school, Jewish camp and rabbinical seminary. Also included in these chapters is an analysis of some aspects of the role of the contemporary rabbi, and what she can learn from the traditional yeshivah model in relating to her congregants.

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Preface

The completion of this thesis is far more than the fulfillment of a requirement for rabbinic ordination at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. It is the culmination of many years of struggle and accomplishment, of teaching and learning. Though my intentions were simple and concrete, to write a thesis which would be interesting to me as well as my readers, I was able to do much more throughout this process.

The "teacher" within me desired to learn and understand the relationships between teachers and students in the yeshivah model throughout Jewish history because I believed, and I still believe, that teachers have something to learn from this model, all teachers in every Jewish setting. The "student" in me hoped to educate all teachers as to the issues and circumstances within teaching and education, so that Jewish learning could grow to be the "example" within the greater community.

There is no question that my personal experiences throughout my life, in particular my relationships with my teachers and my students, have helped me to write and create much of what exists within the contents of this thesis. Having received not only a strong Judaic studies background but also a background in education, both through the receipt of a bachelor's degree and master's degree in education, I feel that my training has helped me to better understand these teacher-student relationships and apply them to a variety of models.

In addition to my own training in education, I have had much experience within the education world. In addition to having taught Hebrew school and

Sunday school for over ten years, I directed a supplemental Reform Jewish high school which served an entire community of Reform high school students. These experiences opened my eyes to the world of supplemental education. I have also taught in a Jewish day school, which allowed me to understand Jewish education from an entirely different perspective. Furthermore, I attended a Reform Jewish camp for seventeen summers, seven as a camper and ten as a staff member, which gave me a completely different perspective on Jewish education. Finally, having been a student in a Reform rabbinical seminary, I have been exposed to yet another model of Jewish education.

Though many of the conclusions drawn research within this thesis are obviously applicable to these school environments, I would also argue that this information is relevant to the relationship between a rabbi and her congregant, in a number of types of congregations. Because I have worked in several different congregations across the Unites States, large and small, traditional and classical, old and young, I have been exposed to many rabbis and many congregants, and I have seen many different relationships between rabbis and their congregants. I believe my personal experience helped me to write this thesis.

I therefore must recognize all of the schools in which I have studied and taught, the camp in which I lived for more than half of my life, and the many congregations in which I have been both congregant and rabbi, for they have all impacted me in ways beyond even my own comprehension. I must also recognize the many individuals who allowed me to interview them regarding their experiences in their various *yeshivot*, sharing with me their hopes and their frustrations, their understandings and their visions. For all of these people and these experiences, I am eternally grateful.

This thesis was written not only as a fulfillment of the requirements for rabbinic ordination, as I stated before. I hope that it will be a helpful guide to the

hundreds of students and teachers yet to be created in the Jewish community, and certainly for the many who already exist. I have therefore attempted to make this an all-inclusive thesis, explaining basic terms so that any teacher, be it in a rabbinic seminary or in a small town supplemental school, would be able to learn and gain from this thesis and the experiences of the many people who, in a variety of ways, contributed to this thesis.

May this thesis, and the information and stories provided within, help to enable many more teachers to teach and many more students to learn throughout many future generations.

Introduction

Perhaps one of the oldest institutions within Jewish society is that of the Jewish school, more commonly called the yeshivah. A yeshivah is often defined as a "Talmudic college."[1] It was traditionally a place where younger Jews came to study Talmud, the books of Jewish law, with an older scholar. Rabbi Shlomo ben Isaac, best known as Rashi, was an eleventh century biblical and Talmudic commentator. He understood a yeshivah to be a place where "students gather to engage in Torah study."[2] The term "yeshivah" can also be used as a reference to a place where accomplished scholars meet in order to clarify the laws of Torah.[3] In different periods of time it took on newer definitions, but the essence of the yeshivah has remained constant throughout the history of Jews from the Bible until the modern period.

The etymology of the Hebrew word "yeshivah" is quite interesting. The root of the word is ישב, which means residence or dwelling, or a meeting or a session. Perhaps it became the term for the Jewish school in which people studied Talmud because the students were supposed to dwell in the study of Talmud. They would do this by means of meetings with their teachers and sessions with their study partners. Though there now exist many kinds of *yeshivot* (the plural of

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1 R. Alcalay, *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary* (Israel: Chemed Books, 1990), p. 970.

2 *Baba Kama* 16b.

3 Zev Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith: The Yeshivah through the Ages* (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1996), p. 7.

yeshivah) they all understand the notion of study while maintaining a relationship with one's teacher.

This term may have originally been adapted from the many passages throughout Torah and Talmud which refer to sitting in reference to being involved in the study of Torah. Perhaps the first such reference is found in the book of Genesis, when it states: "Jacob was a mild man who stayed in camp."[4] The word in Hebrew for "stayed" is ישב, the same root as yeshivah. The sages understood the term "in camp" to refer to the tents of Torah study, and so perhaps this explains how we have come to use the word "yeshivah" in such a distinct way.

Though the word "yeshivah" implies an academy of Talmud and literally means dwelling or meeting, it has yet another significance for many people. A yeshivah may also be understood as a "reservoir of faith."[5] In his book *Reservoirs of Faith: The Yeshivah Through the Ages*, Zev Paretzky has subtitled the entity of the yeshivah in such a way. He understands that a reservoir is a storehouse, a place where important items are collected and stored, and the yeshivah has become the storehouse of Torah for the people of Israel.

Perhaps one of the defining characteristics of the yeshivah is the relationship which exists between teachers in the yeshivah and their students; it is a unique and unparalleled relationship which has helped to shape the path of Judaism and Jewish education throughout the history of the Jewish people. Though the relationship differed depending on the period in Jewish history and the type of yeshivah in establishment during a given time, it is unquestionable and undeniable that a teacher-student relationship existed in every yeshivah model

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4 Gen. 25:27.

5 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 8.

throughout history, and it was a relationship of significance and influence in the lives of the students as well as their teachers.

Though an entire thesis could have been devoted to the relationship between teachers and students in any one of the following times throughout Jewish history, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the development of and changes in this relationship throughout many times in our history. By understanding the different relationships between teachers and students during the early years of Jewish history, during the height of Jewish life in Poland in the 15th-18th centuries, during the development of the Chasidic Movement, during the growth of the Mussar movement and the creation of the American Yeshivah Movement, one should realize all that is to be gained from the traditional yeshivah model by examining what was done in these models and what was lacking from these models.

Although a historical perspective of the relationship between teachers and students is most helpful and beneficial to one's understanding of relationships between teachers and students in general, it is important to understand a contemporary perspective of this relationship as well. The second section of this thesis is devoted to some individuals' perceptions of their own personal experiences within a specific yeshivah. They bring personal insight, feeling and emotion to their descriptions and categorizations of their yeshivah experiences. These personal stories of yeshivah experiences add to the historical perspective to make the reader's understanding of the yeshivah model even more complete.

Though the information gained relates to the yeshivah models from the past and the yeshivah models from the present, it is important to learn from these numerous models and create a "yeshivah of the future." The different *yeshivot* created in this thesis are a range of school settings within the Reform Movement. It is the belief of this author that much can be gained from the traditional yeshivah

model and applied to the educational systems within the Reform movement today and what will be the future of the Reform Movement.

It is important for all Jews, traditional and Reform, young and old, to know and to understand how tradition, traditional Judaism, traditional educational settings and traditional texts can impact the lives of a modern, Reform Jew. By allowing ourselves to learn from our past, from our people and our experiences, we can help to make the future a brighter one.

Part One

The Past:
The Relationship Between Teachers and Students Throughout the History of Judaism

1. *Masters and Disciples Throughout Time*

Before examining the relationship between master and disciple throughout time, one must come to understand the development of the institution we call the yeshivah. There is no question in anyone's mind that a survey of the existence of *yeshivot* throughout time is virtually impossible. Some commentators would claim that *yeshivot* have existed from the time of Jacob's tents until the times of our modern American cities.[1] However, it is important to this writer that a basic understanding exist in the reader's mind as to the development of the yeshivah from the Biblical Period until the present. In this chapter, we will be reviewing the history of the yeshivah from the Biblical Period until the establishment of *yeshivot* in Poland in the sixteenth century.

"Like the beginning of all genuine life, the beginning of the Jewish school is lost in the midst of ancient days."[2] We have no records of enrollment or books of curricula as we do today. We have little understanding of procedures and administration within the schools as we now meticulously record every event and happening related to an educational institution. However, the Hebrew Bible is filled with stories and allegories, and there are many passages and precepts within the Mishnah and Tosefta, the Talmud and Midrash, all of which support and

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[1] This is one of Helmreich's premises on which he bases his first chapter. William Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry* (New York: The Free Press, 1982).

[2] Louis Ginzberg, *Students, Scholars and Saints* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1928), p. 5.

enrich our understanding of the possible existence of the yeshivah several thousand years ago.

It is crucial to understand a general context for these Jewish texts. The Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud and Midrash are perhaps the richest texts "owned" by the Jewish people. Together they comprise the genre of literature called rabbinic literature. This rabbinic literature "forms the principal evidence concerning the particular Judaism that predominated from ancient times to our own day, the one that appeals to the myth of divine revelation to Moses at Sinai in two media, oral and written, hence 'The Judaism of the dual Torah'."[3]

One must also come to understand the general formats of these different categories of rabbinic literature in order to best understand their continuing effect on the Jewish world today. The Mishnah is a six section piece of literature, dealing with agriculture, holy seasons, women and family affairs, politics and civil law, sacrificial offerings and cultic purity. It served as the written law of the land, organizing a compilation of the sages' sayings into well-structured divisions, tractates and chapters. The Mishnah was probably completed in 200 C.E. From the creation of the Mishnah developed three exegetical documents, including the Tosefta, the Palestinian Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. The Tosefta is a compilation of additional sayings organized around most of the Mishnah as citation, probably concluded around 300 C.E.[4]

The two *Talmudim* are perhaps the greatest works from this period of time. Though both exist in full form today, as Diaspora Jews, the Babylonian Talmud is much more common than the Palestinian Talmud. It is "the central pillar

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[3] Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. xix.

[4] Ibid, p. 9.

supporting the entire spiritual and intellectual edifice of Jewish life."[5] It is composed of two main sections: the Mishnah , as described above, and the Gemara. The Gemara is the rabbis' explanation of that which is written in the Mishnah. The legal and practical value of the Talmud, as well as its centrality and vital importance to Judaism, is as applicable today as it was during the time of its conception. The Babylonian Talmud was completed in approximately 400 C.E. and the Palestinian Talmud in approximately 500 C.E.

The Midrash mentioned above is not particular to the rabbinic literature, though many *midrashim* were written during this period of time. These writings are exegesis of the numerous biblical texts. There are thousands of *midrashim* written from this era, typically compiled into volumes of books called Midrash. The most famous *midrashim* are perhaps the Midrash Rabba, a set of Midrash, though each volume maintains a very different style, depending on the author and the time period in which it was written. The Midrash, together with the Mishnah, the Talmud and the Tosefta, comprise the vast majority of rabbinic literature, a literature from which one can come to understand a great deal with regard to the relationship between teachers and students. This is true not only because these relationships are discussed in these texts, but also because these texts are the materials which Jewish teachers have been transmitting to Jewish students for thousands of years.

BIBLICAL PERIOD

A journey through the history of the yeshivah must begin by examining some traditional interpretations of the yeshivah during the Biblical Period. Zev Paretzky, the author of *Reservoirs of Faith: The Yeshiva through the Ages*,

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5 Adin Steinsaltz, *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition*, Reference volume, trans. Israel V. Berman, (New York: Random House, 1989), p. 1.

understands the original yeshivah to perhaps be the one headed by Shem, son of Noah, a descendant of Adam. This establishment may have been the prototype for all *yeshivot* to follow.[6] Though he suggests that an institution before Abraham was not called a yeshivah but rather a *beit midrash,*[7] it implies a similar structure to a modern understanding of the yeshivah.[8]

According to certain traditions, one of the many students in Shem's *beit midrash* was Abraham. Though we understand Abraham to have recognized and realized the existence of God at an early stage in his life, and to thereby receive knowledge of Torah prophetically,[9] he also desired to study with Shem in order to learn of his traditions in his own time as well. The line of study did not end with Abraham, for he insisted that his son Isaac study in the yeshivah of Shem. We learn in Midrash that Abraham says "all that has come to me is only because I have toiled in the study of Torah and the performance of *mitzvot.*[10] Therefore, I do not want the Torah to depart from my ancestors forever."[11] Some commentators even believe that Isaac's son Jacob studied in the same yeshivah as his father and grandfather.[12]

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6 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith,* p. 17.

7 Literally *beit midrash* means a house of study. Depending on the period in time, it can refer to a school or an intense place of study. It is the large hall in which Talmudic study takes place within the yeshivah.

8 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith,* p. 29.

9 *Avot d'Rabbi Natan* 32:1.

10 *Mitzvot* literally means commandments. It is understood to mean acts performed in observance of the commandments.

11 *Bereshit Rabba* 56:11.

12 *Shemot Rabba* 1:1.

Another yeshivah referred to in Talmud is that of the yeshivah established for the children of Israel while they were in Egypt. Those who studied and taught in this yeshivah were called *z'keinim*,[13] or elders, and they were considered to be the forerunners of the Sanhedrin, the famous court from this time period.[14] A Talmudic teaching is that some form of a yeshivah existed for the Jews during the entire time they were roaming in the desert.[15] One quickly realizes how crucial the notion of learning was for our ancestors, even in times of hardship. Therefore they could not fathom that any generation existed without some kind of a yeshivah.

As one looks later in the Bible to the stories of Moses and Aaron, one can understand that a set system for teaching and transmitting the Torah[16] in the oral tradition was already in existence. This was by no way a system imagined by some of the biblical characters. For example, Aaron would enter into Moses' tent

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13 Though the term "elder" has adapted a rather negative connotation in our secular, modern world, this was not true of the ancient people of Israel. The *z'keinim* were not only people of advanced age, but also people who were righteous in their generations. The elders were the consulting body of the city, the nation and the king, and they were therefore considered to be the wisest individuals within the community. During the time of the Talmud, the title "*zakein*" was reserved for scholars and specifically members of the Sanhedrin. The title was actually considered to be the equivalent of a sage. "Elder", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 6, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), pp. 578-581.

14 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 19.

15 Ibid, p. 20.

16 Torah can mean two different things. It can simply mean the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It can also be understood as Jewish learning in a very generic sense. Torah, as its root implies, is a form of the word *hora-ah*, which means teaching. "It teaches [people] the path [they] should follow, and is indeed a guide to fulfilling the commandments." Steinsaltz, *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition*, Reference volume, p. 2.

and sit before him, reciting a portion of Torah to Moses. Aaron would move specifically to Moses' right side, and Aaron's two sons would then enter the tent. Next, Moses would teach the same lesson, and the two sons would then move one to Moses' left side and one to the right. Only at this time would the elders enter the tent.[17] By teaching in such a manner, the system for the creation of *Torah she-b'al peh*,[18] or the Oral Torah, would soon be developed.

It is important to note that the rabbis' understanding of the biblical model as the beginning of the yeshivah is not proven by biblical evidence. Because the rabbis created and developed the yeshivah model, they desired to connect their "creation" to that of their biblical ancestors. It is their interpretation of the biblical school system and the biblical way of learning. They desire to read the institution of the yeshivah into the biblical setting because it futher validates their own creation of the yeshivah model. However, one must note that this interpretation is just that: a rabbinic interpretation of a biblical situation. The Bible never discusses the notion of a yeshivah, though the root of the word "yeshivah" is used throughout the biblical text. By seeing their ways of Torah and their institutions within the text of the Bible, the rabbis give us a portrayal of their own period.

Whether one agrees with the rabbis' interpretations or not, there is no question that this type of teaching, as mentioned above, was transmitted from one generation to the next in biblical times. Moses passed it on to Joshua the son of Nun, and he became the master or teacher upon Moses' death.[19] This teaching

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17 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 20.

18 *Torah she-b'al peh* is understood as the Oral Torah. It implies all that was given to Moses at Mount Sinai but was not written down in the Torah per se. It incudes all the *midrashim* and certainly the Talmud, the books of Jewish law.

19 In Deuteronomy 31:23, we read of this famous transmission of power: "And he charged Joshua son on Fun: 'Be strong and resolute: for you shall bring the Israelites into the land that I promised them on oath, and I will be with you.'"

tradition passed from the elders to the judges and eventually from the judges to the prophets. However, the level of teaching and the love of learning did not remain the same in all times throughout Jewish history. During the times of the monarchy, learning and teaching was only as high a quality as the ruling king allowed it to be. Fortunately, included in the list of kings who respected and desired high levels of learning were both David[20] and Solomon.[21]

One interesting notion during this period of time, according to rabbinic tradition, is that high levels of learning were not exclusively for the scholars or the academics within the community. Learning was intended for everyone during the times of David and Solomon.[22] This is a trend which will fluctuate throughout the ages. Furthermore, it was during this later Biblical Period when we begin to see a development of interest on behalf of the students to study in smaller groups with a particular scholar in some type of yeshivah setting. This would become the trend which one can still see in today's modern yeshivah world, best known as the *chevruta*[23] method of study.

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20 David, who lived in the tenth century B.C.E., is the human character most vividly represented in the Bible. He himself was a brilliant man who helped the Jewish people to become politically and militarily successful. He was the second of three kings to reign over the United Kingdom. Joan Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 87-98.

21 Solomon, who lived just after David, was the third and last king to rule over the United Kingdom. As son and successor of David, he inherited many of David's good traits, including his desire to educate and spread learning to all. Solomon was actually known as Israel's greatest sage, with a high level of insight, learning and literary skill. It was said the "he was wiser than all other men" (I Kings 4:30), and he clearly wanted to teach and spread this wisdom to others. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 358-370.

22 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 24.

23 The *chevruta* method of study is the notion of small group learning. Typically, a *chevruta* would be a group of two or three students who would study

These methods of study and learning from the Biblical Period, as understood by the rabbis, are important to study as a Reform modern Jew. The Bible has always been a text studied by all Jews, often used as a model of the way in which one should live his or her life. Even the rabbis of Midrash and Talmud, who lived according to the *halachot*, the laws in the Talmud, looked to the Bible, the people and their actions, as role models of how they should live their lives. The desire for learning among the biblical characters and their commitment to study is perhaps modeled throughout future generations in Jewish history.

TANNAITIC PERIOD

With the conclusion of the Biblical Period, one must begin looking at the yeshivah during the Tannaitic Period. The Tannaitic Period, otherwise known as the Mishnaic Period, existed from approximately 30 C.E. until 200 C.E. It is named as such because it is the period during which the Mishnah was written. The scholars of the Mishnah are called *tannaim*. For the three centuries following the compilation and editing of the Mishnah (200-500 C.E.), the rabbis, who were then called *amoraim*, and their students, discussed and analyzed the Mishnah. It was the *amoraim* whose questions, discussions and solutions comprise the Talmud.[24]

These *tannaim* and *amoraim* studied in a unique setting. The term yeshivah was used in three specific kinds of institutions of Talmudic learning: the academies in the land of Israel and Babylonia in which the *amoraim* studied and subsequently produced the Jerusalem and Babylonian *Talmudim*, the academies in

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Talmud texts together on a daily basis. Today, many people have adopted and sometimes adapted this method of study.

[24] Steinsaltz, *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition*, Reference volume, p. 2.

the Geonic Period, and local institutions which developed in the post-Geonic Period for the purpose of Talmudic studies.[25] All three categories are important in a history of the yeshivah, but before any of them came the yeshivah in the time of the *tannaim*.

During the time of the early *tannaim*, Israel was ruled by the Romans. This Roman rule in general, and the many problems Roman government posed on the Jewish community in particular, created the political background of this period. Actually, it was during this period that Roman imperial power was at an all-time high. During much of the period, the relationship between the Jewish community in Israel and the Romans was poor. However, there were brief periods of tranquillity in order for some great occurrences to take place, including the building of the Temple by Herod and the editing and completion of the Mishnah. This period ultimately saw the great Jewish revolt, which the Romans crushed and thus destroyed the seond Temple.[26] This was the situation during the period of the writing of the Mishnah.

Although there already existed a political ruler within the Jewish community at that time, known as the high priest, the Sanhedrin was created to act as a high council, comprised of elders from within the Jewish community. It dealt primarily with the organic, internal socio-religious issues within the community.[27] The famous, perhaps even infamous *zugot*,[28] or pairs, were the leaders of the

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25 "Yeshivot", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 16, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), p. 762.

26 Steinsaltz, *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition*, Reference volume, pp. 11-12.

27 Alexander Guttmann, *Rabbinic Judaism in the Making*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), p. 25.

28 The literal meaning of *zugot* is pairs. It was the term used to refer to the teachers of Torah before and during the *tannaim*. Hillel and Shammai are the

Sanhedrin. There was a *nasi*,[29] or president, and an *av beit din*,[30] or vice president. This began sometime during the reign from 135-105 B.C.E. The last of the famous *zugot*, perhaps the most famous of them all, were Hillel and Shammai. They ended their rule between 10 C.E. and 20 C.E.

By examining Hillel and Shammai and the workings of their relationship and the relationships they maintained with their students, one may have a much greater understanding of the relationship between master and disciple during this time period. They each worked with their students and modeled for them. Though each had his own way of being a teacher, Hillel and Shammai were both talented masters who trained countless disciples.

Eventually, Rabbi Gamliel I, the grandson of Hillel, replaced the head of the Sanhedrin. He was one of the most beloved and admired figures of this era.[31] Because of the happenings in Rome during this time, the sages were forced to leave the designated place in the courtyard of the *Beit ha-Mikdash*[32] where they had been housed, and they opted to relocate in Yavneh, just west of Jerusalem.[33] Because of the tremendous amount of turmoil surrounding the people of Israel,

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last of the famous *zugot*. Typically, when the pairs are listed, the first was generally the president of the Sanhedrin and the second was the vice-president. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, p. 146.

29 The *nasi* typically referred to the president of the Sanhedrin.

30 *Av Beit Din* literally means the father of the court. During Mishnaic times, the title *av beit din* was conferred on the man who was second in charge after the *nasi*. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, p. 137.

31 Cecil Roth, *A Bird's Eye View of Jewish History* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1954), p. 112.

32 The *Beit ha-Mikdash* is the Temple which existed in Jerusalem.

33 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 48.

and the sages in particular, what was a seemingly calm society during the times of Hillel and Shammai, with few differing opinions, grew to be much greater between the descendants of these two great teachers. These two groups of continually feuding people came to be known as *Beit Hillel* and *Beit Shammai*.[34]

Because Rabbi Gamliel was very young when he inherited the reign of the Sanhedrin, his master, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, assumed the role of *nasi* until Rabbi Gamliel was old enough to reign in a mature fashion. The sages who came to study with Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai at Yavneh were participants in the *mesivtah*[35] or Torah Academy.[36] This was the beginning of the trend of scholars who would eventually go elsewhere in order to establish their own *yeshivot* with their own methodologies and ultimately their own disciples.

Upon Rabbi Gamliel's death, there were some enormous changes made in the yeshivah affecting the methods of Torah study. For example, while Rabbi Gamliel was alive, the teacher would sit while the student stood. After he had died, the students sat as well. Furthermore, under Rabbi Gamliel's leadership, the admissions policies to the Torah Academy were rather stringent, and after his death, under the leadership of Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah, the standards were much more relaxed. Unlike Rabbi Gamliel, Rabbi Eliezer did not feel that "any student whose inner self [was] not as sincere as his external appearance would

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34 *Beit Hillel* was the great school founded by Rabbi Hillel. *Beit Shammai* was the school founded by Rabbi Shammai. They were intellectual adversaries of one another. Their disciples continued to challenge one another long after the deaths of this two great masters. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 210-213.

35 During rabbinic times, the *mesivtah* refered to a place to study Torah. Today it generally refers to a yeshivah high school for boys.

36 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 50.

indicate, [could not] enter the house of study."[37] Clearly, each of the masters maintained a different perspective regarding the ideal yeshivah and the relationship each *rosh yeshivah*[38] should maintain with the students.

During the later Tannaitic Period, the Torah Academy was moved to the Galilee because the site at Yavneh was far too prominent a place to be located. However, the sages were still unable to establish the *mesivtah* the way it had once been created at Yavneh.[39] Soon other rabbis became great masters of Torah study, including some of our famous rabbis of Midrash like Rabbi Akiva[40] and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah.[41] Shortly after the move to the Galilee, the Romans began to imprison these various rabbis. Even though the situation surrounding them was far from ideal, it was this generation of rabbis who would eventually edit what is today known as the Mishnah. In approximately 192 C.E., the time of the *tannaim* ended and their successors, the *amoraim*, began their own endeavors.

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37 Ibid., p. 56.

38 Literally, the term *rosh yeshivah* means the head of the yeshivah. It implies the educational and spiritual head within any yeshivah setting.

39 *Rosh Hashanah* 31a.

40 Rabbi Akiva was a Palestinian *tanna* who was the most talented and influential man of his generation. A number of sayings are attributed to him in *Pirke Avot*, the Ethics of the Fathers. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 167-170.

41 Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was a *tanna* who lived in the first and second century. He became president of the Sanhedrin at Yavneh, and he was respected by the Romans more than many of his contemporaries. He is often quoted in *Pirke Avot* as well. Ibid., pp. 184-185.

AMORAIC PERIOD

The Amoraic Period, also referred to as the Talmudic period, lasted from the creation of the Mishnah in approximately 200 C.E. until the creation of both *Talmudim* in approximately 500 C.E. During this period of time, Roman authority was actually shaken. The central government of the Roman Empire was disintegrating, which caused much anarchy and war. Because of all that was taking place around them, the scope of internal Jewish self-government was gradually reduced, and Jews were beginning to emigrate to other countries. There was a decline in Torah study in Israel as well. Because they were lacking leadership and direction, the Jews began devoting their efforts to the area of *aggadah*, of legend. The focus during this time period was rather different from that of the previous time period.[42]

During the time of the *amoraim*, we learn much more about the relationships between the sages and their students. This is due primarily to the fact that the rabbis of the Talmudic Period now possessed a text which they desired to teach to their disciples. It was these disciples, in most cases, who would become the editors and authors of the Talmud itself. Students traveled from far and near in order to study with these sages. The desire was great to be among the disciples of these rabbis. It is important to note that there was a large range of ages and accomplishments among these many students.[43]

The students were often physically very close to their teacher, accompanying him wherever he went, both in and out of the classroom, in order to glean wisdom from his every action.[44] There were different types of blessings

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[42] Steinsaltz, *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition*, Reference volume, p. 12.

[43] Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 72.

[44] Ibid., p. 73.

given to students than those given to their teachers. Clearly, the teachers were held at very different heights with different levels of *kavod* or respect. Students attended the *shiur*[45] which was given twice a day by the *rosh yeshivah*. It was mandatory for them to attend this lesson.

When the *mesivtah* was in session, the *rosh yeshivah* would sit facing the entire yeshivah at one time. There was a very distinct layout within the yeshivah. The chief scholars were seated in the first seven rows, closest to the teacher, and it declined from there. Those who were just beginning their studies were lucky if they were even allowed in the room with the great masters of Torah study.[46]

During this period of the *amoraim*, the rabbis and their *yeshivot* primarily still existed in the land of Israel. One of the predominant teachers there was Rabban Gamliel III. He was perhaps the most influential of all the rabbis in the transmission of the Mishnah to his disciples.[47] This period began in the early part of the third century. Some of the other great rabbis from this time include Rav Chiya of Babylonia, Rabbi Oshiah and Bar Kappara. Soon the *mesivtah* was separated from the *nasi*. A long list of scholars followed this separation, including Rabbi Yochanan,[48] who was from a different time period, Reish

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45 A *shiur* is a lesson, usually referring to a lesson of Talmud in the yeshivah model.

46 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 74.

47 Ibid., p. 82.

48 Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was a pupil of the great Rabbi Hillel. He became the head of the Sanhedrin during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. He was a towering character in Jewish history and many stories are told about him. It was Yochanan ben Zakkai who was primary in reorganizing Jewish life after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. He had a number of famous disciples. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 233-235.

Lakish[49] and Rabbi Ami.[50] Some of the rabbis began heading up *yeshivot*, like Rabbi Yosef bar Chiya[51] and Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani,[52] as well as several others.[53] They would grow to be some of the great *roshei yeshivot*[54] during this time period.

The *amoraim* moved to Babylonia, to the Diaspora, in approximately 220 C.E. One of the leading figures in this place and time was Abba bar Aibu, known to us from Talmud as Rav. Others who were predominant during this time period were Rabbi Yochanan, Rav Kahana, Rabbi Chamnuna and Rav Chuna, the latter two rabbis being disciples of Rav.[55] It was clear during this time period in Babylonia that there was a passing of the torch from one *rosh yeshivah* to the next

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49 Reish Lakish, who's real name was Rabbi Simon ben Lakish, was one of the outstanding Palestinian *amoraim* of his generation. He joined Yochanan ben Zakkai at his school in Tiberias and became the assistant principal, though the two were often in disagreement. He, too, is known for many famous sayings. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 296-297.

50 Rabbi Ami was an *amora* who became principal of an academy in Palestine. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 171-172.

51 Rabbi Yosef bar Chiya was a Babylonian *amora*. He eventually became the principal of the academy of Pumbedita as well. He was considered to be very witty, and a number of such sayings are attributed to him as well. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 245.

52 Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani was a Palestinian *amora* who visited Babylonia several times. He is known as a haggadist who wrote many legends. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, p. 286.

53 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith: The Yeshiva through the Ages*, pp. 81-87.

54 This is the plural of *rosh yeshivah*, meaning several head of *yeshivot*.

55 Rav, whose full name was Rava ben Joseph ben Chayyim, was a famous Babylonian *amora*. He eventually became principal of the academy at Pumbedita. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 276-277.

one. Though there were two main *yeshivot* at this time, there were many other small *yeshivot* throughout Babylonia. It was during this time period that both the Jerusalem and the Babylonian *Talmudim* were created in their respective homes.[56]

GAONIC PERIOD

Now that the rabbis had begun this growing notion of Torah study and *yeshivot* learning, they developed their skills as expounders of the law. Never before had the rabbis held in their possession the Mishnah and the Talmud, from which they could teach their many distinguished and determined students, as well as continue their own studies.

The era of the *geonim* was the next era in the course of Jewish history. This era lasted from the end of the Amoraic Period until the eleventh century. During this time, "scholars worked to produce collective rulings and compilations bearing the authroity of the [earlier] academies."[57] The *geonim* themselves were the heads of the many academies in Babylonia. They were recognized by the Jews as the highest authority of instruction from the end of the sixth century through the eleventh century. These *geonim* were not chosen by the scholars of the academies, as was true in the earlier period, but rather they were appointed by the exilarchs. Typically the *geonim* would cimb through the hierarchy within the academies until they reached the highest office.[58]

It seems that the first *gaon* was Rabbi Chanan Av Ashkaya, who reopened the *yeshivot* in Pumbedista in 589. Though he was probably not referred to as a

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56 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 96.

57 Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987), p. 153.

58 "Gaon", Encyclopedia Judaica 7, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), pp. 315-325.

gaon at the beginning of his term, it was during this time period that the heads of *yeshivot* came to be known as *geonim*.[59] Though there were many *yeshivot* at this time, the central *yeshivot* provided the primary leadership. There were *mesivtot* as well, modeled after those established during the time of the *amoraim*. There was also a *Sanhedrin G'dolah and K'tanah* of the land of Israel.[60] The hierarchy within the yeshivah was probably an advanced scholar with students, and a *rosh yeshivah* who was higher than all the rest.

The core of the *mesivtah* was comprised of accomplished scholars of many different kinds. They studied diligently as a full time profession. Because of this, money was even distributed to the students based on their diligence in the *mesivtah* as a student of Torah. Students aspired to be *geonim* or an *av*, the second in line after the gaon and typically the one who would succeed the gaon.

The *geonim* of the *yeshivot* led not only the *yeshivot* in Babylonia, but they also led Jewish communities in all the lands. Because many of the communities outside of Babylonia did not have the same quality of scholars, some of the *geonim* created works in order to help those Jews to further their Jewish education.[61] Some of the great *geonim* include Rabbi Achai, Rabbi Shmuel, Rabbi Malcah, Rabbi Moshe bar Mar Yaakov Kahana, Rabbi Amram and Rabbi Nachshon. This period ended in approximately the twelfth century, bringing us to a very different era from the one in which it began.[62]

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59 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 108.

60 The *Sanhedrin G'dolah* refers, during Talmudic times, to the assembly of seventy-one ordained scholars who acted as a supreme court and legislative body. The *Sanhedrin K'tanah* refers to a smaller version of the *Sanhedrin G'dolah*. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, p. 144.

61 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 112.

62 Ibid., pp. 103-129.

MIDDLE AGES - SEPHARDIM

It is during this next period where one finds the beginning of a split between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jewry. It is important to begin by examining the Sephardic community, noticing first the community in Italy. There already existed a fairly large Jewish community in Rome during the time of the *tannaim*, even before this period of time. The Italian community was founded by the scholars who came from the *yeshivot* in Israel, not from the ones in the Diaspora.

Rabbi Joseph Colon, more commonly known as the Maharik, was born in France and studied in Germany. In 1440 he left for Italy in order to further the Torah renewal in Italy at the time.[63] He held his first position as the Rav of Pimanti in Northern Italy. (There was also a yeshivah in Padua, under the leadership of Rabbi Yehuda Mintz.) In that yeshivah, there existed *pilpul*, discussion or debate. Each person present would discuss the matter with his partner, the older with his counterparts and the younger with his counterparts. All of the study was done by memory alone. Following afternoon services on shabbat, the students would have the wonderful opportunity to study with the *rav*.[64]

Another yeshivah in the 1530's was very similar. Occasionally, the *rosh yeshivah* of an Italian yeshivah would present halachic[65] questions to the students for discussion. These might be questions presented to him for halachic decision

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63 Ibid., p. 138.

64 The word *rav* is the Hebrew for rabbi.

65 *Halachah* is Jewish law, typically referring to that which is in the Talmud.

by others from within the community. He would make his own decision following the discussion of the students.[66]

In Spain, the Jewish community was growing as well. One of the leading Jewish personalities in Spain during the first part of the tenth century was Chisdai ben Yitchak ibn Shaprut, born in 915. He was one of the great patrons of Torah study in this time. He was a Spanish physician and diplomat during a great time of Jewish life in Moslem Spain. He was always mindful of the needs of his fellow Jews, and he introduced the study of Talmud by helping to open an academy.[67] The famous Rabbi Shmuel ben Yosef haLevi haNaggid[68] was one of his disciples.

There were many other famous rabbis who thrived in a variety of *yeshivot* in Spain during this time. Included in the list were the Rabbi Yitzchak ben Yaakov,[69] Maimonides[70] and Rabbi Shlomo ben Avraham Aderes,[71] who would become the leader of Spanish Jewry during the end of the thirteenth century.

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66 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 140

67 Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 172-173

68 Shmuel ha Naggid was born at the end of the tenth century, and he was a Spanish statesman and scholar in his own right. He saw himself as a defender of Israel and leader of Spanish Jewry. Ibid., pp. 321-322.

69 Rabbi Yitzchak ben Yaakov of Fez, otherwise known as the Rif, lived in the eleventh century. He wrote a comprehensive summary of the Talmud. Barry Holz, ed, *Back to the Sources* (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p. 161.

70 Rabbi Moses Maimonides, otherwise known as the Rambam, is perhaps the most famous Jewish philosopher of all times. Born in Cordova in the twelfth century, he was a doctor as well as a philosopher. His reputation continued to grow after his death. Comay, *Who's Who in the Bible*, pp. 243-245.

71 Rabbi Shlomo ben Avraham Aderes is best known as the Rashba. He was a student of Nachmanides and Rabbi Yona, and he established a yeshivah in Barcelona. Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 154.

Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel[72] would then take over his position of leadership at the beginning of the fourteenth century. These *yeshivot* in Spain thrived until the expulsion in 1492.[73]

After the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, many more Jews fled to Italy than ever before. Numerous families were greatly effected by the expulsion, which eliminated all *yeshivot* from within Spain. Rabbi Joseph Caro's family fled from Spain in 1492 when he was but a child. A sixteenth century religious authority and mystic, Joseph Caro is best known as the author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, the code most influential in modern Jewish life.[74] He became connected to Jewish Mysticism after he was visited by the Maggid, a mystic who will be discussed in a future chapter. Joseph Caro's Talmudic academy in Safed attracted hundreds of students, and only upon the arrival of Isaac Luria, the great Jewish mystic, did his popularity decline.[75]

Rabbi Yosef ben Lev became the first *rosh yeshivah* in Constantinople. His yeshivah was willing to accept both older and younger students. He would sit facing his students, the older ones in the front and the younger ones in the back of the lecture room.[76] It was Rabbi Yosef who excommunicated Shabbtai Tzvi

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72 Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel, otherwise known as the Rosh, was born in 1250 and was the main disciple of a well-known teacher in Germany. Ibid., p. 154.

73 Ibid., pp. 149-155.

74 The *Shulchan Aruch* literally means the set table. It is a a digest of Caro's commentary to an earlier, more detailed code. It aims at "giving a simple statement of the law as it affects the life of the ordinary Jew...." Holz, ed., *Back to the Sources*, p. 162.

75 Comay, *Who's Who in the Jewish History*, p. 78.

76 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 166.

when he came into the picture in the 1660's.[77]

In Southern France there was also a growing yeshivah community. The *rosh yeshivah* of the Marbonne Yeshivah was Rabbi Yitchak ben Marbonne haLevi, who took his place as such in the late eleventh century. Others followed once he died. The Ra'avad, Rabbi Avraham ben David, headed a yeshivah in Nimes. He was always looking for ways in which to improve his yeshivah. Born in Narbonne in the early twelfth century, the Ra'avad was a recognized leader among scholars. He was known for many acclaimed works, and the yeshivah which he ran became very well known. Students would come to study there from near and far.[78]

Among the many regulations detailed in a document called *Chukei haTorah*, Laws of the Torah, probably written in Provence in the thirteenth century, are the following: 1) no teaching is to be done at home; 2) the rector must not reside at his school with his family; 3) students were encouraged to examine one another every evening - using books, not from memory. This is just a taste of the pedagogical issues which were of importance to the *roshei yeshivot* in Southern France during this time.[79]

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77 Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 267.

78 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, pp. 188-189.

79 Ibid., p. 193.

MIDDLE AGES - ASHKENAZIM

Though there were clearly numerous *yeshivot* in the Sephardic world during the Middle Ages, those which existed in the Ashkenazic[80] world were perhaps some of the greatest *yeshivot* of all time. In this section, the *yeshivot* in Germany and Northern France will be examined, for the entire following chapter of this thesis is devoted to the study of the yeshivah in Poland during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

There is a long line of *roshei yeshivot* in Germany and Northern France. Rashi, one of the greatest commentators of all time, was born in the French province of Champagne in 1040. He established his own yeshivah there so that he could teach his methods and his beliefs to all of his many followers and disciples.

There was a group of scholars at this time known as *chasidei Ashkenaz* who were very active in the yeshivah movement. At the close of the era, there were two main semesters in every Ashkenazic yeshivah, though different from what we understand them to be today. They were called *z'man perush*[81] and *z'man tosefot*.[82] During the first semester, the students studied with Rashi's

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80 The term "Ashkenaz" is the designation of the first compact area of Jews in North West Europe, originally on the banks of the Rhine. This expression eventually became identified with Germany and German Jews, as well as their descendants who dwell in other countries. It now has an even broader connotation, including ideas, ways of life and social institutions. It is used in clear contradiction to the term "Sephared", the term connoting Jews originating in Spain. "Ashkenaz", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 3, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), pp. 719-722.

81 *Z'man perush* was the time when students studied the Talmud with Rashi's commentary.

82 *Z'man tosefot* was the time that the *Tosefot* and other commentaries were studied through the method of *pilpul*.

commentary, and during the second semester, they studied *Tosefot* and commentaries through the sharp *pilpul* method of study known as *chilukim*.[83]

The creation and development of the yeshivah allowed many new ideas to be pursued as related to Jewish education. The *rosh yeshivah* would maintain a close connection with many of his students. The yeshivah became a very close-knit group. When someone died, the whole yeshivah mourned and fasted. When someone was wed, the whole yeshivah celebrated, students and teachers alike.[84] It was as if they were a part of one large family.

A description of this time period would not be complete without the inclusion of Rabbi Jacob Moellin, better known as the Maharil. Having lived in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, he was the leading Ashkenazic scholar of his time. He was the *rosh yeshivah* of a yeshivah in Mainz, and he was quite influential on the development of Ashkenazi halachic tradition. He, like many others of his time, helped to further develop the Jewish customs and learning in this era.

Though clearly just an overview, perhaps a reader can now better understand that the yeshivah did not just arrive overnight. It has been developing over the last two thousand years. Furthermore, the relationship being examined in this thesis between the teachers and the students is also not a recent development in the *yeshivot* of the modern world. It is clear that such a relationship has existed for thousands of years as well, with many different understandings.

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83 *Chiluk* literally means a division, but refers in this context to the study method of *pilpul*, as described above.

84 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 206.

Having examined the *yeshivot*, with a specific emphasis on the relationship of the teachers, whatever they may have been called in a given era, and their students or disciples, in the Tannaitic Period, Amoraic Period, Geonic Period, the Sephardic world and the Ashkenazic world, it seems only appropriate to move toward the next phase. This brings the history timeline to the beginnings of the *yeshivot* in Poland in the sixteenth century.

2. *Teachers and Students in Eastern Europe*

In the minds of some traditional interpreters, the yeshivah as it is known today began as long ago as in the Biblical Period. However, the yeshivah became the great institution of learning across the Jewish world because of its growth in Eastern Europe from the time of the sixteenth century and forward. One can see a major shift in history at this time because by 1500, the center of the Jewish world had shifted east of the Rhine, and the Eastern European era in Jewish history officially began.[1]

It seems that one would define a yeshivah during this period of time as an educational setting in which students and teachers work together toward the learning and mastering of Talmud study in particular and Jewish studies in general. However, before examining the yeshivah itself during this time period, it is important for the reader to understand the greater historical reality for the Jews of this time. There is no question that the yeshivah developed and multiplied as a result of the environment in which the Jews were living. Therefore, one must come to understand this environment in order to appreciate the details within the yeshivah world.

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[1] Milton Meltzer, *A History of Jewish Life from Eastern Europe to America*, (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1996), p. 8.

CONDITIONS OF THE TIME

One should begin by defining "Eastern Europe" during this time as the area bounded by the Rhine River on the western side and the Dnieper as the eastern boundary.[2] It included the countries of Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Hungary, and many more.

These Jews living in Eastern Europe were mostly peasants, though some of them held positions of artisans and workers. They had come to be called Ashkenaz, and they had even brought their own language and customs with them, different from the Jews of Sephardic communities. Many of them had arrived from Western Europe as a result of expulsions, though some arrived after the expulsions had ceased. They welcomed and appreciated greatly their new lives in Eastern Europe.

There even began during this time an expansion of commerce. As a result, there was a growth of handicrafts among the Jews. Many Jews became merchants and sold clothing, a business they would continue to pursue even once they had arrived to the shores of the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Because they were Jews, they were prevented from working in most professions withing the greater community. Though they were interested in being successful, they often needed to accept being successful within their own small Jewish community.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century one can see the development of a form of Jewish self-government in Poland when the Polish monarch decided to appoint Rabbi Jacob Pollak[3] as the rabbi of all of Poland.[4] The Jews quickly

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[2] Ibid., p. 3.

[3] Jacob ben Joseph lived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Poland. He was the first Polish halachic authority in the entire history of Jews in Poland. He eventually left Prague, where he was appointed the rabbi and a member of the court, finding his way to Cracow where he opened the first

became their own people, a community onto themselves, about which they really had no choice. They were separate and apart from their non-Jewish neighbors, though they did fear the potential downfall of completely separating themselves from the greater community. Therefore, Poland and other Eastern European countries became obvious homes for the Jews. By the year 1575, there were approximately 150,000 Jews were living in Poland, among the seven million people in the entire country.[5] This number only grew as the years passed, to reach an unbelievable seven million by 1939.[6]

The Jews felt very welcomed in Eastern Europe. Though they were rather poor, they felt as if they were moving up in the world. Although the Jews still remained in separate quarters from their Christian neighbors, it was different than the ghettos from which they had come. It was their decision to live in this manner. They enjoyed being separate from the non-Jewish community so that they could observe their Jewish traditions without much conflict or question.[7] It was during this time period that the essence of the Jewish ghetto was created, the ghetto one might imagine today which existed then. However, this was certainly not the same ghetto which Hitler created, or enforced, during the World War II. In this ghetto of Eastern Europe, the Jews were proud of their Jewish traditions and customs.

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yeshivah in Poland. There he was greatly admired and quickly became one of the community leaders.

[4] Judah Gribetz, *The Timetables of Jewish History*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 160.

[5] Ibid., p. 179.

[6] Meltzer, *A History of Jewish Life from Eastern Europe to America*, p. 3.

[7] Ibid., p. 9.

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

It seems clear that this sense of Eastern European traditionalism was preserved by the soon to be established *yeshivot* throughout the lands.[8] Because they were interested in being Jews both inside and outside of their homes, the same needed to be true of their lives within these *yeshivot*.[9] A reader can understand this further by examining the education process, and especially the *yeshivot*, within Poland.

The younger boys would begin their schooling in *cheder*.[10] The *cheder* used no modern teaching techniques. Instead, a student in the *cheder* could be found repeating his teachings over and over again, memorizing all that he needed to learn. From the lowest level *cheder*, a young boy would move up to a middle level *cheder*, and he would hope to achieve a place in the highest level *cheder* as well. It was only at the highest level of *cheder* that the students had some excitement in their learning.[11] From this *cheder* alone did the students continue forward for learning within the yeshivah.

Within these settings, there existed a *melamed*,[12] or supervisor. He was supposed to be cherished like a father. However, some sources share that in the early days, the *rabbeim* and *melamdim* were not regarded with such affection,

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8 Robert Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 728.

9 Meltzer, *A History of Jewish Life from Eastern Europe to America*, p. 10.

10 The term *cheder* implies a Hebrew elementary school.

11 Meltzer, *A History of Jewish Life from Eastern Europe to America*, p. 75.

12 A *melamed* literally means one who teaches, and it specifically referred to the teachers in the yeshivah.

though most claimed otherwise. The famous writer I. L. Peretz, who went to school in the nineteenth century, claimed that he did, in fact, have a great deal of respect for his *cheder* teachers and rebbe. The students in the *cheder* were treated like children but there was no question that they were challenged intellectually as adults.[13]

The rabbis in the Polish community were part of the great influence on the young boys to participate in the yeshivah world. From the late fourteenth century, the rabbi's job had become a paid position. Each community maintained young men for study and even went so far as to give them an allowance in cash.[14] There was clearly incentive for the boys to continue to a yeshivah. Men were most interested, from the early creation of the yeshivah, in studying with the head of the academy or the *rosh yeshivah*. However, they needed to work their way up the ladder in order to achieve this goal. The *rosh yeshivah* always had two younger men studying under his tutelage, with whom the *rosh yeshivah* would discuss Gemara[15] orally, including the Rashi and tosefot. He would also maintain a helper at all times.[16]

Perhaps the man who is considered the father of the Lithuanian *yeshivot* is Rabbi Yaakov Pollack, as mentioned previously. He was the Polish halachic authority during this time. Though he was forced to leave his yeshivah due to a law suit, he was still one of the most well known rabbis during this era. It was he

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13 Meltzer, *A History of Jewish Life from Eastern Europe to America*, p. 76.

14 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 477.

15 The Gemara is the analysis and interpretation of the Mishnah. However, it is sometimes used to refer to the entire Talmud. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, p. 390.

16 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 477.

who introduced the method of *pilpul* into the yeshivah movement. This is a method still used in yeshivot today by which a dialectical Talmud study was enforced. It allowed creative participation in rabbinic religious intellectuality.[17] It caused his yeshivah to become a center of European learning for quite some time. Though it was rather popular in Poland, it underwent much criticism later in time.[18]

There were a number of men who became *roshei yeshivot* during this time. One of them was Rabbi Shlomo Luria, known as the Maharshal.[19] He was one of the leaders of his generation, and he became one of the opponents to Rabbi Pollack's *pilpul* method. Yet another prominent *rosh yeshivah* was Moses Isserles,[20] among many others.[21]

The younger students were called *noarim* and the older ones were referred to as *bachurim*. Students may have begun the yeshivah when they were very young, but they would often attend until the time they were to marry. Sometimes it was even their teacher or rebbe who would find them the appropriate wife. If it should happen that a student was showing no sense of learning or understanding, he would be taught a trade in the yeshivah so that he would be capable of contributing something to the community.[22]

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17 Ibid.

18 Gribetz, *The Timetables of Jewish History*, p. 164.

19 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 218.

20 Moses ben Isserles was a Polish rabbi in the sixteenth century. He was an outstanding scholar who founded and directed a rabbinical academy in Cracow. He published on both philosophy and mysticism.

21 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 217.

22 Ibid., p. 233.

There were two terms of study within the yeshivah each year. During one term the men and boys were to study with the head of the academy. This was a great honor and was done with the utmost respect for the *rosh yeshivah.* Men would spend hours upon hours preparing the material to be discussed with the *rosh yeshivah,* for they never desired to let him down.

From one description of a *rosh yeshivah,* we know that one particular *rosh yeshivah* did not leave his house except to go the *beit midrash* or to the synagogue. Often times, his students would come to him to study with him. Of course, this honor was given only to those who were well deserving of the task. He was held in the highest of esteem across the entire land. Great honor was given to each and every *rosh yeshivah.* None of the other *roshei yeshivot* nor the students would ever go against his authority.[23]

Roshei yeshivot often studied with the *bachurim* in a yeshivah during the summertime. This would enable the *bachur* to have some smaller group time with the *rosh yeshivah,* which was otherwise unheard of in the yeshivah model. When the *rosh yeshivah* did study with the *bachurim,* he would arrive at the yeshivah in the morning, asking of the *bachurim* what was most difficult for him in that day's preparation. He would then take the time to answer each one of the young boys patiently and with great thought.[24]

There is no doubt that this era was the pinnacle of Polish Jewry's Golden Age. Therefore, this period of time was the height of Polish *yeshivot,* until the Cossacks uprising in 1648. From these numerous *yeshivot,* many great scholars and academics were produced. Some of the most famous commentators of the

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23 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought,* p. 477.

24 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith,* p. 234.

time were products of this yeshivah movement. It was certainly a great center of rabbinic halachic discussion. [25]

VOLOZHIN YESHIVAH

Perhaps one of the best known *yeshivot* during this time was the one in Volozhin. A man named Chaim ben Isaac Volozhiner, a Russian rabbi and educator, founded this yeshivah in the year 1802. This yeshivah became the prototype of the greatest *yeshivot* in all of Eastern Europe.[26] Many men eventually ran this yeshivah, including Rabbi Naphtali Zevi Judah Berlin, who becomes the head of this yeshiva in 1854 and transforms it into a center for Russian Jews. He is known for creating some rather innovative yeshivah studies for his time.[27]

The yeshivah eventually became known as the Etz Chaim Yeshivah in honor of its founder, Chaim. It was, without question, different from other *yeshivot*. It was created in a very formal way, and it conducted its business in such a manner. In this yeshivah, students came in order to study with a specific rabbi. Because many students attended this yeshivah from other cities and perhaps distant locations, they would often reside with local families. However, so as not to put pressure on the local families, the yeshivah would always compensate the families, so there was no sense of obligation to completely look after the yeshivah students. This was the level at which they placed the yeshivah

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25 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 477.

26 Gribetz, *The Timetables of Jewish History*, p. 246.

27 Ibid., p. 279.

study. In this yeshivah, unlike others before it, yeshivah participants were referred to as yeshivah men, not *bachurim*.[28]

A branch of this yeshivah was eventually opened in Vilna, but only a branch because Rabbi Chaim did not desire to move his entire yeshivah to a new location. In this yeshivah, in either location, there were no special levels. Instead, all students studied together.[29]

There was a big dispute as to who should run the yeshivah after Rabbi Chaim. In the end, Rabbi Yosef Netziv became his successor. However, in the year 1880 Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik, the son of Rabbi Yosef Dov, was appointed to become the associate *rosh yeshivah*. Eventually it was his analytical method of study which would become the hallmark of all the Lithuanian *yeshivot*.[30] This method is described by Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg:

> The first step in the task of reaching the deepest content of a *halachah* is to collect its details and then unify them into an overall conceptual picture. Only then can one grasp the basic idea that underlies the details of a *halacha* and finally reach a logical definition of the halachic principle and thought category. This combination of what is referred to as the inductive and deductive method infused new life and productivity into the Talmudic studies of the Lithuanian yeshivot.[31]

In 1859, the government decreed that secular studies were a mandatory part of the curriculum, and they must be included in the daily studies at Volozhin Yeshivah. The minister of education of the Vilna district began, at this time, to request information from the Vilna branch of the yeshivah. A decree was even

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28 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 265.

29 Ibid., pp. 268-69.

30 Ibid., p. 275.

31 Ibid.

issued in 1891 from the Russian government which created standards for the yeshivah which they must follow, including when the students could study and the how the *rosh yeshivah* and the faculty of the yeshivah must be trained. This yeshivah was eventually closed, though Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik did not quit without a fight.[32]

LITHUANIAN YESHIVOT

Yet another yeshivah established during this time period was established by Moses Sofer, otherwise known as the Chatam Sofer. He was the leader of Orthodox Jewry at the time. His yeshivah, interestingly enough, became the center of his activities against all of the soon to be arising Reform activities [33] Another rabbi with similar views toward Reform, Rabbi Akiva Eger, a German rabbi, also established a yeshivah during this time.[34]

During the World War I, most of the Lithuanian *yeshivot* were forced to uproot themselves and find temporary homes in Russia. As a result of the establishment of a *va-ad*,[35] regulations were created which *yeshivot* in the region needed to obey. For example, similar to Volozhin, there was a limit as to the amount of secular studies which could be included in the yeshivah curricula, the opposite dilemma the *yeshivot* were finding when the secular governments were

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32 Ibid., p. 291.

33 Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 156.

34 Gribetz, *The Timetables of Jewish History*, p. 252.

35 The *va-ad* was the committee created to help with the running of a community or a yeshivah.

in control. However, the main purpose of the *va-ad* was not the establishment of curricula but rather the upkeep of the various *yeshivot*.

In Polish Lithuania, there were other types of *yeshivot* being established. Perhaps one of the largest *yeshivot* was the yeshivah in Mir. It was founded by Samuel ben Chaim Tiktinski in 1815, and it was directed by his son Abraham and many others throughout its lifetime. This yeshivah played a central role in the educational and spiritual life of the Jewish community within the city of Mir. When the Germans captured the yeshivah in 1941, many of the students were saved by escaping to Shanghai. After the war, the yeshivah was transferred to Brooklyn, though some of its scholars eventually joined the Mir Yeshivah in Jerusalem.[36] Because of its size, it was considered one of the most important *yeshivot* in this time and place. Also established were the *yeshivot* of Slonim, Radin, Lomza and Novardok. All were established near the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth centuries, each one was a little differently flavored.

Rabbi Israel Meir Kagen of Radin, best known as the Chofetz Chaim, worked at the yeshivah in Radin. In that yeshivah, the students were even permitted to sleep in the *shul*.[37] It became a very important place to study Torah. In Lomza, the yeshivah was founded in 1883 by a Rabbi Leizer Shulvitz. Those who were diligent in this yeshivah were allocated a place to sleep in the yeshivah itself. However, the students needed to prove themselves to their teachers. In Novardok, a yeshivah was established in 1896 by Rabbi Yosef Yozel Horowitz.

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36 "Mir", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 12, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), p. 70-73.

37 The *shul* is the Yiddish term for the synagogue.

Here the yeshivah was divided into smaller groups of students, each one being led by a more advanced student.

In Hungary there also existed a wide range of *yeshivot*. The first Hungarian yeshivah of which there is knowledge was established in 1717 by Rabbi Meir Ash. Within this yeshivah, there was the *shiur pashut*, or the simple lesson, which took place in the afternoon in the summertime and after the evening prayers during the winter. There was also a *shiur iyyun*, an in-depth learning session, which took place in the early part of the day. Within these lessons, the primary stress was placed on getting to the core of the subject matter.

The rabbis in this yeshivah were very concerned with clarifying the *halachah* for their students, so there would remain no unsolved issues. Because of their different levels of knowledge, the younger students did not study with the older students. Furthermore, there was no inclusion of secular studies within this Hungarian yeshivah. Though this is but one of the many *yeshivot* to be established in Hungary, all of these *yeshivot* were destroyed during World War II. Though there was some effort to reestablish *yeshivot* after the war, they did not succeed.[38]

The *yeshivot* in Poland during the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries were perhaps the beginning of the Yeshivah Movement as it has come to be known today. These *yeshivot* that were created during this time period began many of the trends in both teaching and the development of relationships between teachers and students within the yeshivah model.

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38 Paretzky, *Reservoirs of Faith*, p. 416.

3. *Tzaddikim and Talmidim in the Chasidic Movement*

There is no question that one must examine to some extent the system created within the chasidic world. The chasidic world was certainly an entity unto its own. The rules which existed and the communities that were developed were like no other in the history of the Jewish people. It was a religious movement which gave rise to a certain pattern of communal life and trends of leadership which would exist in full force for only a very short period of time.[1]

The relationship which existed between the rebbe[2] and his disciples was like no other. These charismatic leaders had an effect on their disciples that was far different from the relationship between teachers and students during the Rabbinic Periods. Furthermore, this relationship certainly differed from the relationship between teachers and students during the times in Poland just preceding the development of this movement. By examining the conditions at the time of the creation of the Chasidic Movement and the development of the movement in some detail, as well as some biographies of a few great chasidic masters and their behaviors in general, one can better understand the relationships

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1 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), p. 1390.

2 The term rebbe refers to "The Rabbi." It is a commonly used term in the Chasidic Movement as well as among many more recent *yeshivot*.

between *rebbeim* and *talmidim* (students) within this movement, the positives and the negatives.[3]

CONDITIONS OF THE TIME

As is true of the development of most movements within Judaism, the events occurring in the communities surrounding the Jews at the creation of a movement seem to have had a tremendous impact on the mere existence of such a movement. It seems clear that the creation and the explosion of the chasidic movement was most certainly a result of the needs of the Jewish community at this particular time in history.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Poland, the Jewish people were at the culmination of their powers. They were being driven from Central Europe by numerous persecutions. Because the Jews were no longer welcome in Central Europe, they packed up their lives and moved to more welcoming places where they could live trouble-free as Jews. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were upward of one half of a million Jews living in Poland. Though life was not at its highest point, the Jews were able to remain "economically prosperous, living an almost autonomous life, a nation within a nation, with their own courts and synods fully recognized by the government."[4]

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[3] The author of this thesis realizes that the structure of the chasidic model and the relationship between rebbes and disciples within this model is very different from that of the traditional "yeshivah" in Poland and Lithuania as described in the previous chapter. However, it is this author's opinion that the exclusion of this chasidic model would have caused a hole in the establishment of the development of the relationship between teacher and student throughout history. There is no question that, in its time, this model was quite influential.

[4] Samuel H. Dresner. *The Zaddik: The Doctrine of the Zaddik According to the Writings of Rabbi Yaadov Yosef of Polonoy,* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 23.

For most of these Jews, the situation was far better than it had been in their previous locations.

Out of the bitterness innately felt at times of persecution arose a hope which would eventually raise the Jews from the deepest depths of despair. There seemed to be a "promising relief from suffering, redemption from agony and the coming of the kingdom of heaven for those who had faith - only to cast them back once again, still deeper than before, into the misery of despair and disillusion: the false messiah, Shabbtai Zevi."[5] In the 1660's he declared publicly that he was the messiah, and he created quite a following.[6] Eventually, his lies and deceptions were discovered, but the Sabbatean Movement had already made its impact on the Jewish community. It was one of the most disruptive forces in Judaism for many centuries.[7] Though many Jews became quite skeptical, they were in great need of leadership, and they deserved a sense of belief in God and a reason to study Torah.

Life for the Jews was slowly changing. "By the second half of the eighteenth century, autonomous authority of the Jewish communal structure was weakened as a result of developments without and within Polish Jewry."[8] In the year 1764, the inevitable abolition of the Council of the Four Lands[9] occurred.

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5 Ibid., p. 27.

6 Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1941), p. 288.

7 Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History*, p. 330.

8 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 485.

9 The Council of the Four Lands was a national body composed of the most eminent rabbinical leaders and lay leaders of the time. They usually met biannually during important community fairs. They were responsible for allocating to the regional synods of congregations the taxes assigned to the entire Jewish population. They also issued ordinances for Polish Jewry in many

The framework for Jewish leadership was shaken, and the Jews were in great need of a new salvation.[10] The Polish government began collecting taxes directly from the Jews as well. Clearly, Poland was no longer a wonderful place in which the Jews could thrive.[11] While Poland-Lithuania was in the midst of being partitioned, changes were being made that would directly affect the lives of the Jews. Further impacting the lives of the Jews were problems inherited as a result of both the Chmielnicki Massacres[12] and the Haidamak Massacres.[13] All of these events were impacting Chasidism from its inception.[14]

Jewish hope, once again, was on the rocks of despair. The Jews were being treated unfairly by the government as well as their non-Jewish neighbors. However, there were some good aspects to the village life they were now living. There were several generations residing in any one home, and so the values of the

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different areas, including education, public morals and qualifications for the rabbinate. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 479.

10 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1391.

11 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 487.

12 The Chmielnicki Massacres were led by Bogdan Chmielnicki, the anti-Jewish Ukrainian leader of this 1648 revolt against Polish rule. He and his followers attacked the Ukrainian Jews, killing thousands, though some Jews did spare their lives by converting to Christianity. This battle was understood by some as the chaos preceding the end of days, and it most certainly contributed to the fervent support given to Shabbtai Tzvi. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 480.

13 The Haidemak Massacres were led by these Cossack detachments known as Haidemaks, who robbed and killed Jews while raiding the Ukraine in the 1730's and 1740's. A series of smaller attacks culminated in a large-scale massacre of Jews in 1768 in the city of Uman. As a result, the Jewish community lost a great deal of their moral prestige. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, pp. 482-483.

14 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1391.

elders were transmitted to the younger generations. There was, therefore, a delayed influence of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment.[15] Further, since these Jews held little respect for the dominant culture within their society, they were not interested in integrating with the non-Jews.[16] Therefore, the infiltration of outsiders' ideas was almost non-existent. The time for the development of Chasidism was just right.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHASIDISM

Chasidism was the new symbol of hope in a world of pain. There was an opportunity for new social integration, and Jews were once again given a chance to become loving and spiritual beings. Though there was certainly some opposition to this new wave of Judaism, it soon became "accepted as a parallel option to Rabbinism."[17] Nothing had been like it since the rabbis of the Midrash and the Talmud, and even they were incomparable with the rebbes of the Chasidic Movement.

The creation of this Chasidic Movement was truly miraculous. Gershom Scholem even describes the development of this movement in a matter of disbelief. He explains the following:

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15 There is no question that the Jewish Enlightenment impacted on the Chasidic Movement. Many chasidic Jews were disinterested in *Haskalah* because they believed it differed too much from their basic premises of life.

16 Zalman Meshullam Schachter-Shalomi, *Spiritual Intimacy: A Study of Counseling in Hasidism*, (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1996), p. 18.

17 Ibid., p. 20.

> within a geographically small area and also within a surprisingly short period, the ghetto gave birth to a whole galaxy of saint-mystics, each of them a startling individuality. The incredible intensity of creative religious feeling, which manifested itself in Chasidism between 1750 and 1800, produced a wealth of truly original religious types which, as far as one can judge, surpassed even the harvest of the classical periods of Safed. Something like a rebellion of religious energy against petrified religious values must have taken place.[18]

Clearly the spark which ignited the Chasidic Movement was rather powerful. Chasidism even attained the unique distinction of being "the first religious trend in Judaism since the days of the Second Temple [to have] a self-defined way of life and recognizable rite of worship, but yet was acknowledged by those who differed from it as a legitimate Jewish phenomenon."[19] The creation and development of Chasidism would impact more people than a movement in Jewish history for many centuries.

The existence of Kabbalah, of Jewish Mysticism, provided an ideological basis for a broad and permanent movement of great vitality and diversity.[20] Chasidism first appeared in the villages of the Polish Ukraine, and the movement quickly grew from these smaller villages to larger areas within many cities and districts. In the cities, Chasidim remained a distinct sub-group of Jews. However, Chasidism was still strongest among the village and shtetl Jews, including people who were innkeepers, lease holders, rural merchants, and many others.[21] It was a movement which was of interest to many different kinds of people.

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18 Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 337.

19 "Hasidism," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1395.

20 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 487.

21 Ibid., p. 495.

Perhaps the most prominent type of Kabbalah was that of Lurianic Kabbalah, named after its creator Isaac Luria. It was transmitted by Luria's students and by kabbalists who could understand his teachings and his beliefs. Whereas the Kabbalah of the Zohar, the classic text of Jewish Mysticism, was primarily concerned with the mysteries of creation, the Lurianic Kabbalah focuses on the end rather than the beginning of creation. It provides an explanation of the creation of the world, the main premise of which is the notion that a retreat of God's nature occurred, freeing a space for heaven and earth.[22] They believe that a primordial catastrophe occurred. There was a fragmentation of the light and the vessels of creation; it was almost an alienation of the divine from itself. The common belief is that we as humans have the power through *tikkun*, through repair, to put the world back together. This assumes the inclusion of the Divine in this process. This sense of *tikkun* and the gathering of the sparks impacts Chasidism as its base ideology.

Early *chasidim*[23] were known for ecstatic worship and their willingness to sanction and encourage deviations from the already established religious norms.[24] The earliest chasidic leader, the creator and developer of the movement, was Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. Otherwise known as the Besht,[25] he promoted this movement like no other rebbe. He quickly became the symbol of Chasidism. The Besht lived in the eighteenth century and was a popular healer and prayer leader. After a "revelation" in the 1730's, the Besht gradually became the respected leader

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22 Ibid., pp. 462-67.

23 The *chasidim* were those individuals who were members of the Chasidic Movement. The singular is *chasid*.

24 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 487.

25 The name the Besht comes from Baal SHem Tov.

of most chasidic circles.[26] He had followers and admirers like Judaism had never before seen, nor would it ever experience again.[27]

After the death of the Besht in 1760, the Chasidic Movement was put in the hands of Rabbi Dov Baer, otherwise known as the Maggid of Mezeritch. By 1772 there was much hostility from the various community authorities, especially in cities like Vilna. The *chasidim* were "accused of holding the study of Torah in contempt, being permissive in their observance of the commandments, behaving like mad men in their rituals, [and] praying with Lurianic rather than the Ashkenazic prayer book...."[28] This meant that the Jews were departing from their traditional models and creating new and innovative models of prayer. The *chasidim* were clearly posing many unique challenges for the mainline Jewish leadership.

By the 1780's and 1790's, the hostility between the *chasidim* and its opponents, commonly referred to as the *mitnagdim*,[29] grew. This anti-Chasidic Movement was primarily inspired and developed by the thoughts, fears and character of Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, living in the eighteenth century. Zalman, otherwise known as the Gaon of Vilna, influenced the communal leadership to join in his fight against the *chasidim*.[30] He was perhaps the first one to urge Jews to intensify their study of Torah, for he believed that all the answers

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26 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1391.

27 There is a more detailed description of the Besht in a later section within this chapter.

28 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 488.

29 The word *mitnaged* literally means against or in opposition to.

30 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1395.

to all of life's challenges could be found somewhere in Torah. Though he was not a *chasid* but rather a *mitnaged*, Zalman's popularity grew and the Mitnagdic Movement developed as a direct result of Chasidism's attraction and influence on the Jewish community at large.[31]

In the long run, neither the *chasidim* nor the *mitnagdim* prevailed. Though the Russian and Austrian governments did acknowledge the Chasidic Movement, the *chasidim* did not capture great loyalty from the majority of the Jews outside of Southern Poland and the Ukraine.

The *chasidim* ultimately split themselves into a number of different groups, each group following its own leader. As a result, the creation of chasidic dynasties existed by the first part of the nineteenth century, the third generation of chasidim. *Tzaddikim*, or righteous individuals, became an entity onto their own. They were qualitatively different from those who were followers within the movement, as will be described in more detail below.

Perhaps one of the main differences between Chasidism and all other movements within Judaism was the relationship between the leaders of the movement and its followers. The leaders were so committed to spreading the word and belief of Chasidism, and the followers were intent on obeying their masters.

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31 Elijah ben Solomon Zalman will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, in relationship to his influence on the Mussar Movement. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry*, pp. 1-17.

BELIEF SYSTEM IN CHASIDISM

The creation and development of the Chasidic Movement caused several major changes in the belief systems of the Jews. One of its largest effects on the overall Jewish community was the belief in Torah study. The early chasidic masters were quite critical of the many *roshei yeshivot* who had preceded them. They accused the conventional scholars of "engaging in Torah study for motives of fame, wealth and prestige." [32] The chasidic masters, on the other hand, were much more interested in the notion of prayer, above and beyond the notion of Torah study. Furthermore, they believed that the rabbinic notion of *Torah lishma*[33] really meant an attachment to God, *devekut* in their terms. The *chasidim* clearly established many reinterpretations of previously believed notions. Also, though Torah study had existed in an unused form in the past, many will agree that it had never reached greater heights in the entire history of the Jewish people than it did during the period of the Chasidic Movement.

One of the major tenets of Chasidism revolved around their intense prayer rituals. Because the *chasidim* believed that distracting thoughts were the biggest stumbling block in concentration during prayer, they made their prayer experience a very active and loud one. Even one of the more well-known critics of Chasidism, Solomon Maimon,[34] gives a rather sympathetic account of the intensity with which the chasidim prayed:

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32 "Study", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 15, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), p. 457.

33 The rabbinic notion of *Torah lishma* implies the study of Torah simply for the sake of study and for no other ulterior purpose.

34 Solomon Maimon was a Polish-German philosopher born in Polish Lithuania in the eighteenth century. He was considered a master of Talmud at a young age, though he became very interested in secular education in Germany.

> Their worship consisted in a voluntary elevation above the body, that is, in abstracting their thoughts from all things except God, even from the individual self, and in union with God. By this means a kind of self denial arose among them which led them to ascribe, not to themselves, but to God alone, all the actions undertaken in this state. Their worship therefore consisted in speculative adoration, for which they held no special time or formula to be necessary, but they left each onto determine it according to the degree of his knowledge. Still they chose for it most commonly the hours set apart for the public worship of God. In their public worship they endeavored to attain that elevation above the body which has been described; they became so absorbed in the idea of the divine perfection, that they lost the idea of everything else, even of their own body, which became in this state wholly devoid of feeling.
>
> Such abstraction, however, was a very difficult matter; and accordingly, whenever they emerged from this state through new suggestions taking possession of their minds, they labored, by all sorts of mechanical operations, such as movements and cries, to bring themselves back into the state once more, and to keep themselves in it without interruption during the whole time of their worship. It was amusing to observe how they often interrupted their prayers by all sorts of extraordinary tones and comical gestures, which were meant as threats and reproaches against their adversary, the Evil Spirit, who tried to disturb their devotion; and how by this means they wore themselves out to such an extent that, on finishing their prayers, they usually fell down in complete exhaustion.[35]

Clearly, the *chasidim* firmly believed that material needs and bodily impulses contained possibilities for making the profane into something holy.[36] This was an ultimate goal of the *chasidim* in all acts of life: moving from the profane to a level of sacredness. The main purpose of the *chasid* was to create a state of attachment

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35 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 491, taken from the autobiography of Solomon Maimon.

36 Those things which are profane are things we can do during a normal day. That which is holy can be done on shabbat. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 492.

(*devekut*) to God, of always being with God. This was the aim of worship of the *chasid* at all times.[37]

Yet another basic tenet of Chasidism is the insistence on joy,[38] optimism and *hit-la-ha-vut*[39] as the primary factor in living a good Jewish life. All of the songs, dances and tales related to Chasidism therefore demonstrate this belief. Because the *chasidim* believed so strongly in the omnipresence of God,[40] they therefore ascribed to the belief that all in life must be good because it is in the hands of God and it was easy for them to always maintain the notion of *simchah* in their lives. They believed that a melancholy attitude would only cause a barrier between human beings and God.

Chasidism further believed in the ideas of love and fear. The *chasidim* believed that the study of Torah, the devotion to prayer and other religious duties must be carried out in both love and fear of God. To do the bare deed without these two feelings is like a bird without wings. They believed that there were holy sparks (*nizozot*) waiting to be redeemed and rescued for sanctity through human beings using their appetites in order to serve God.[41]

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37 Because they were unable to pray in such manner around those who were not *chasidim*, they opened many small prayer houses called *shtiblekh*, a name which is still used today. "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1401.

38 They would refer to joy as *simchah*, as we do today in modern Hebrew as well.

39 The term *hit-la-ha-vut* literally means a burning enthusiasm, in which the soul is aflame with ardor for God whose presence is everywhere and in everyone. "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1405.

40 Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz, transl., *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov: The Earliest Collection of Legends about the Founder of Hasidism*, (New York: Schocken, 1970), p. xxi.

41 This was a Lurianic understanding. "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1405.

Furthermore, a basic belief in Chasidism is the notion of social involvement. As a result of the horrific conditions existing in the lands when Chasidism was created, felt so keenly by the chasidic masters, they considered it a duty of theirs, even an obligation, to alleviate the sufferings of those around them, particularly for those within their own group or community. Those who were wealthy were asked to help those who were poor, just as those who were well versed in Torah were asked to teach those who remained untutored. Because the *chasidim* believed that Jews should participate in one another person's joys as well as their sorrows, they stressed the notion of Jewish unity among all Jews. If there were those among them who were not interested in following such obligations, it was taken before the *tzaddik* of the community, and thus dealt with appropriately.[42]

Finally, and most appropriate for the topic of this thesis, the *chasidim* had a devotion to a new doctrine of religious leadership. They believed that the *tzaddikim*, the holy men of God, could raise the prayers of their followers, and all of their own thoughts and actions, to God. Actually, the *tzaddik* performed a double task of bringing human beings nearer to God and bringing down God's bounty to human beings. The *tzaddik* even had the power, according to the *chasidim*, over life and death. Though God may have actually decreed whether a person should live or die, the prayers of the *tzaddik* can effect this decree. Furthermore, because the *tzaddik* was constantly performing acts for his followers, the community had an obligation to financially support the *tzaddik*.[43] It is crucial to look in greater detail at the lives and expectations of these *tzaddikim*.

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[42] Ibid., p. 1406.

[43] Ibid.

TZADDIKIM AND THEIR STUDENTS

As was stated earlier, one of the truly unique characteristics of the Chasidic Movement revolves around the role of the *tzaddik* and his relationship with his students. First one must come to understand the role of the *tzaddik*, his own personal goals and his goals with regard to his students. These *tzaddikim* were the *rebbeim* in the chasidic community, the righteous ones who led the communities in so many different capacities.

The concept of a *tzaddik* was not a new concept to Judaism at the onset of the Chasidic Movement. It had existed in other periods of Jewish history, but it had never managed to become an establishment as it did during the height of the Chasidic Movement. Chasidism "achieved a revolution in Jewish life, because it succeeded in creating an exalted blueprint of the kind of leadership it wanted."[44] It had a true vision, as a movement, of the direction of its leadership and the role its leaders needed to play.

The Tzaddik

The *tzaddik* was defined as "an individual of extraordinary spiritual gifts whose *devekut* is dependent on the congregation that gathers around him."[45] The *tzaddik* became the perfected man who would serve God in the midst of the entire world. He was the main solution to the crisis of the time. He was the link between heaven and earth, between God and the people of Israel. Some would even go as far as to say that the relationship between the *tzaddikim* and the

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44 Dresner, *The Tzaddik*, p. 119

45 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 494.

chasidim was parallel to the relationship between God and the Israelites at Sinai, but instead of being handed the Torah, the *chasidim* are being given the *tzaddik*.[46]

The *tzaddikim* attempted to draw the *chasidim* to themselves. They wanted to be able to have an impact, some might even say an influence, over their followers. This was actually one of the spoken goals of Chasidism.[47] *Tzaddikim* were typically aware of the faults of the masses and the sins of the rich, and they would attempt to change these patterns of behavior. They desired to raise the souls of their followers to show them divine light. Because of this role, *tzaddikim* are often considered by historians to have been quite authoritarian. "Never before in Rabbinic Judaism did unquestioning loyalty to the person or the religious leader become, to such an extent, a prerequisite for salvation."[48] The awe and reverence held for the *tzaddik* was unique.

The *tzaddik* actually became an institution. Every *tzaddik* was considered the soul of his generation, the heart of his community. Every single *chasid*, every man who maintained a connection to the Chasidic Movement, had a particular *tzaddik* that he called his own. Many of the *tzaddikim* actually taught that a *chasid* should be completely dependent on his *tzaddik*, though this was not taught by all *tzaddikim*.[49]

Though being a *tzaddik* may seem like a job for people with pride and ego, it was actually quite the opposite. The role of the *tzaddik* was only for those with

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46 Dresner, *The Tzaddik*, p. 119.

47 Ibid., p. 90.

48 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 494.

49 Yaakov Yosef, one of the disciples of the Besht, did not teach complete dependence on the *tzaddik*. That is the reason he did not become the leader of Chasidism, Ratehr, the Maggid of Mezeritch took his place. Dresner, *The Tzaddik*, p. 133.

the utmost sense of humility. This was the primary quality of the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik* must also have a sense of self-criticism and self-understanding. Further, the *tzaddik* must be willing to set aside any personal goals and desires for the good of his people. Nothing the *tzaddik* did was for himself. He must have been willing to undergo extreme situations, even persecution, for the sake of his people. *Tzaddikim* were considered to be humble yet proud, meek and yet strong.[50]

The *tzaddikim* demanded that all *chasidim* respect students and teachers of Torah, the *tzaddikim* themselves being the most respected teachers of Torah. Actually, "reverence for the teacher was a duty of the Jewish student, but the *chasidim* carried their awe for their masters much further, to include everything the *tzaddik* said or did."[51] Chasidism seemed to define reverence with a new understanding. A student looked at a *tzaddik* as he looked at no other human being. Often times, in order for a *tzaddik* to be able to successfully teach a *chasid*, he would recognize the fact that he would need to lower himself to the level of his student. He must never demand from his students more than his students are able to give to him. This would only have created a frustrating experience for both parties.[52]

Students or Servants

One might infer from the description above that the relationship between a *tzaddik* and his disciple is more similar to a relationship with a servant than one with a student. There seems to be a subservience imbedded within the

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50 Ibid., p. 163.

51 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 495

52 Dresner, *The Tzaddik*, pp. 149, 166.

relationship between masters and disciples within Chasidism. However, before making any assumptions, one should carefully examine this relationship.

According to all of the chasidic writings, human beings have a double role in fulfilling God's *mitzvot:* 1) to acknowledge the will of God and to appease God's desires and demands, and 2) to exert full capacity in understanding and appreciating the *mitzvot.* Unfortunately, these two roles can sometimes be in contradiction of one another. Sometimes individuals act like servants, obeying their masters out of fear, and at other times they act like students, satisfying the wish of their teachers simply out of love.

The servant shares no desire for the performance of the deed that his master has commanded him to execute. He takes no pleasure or understanding in what he is doing and does not want to think of it. Contrarily, the student has developed an affection for his mentor and wants his mentor to be satisfied with his pupil. He executes his teacher's wishes, constantly attempting to uplift himself in order to better understand the desires of his teacher. Coercion is certainly unnecessary in such cases.

It may seem, at the onset, that the student is closer to his teacher than the servant is to his master, but this is absolutely not the case. According to chasidic thought, there is a shortcoming in the relationship between teacher and student. Since the relationship is based on both understanding and feeling, a teacher is not allowed to expose all of himself to his student, since he is seen as both older and wiser than his student. It would be impossible for a student to comprehend all parts of his teacher's character. Instead, the teacher must descend to the level of the student. Any requests made of a student must fit the limitations of the given student. Conversely, any requests a master might make of his servant are uncensored. The servant, or slave, need not understand the request; he must

simply perform the task requested of him. The master does not need to conceal any aspect of his character from the servant.

One should note further some interesting differences between the student and the servant. The student has a superficial relationship with his teacher; the servant has direct access to his master's inner being. The student fulfills the teacher's external will; the servant is exposed to the master's heart of hearts. The student's relationship is internal. It embraces thought, speech and action. The servant's relationship is external. It embraces the master only in deed. The student is linked with the master through speech and action; the servant does not deal with the intellect, emotion or sense of pleasure of his master. The student's aspiration is to rise to the level of the teacher; the servant has no desire to reach the heights of his master. His aspirations have stunted and he is content being left alone.

One author understands that the *chasidim* were intended to be the servants, and the forefathers of Judaism were given the role of being the students. The patriarchs emulated the relationship of a student to his teacher because they used their entire bodies and souls in order to reach to God. The *chasidim* are privileged to facilitate the enactment of God's intrinsic will. Their purpose is to be like servants: to do whether or not they ultimately understand.[53]

Tzaddik as Counselor

Whether the *chasid* is understood as a student relating to a teacher or a servant relating to a master, it is clear that this relationship between a *chasid* and a *tzaddik* is unique. There was a type of counseling which actually took place

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53 Shmuel Boteach, *Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge: Basic Concepts of Hasidic Thought,* (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1996), pp. 231-234.

between *chasidim* and their rebbes. In Habad[54] language, the interview between a rebbe and a *chasid* is called *yedidut*. It is defined as "a spiritual treatment whereby a trained rebbe, who stands in a deliberate contractual relationship with his *chasid*, listens to his problems and advises him to engage in actions which are designed not only to relieve his suffering, but also to align him with God's will for him."[55] *Yedidut* may include a blessing or an intercession. It is implied that when a chasid seeks out yedidut with a rebbe, he is giving consent for the conversations. *Yedidut* is very similar to pastoral psychology.

There are many reasons why a *chasid* might approach a rebbe. He might be interested in discussing items of a human agenda, including issues about his children, his health or sustenance. He might also be interested in discussing items of a social agenda, perhaps some interpersonal conflict, social or economic problems. He certainly might be interested in discussing some spiritual concerns of his, perhaps including, but not limited to, the realm of the supernatural or matters dealing with a spiritual life.[56] The breadth of the possible discussion is as large as the unique individuals who exist in the world.

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54 There are many different categories of Chasidism, including Lubavich and Habad Chasidism. Rabbi Shneour Zalman of Lyaday was a great Talmudic scholar and evolved his own school of chasidic thought which came to be known as Habad. The word itself is an abbreviation: the "*chet*" stands for *chochmah*, which means wisdom, the "*bet*" stands for *binah*, which means understanding, and the "*dalet*" stands for *dei-ah*, which means knowledge. This system places a higher emphasis on intellectual and theoretical teachings than on the emotions. It attempted to restrict the tzaddik's role as intermediary between those who are faithful and God to spiritual matters alone. Habad Chasidism emphasized a distinctive fusion of kabbalistic speculation and rabbinical learning. H.H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 772.

55 Schachter-Shalomi, *Spiritual Intimacy*, p. 4.

56 Ibid., p. 55.

The rebbe holds so many different titles in this regard. He is seen as the community rabbi, enjoying the established authority predicated on the old Torah hierarchy. The ordained rabbi was sought more for his rabbinical decree than for his blessing. The rebbe is also seen as the "Good Jew". The "Good Jew" implies a paragon of trust in God. The "Good Jew" is the ultimate model for a *chasid* to follow. The rebbe might further be seen as the seer. The seer followed the prophetic model, in which much of the decision making is simply left in the hands of the rebbe. The rebbe might also be seen as the miracle worker, who cures people and heals all of their ailments. Finally, the rebbe can be seen as the guide in serving God. He is to act as a tour guide for those who cannot otherwise find their way. All of these roles are very important in the life of the rebbe and his students.[57] Whenever a *chasid* might approach a rebbe, he could desire for him to perform any one of these numerous tasks.

SPECIFIC TZADDIKIM WITHIN CHASIDISM

There have been many influential and memorable *tzaddikim* over the course of the development of Chasidism. Most of them fit into the general categories described above, though each one certainly has his own trademarks. Although there were so many rules related to the establishment of a *tzaddik*, there is also no question that individualism did exist among the *tzaddikim*. Each *tzaddik* won his own method, developed his own doctrines and in some cases his own melodies.[58] By examining some of the key players in the history of Chasidism, one can better understand the relationships these *tzaddikim* maintained with their students.

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57 Ibid., pp. 60-70.

58 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 496.

The Baal Shem Tov

One must certainly begin this discussion by mentioning a man named Israel Baal Shem Tov, more commonly called the Besht. Though he lived a very short life, from 1700-1760, the Besht became one of the most popular leaders of any movement within the history of Judaism. Born of poor parents in a small town in South Poland, the Besht was left as an orphan at a very young age. Of necessity, he worked while he was still very young in several different jobs, including one position as the assistant of a *cheder*. By the time he reached his early twenties, he was often found meditating on Kabbalah in seclusion.[59] He claimed that some of his best praying and thinking was done at such times as he was alone.

The Besht's teachings eventually became the focus of the entire Chasidic Movement. In addition to his own teachings, the Besht also used classical texts to expose the ignorance of the great rabbis in order to reveal the wisdom of the unlearned.[60] He becomes known for curing physical and mental illness, expelling demons, working miracles, perceiving the secrets of people's souls and teaching how to reach mystical exhalation. Though he maintained no mastery of the Talmudic texts, he was fluent, in fact, in the teachings of Kabbalah.[61]

By the 1740's, the Besht already had many followers. He preached a message of pious ecstasy and fervent affirmation. He would always act with compassion, even when it meant risking his life and his portion of the world to come.[62] Though the Besht was quick to have many followers, he did need to

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59 Ibid., p. 488.

60 Ben-Amos, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, p. xxv.

61 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 488.

62 Ben-Amos, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, p. xxiv.

demonstrate that his teachings were an authentic transmission of Godliness. He wanted to instill important spiritual principles within the individuals with whom he often came in contact.[63]

The Besht firmly believed that God affects every moment and every situation in our lives. He preached and taught time and time again that a person can never give up hope. He even attempted to lift people's hopes and to rekindle their forgotten dreams. He further desired to bring people together by unifying different souls. He even acted as a healer, writing amulets against diseases and evil spirits. Though the Besht left no important writings of any kind, his oral teachings continued long after he had died.

Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezeritch

The leader of the Chasidic Movement after the death of the Besht was Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezeritch, a town in Central Poland. Outliving the Besht by only twelve years, he led the movement for a few short years. Born in 1710 in the Ukraine, the Maggid eventually set up a court in Mezeritch in Volhynia, and he received the name the Maggid of Mezeritch.[64]

Under his leadership, Chasidism did acquire many more followers. However, it was not because the Maggid followed in the line of the Besht. Unlike the Besht's disciple Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, the Maggid never referred to the Besht as his teacher. Many believed that the Maggid perceived himself as an independent chasidic leader rather than as a disciple of the Besht.[65]

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63 Eliahu Klein, *Meeting with Remarkable Souls: Legends of the Baal Shem Tov*, (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., 1995), p. 33.

64 Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History*, p. 101.

65 Ben-Amos, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, p. 81.

Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polonnoye

To the surprise of many of the followers of the Besht, including himself, Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, a close disciple of the Besht, was not named to succeed the Besht upon his death. Though not a *chasid* his entire life, Rabbi Yaakov was converted to Chasidism by the Besht, becoming one of his greatest and closest disciples. He was a very harsh, officious man, quite rigorous in his personal observance of Judaism. He was always devoted to study, but he was aloof from the people and their problems.[66]

Rabbi Yaakov quickly became aware of the suffering of his people. He understood that the problem of his time was an inner problem, perhaps even a spiritual problem. He claimed first and foremost that Torah study was not motivated by love and fear, but rather by pride and vain glory. He further acknowledged that the second cause of the destruction of the people of Israel was needless hatred, hatred which ultimately brought a division between people. Rabbi Yaakov believed that shabbat needed to be given to the Jews all over again, for they had lost their understanding of the sabbath. However, according to Rabbi Yaakov, the area of religious life which suffered the most was prayer. He believed, like the Besht, that prayer was the way to connect each individual *chasid* to God, through his rebbe.[67]

Though Rabbi Yaakov did not actively spread Chasidism like his master and teacher, he was the first to publish a book that quoted the Besht extensively.[68]

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66 Dresner, *The Tzaddik*, p. 48.

67 Ibid., p. 33.

68 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 488.

Further, his teachings were left behind in the students with whom he had associated.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav

Though younger than the previously listed rabbis, Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav was perhaps one of the most influential rabbis of this time. A descendant of the Besht, Rabbi Nachman was born into a family of piety and strong *chasidut*. Born in Medzhibozh in 1772, Rabbi Nachman was raised in a chasidic family. His mother was said to be the granddaughter of the Besht, and Rabbi Nachman became quite obsessed with his great-grandfather.

Though most of the information about Rabbi Nachman's childhood is legend, it appears that he was a wonder in his childhood. Though externally he was a very happy and playful child, the same was not true of his inner personality. He was constantly searching for the nearness of God. He would even visit the grave of the Besht so the Besht could help Rabbi Nachman to draw himself nearer to God.[69]

As a child, Rabbi Nachman carried a typical course of study for the child in a chasidic environment. He studied the traditional texts of Talmud and Codes, but he also studied with great passion both mystical and ethical literature. However, whenever Rabbi Nachman had difficulty relating to the text, he would cry out to God for help in better understanding the matter before him.

Rabbi Nachman was known as a master story teller and critic of the other *tzaddikim* of his day. He maintained a quasi-messianic self conception that did

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69 Arthur Green, *Tormented Master: The Life and Spiritual Quest of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav*, (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992), p. 28.

not permit his followers to replace him when he died.[70] He therefore became one of the most famous chasidic masters of all times.

CHASIDISM IN THE MODERN PERIOD

The Chasidic Movement which sprang up in Eastern Europe during the eighteenth century has virtually disappeared in our modern world.[71] By the second half of the nineteenth century the growth of Chasidism had ceased. As the tendencies toward the secularization of Jewish life grew, Chasidism closed itself in and moved from a position of attack to one of defense. Because the *chasidim* adamantly opposed any change in the way of life and in spiritual values, they alienated themselves from the new forces which were being born among the Jews. Though the numbers of *chasidim* did not decline, the power of its attraction among non-*chasidim* was failing.[72]

Though it was not at its strongest state, Chasidism was not washed off the face of the earth. From time to time in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Chasidism's vitality rose to lead counter attacks against modern secularism among Jews.[73] During World War I, when many of the *tzaddikim* were driven out from their homelands, some of the chasidic groups did try to help others. However, when the Russian branch of the Chasidic Movement was completely cut off as a result of the Bolshevik regime, the *chasidim* felt the pain and the loss.

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70 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 495.

71 Dresner, *The Tzaddik*, p. 14.

72 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1397.

73 Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, p. 496.

Between the two world wars, the *chasidim* maintained many aspects of their religious observances. They continued their customs of dress, language and education. They remained loyal to their *tzaddikim*, as was true in the past. Though many of the *chasidim* were anti-Zionist, they often did not oppose the constant move of Jews, and even *chasidim*, to Palestine. There even began the development of chasidic communities in Palestine during this time period.[74]

During the Holocaust, every chasidic center in Europe which still existed through the 1930's was completely destroyed. Most of the *chasidim* across Europe were killed in the ghettos and the concentration camps. Any *tzaddikim* who might have survived the war moved to Israel or came to America and established new chasidic centers in their new towns.

The *tzaddikim* who came to the United States, either before the wars or as a result of the wars, felt a strong desire to perpetuate the Judaism they knew from Eastern Europe. They gathered followers, but they typically lacked the means and the fervor to re-establish the entire Chasidic Movement. Different sects of *chasidim* developed in the cities of their *tzaddikim*, like Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, the Lubavicher rebbe,[75] and the *tzaddik* of Skver, who established a following in a suburb of New York.[76]

Today one finds very few chasidic communities across the United States and in Europe. There are a handful of chasidic communities within Israel, namely the communities in *Meah Sharim* in Jerusalem and in *B'nai Berak*, outside of Tel Aviv. Though these *chasidim* are as committed to chasidism as was the Besht, the movement is certainly not what it once was, nor will it ever be the same

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74 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1398.

75 Just as Habad is one kind of Chasidism, so too is Skver another sect within the Chasidic Movement.

76 "Hasidism", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 7, p. 1399.

Clearly the Chasidic Movement has added a tremendous amount of history, prayer and beliefs to the history of the Jewish people. In particular, it has created yet another model of a relationship between a teacher and a student. The chasidic model is a rather extreme situation, given the awe and fear which existed between masters and their disciples. However, it is also clear that much can be gained by examining and applying some of the information presented throughout this chapter.

4. *Rabbeim and Talmidim in the Mussar Movement*

A study of the establishment of *yeshivot* and its progression to become the yeshivah we know today would be incomplete without the inclusion of the Mussar[1] model. The *yeshivot* which did, in fact, adhere to the Mussar system captured the attention of the Jewish community in a rather unique manner. Though the Mussar model reached an all-time peak in Russia in the nineteenth century, it is still prevalent in many modern *yeshivot* and is used by many teachers within these *yeshivot.*[2]

In order for a reader to comprehend the meanings and tendencies within the Mussar *yeshivot*, one must travel on the path of its history. There is no question that the founder of the Mussar Movement was interwoven into the history of the movement itself. Therefore, one must learn the characteristics and beliefs of Rabbi Israel Lipkin, who came to be known as Rabbi Israel Salanter, in order to best understand the ways and means of the Mussar Movement. However, in order to thoroughly understand Rabbi Salanter's beliefs and values, one must be introduced to his own teachers and masters as well: the individuals who helped him to become who we now know him to have been. Furthermore, a reader can best understand the Mussar Movement when examining it in relation to the two

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[1] Mussar means ethics, though the specifics of this definition as it was defined by the founder of the Mussar movement will be detailed shortly.

[2] Among the students whom this writer interviewed for this thesis, at least half of them made reference to the fact that their teachers, or one of their teachers, taught Mussar or used Mussar as a part of their teaching methods.

other movements surrounding it, the Chasidic Movement and the Haskalah, the movement toward Jewish Enlightenment. Only then would it be logical to attempt to comprehend the beliefs and ideals which shaped the movement itself, the *yeshivot* which were created as a result of the movement, and the relationships between teachers and students within this yeshivah movement.

There is one other note to make before diving into the development of this movement. This author believes strongly that the beliefs and characteristics of the Mussar Movement, the learning within its *yeshivot* and the relationships between its teachers and students, can most definitely be applied in the modern, liberal Jewish world of learning, perhaps more than all other educational concepts previously studied. Therefore, the inclusion of many details within this topic may seem extreme, but the application of this information in later sections of this thesis should help the reader to understand more clearly the necessity for so many details regarding the Mussar Movement.

GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF MUSSAR

There is no question that the word Mussar, in Hebrew written מוסר, takes on very different meanings depending upon who precisely is doing the defining, though the *peshat*[3] meaning of the word is simply ethics or moral.[4] In fact, the root of the word, מסר, can hold the following meanings in modern Hebrew: to give, as in to deliver, hand over or transmit something. The noun form of this word, מסר, translates as a message.[5] It seems rather appropriate that the Mussar

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[3] The term *peshat* is used primarily in rabbinic study to infer the most basic understanding of a word, phrase or verse.

[4] Alcalay, *The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary*, p. 1233.

[5] Ibid., p. 1405.

Movement was indeed dedicated to spreading their message throughout their communities.

Before individuals such as Rabbi Salanter began defining the notion of Mussar, it did hold an already existing meaning. According to the rabbis, Mussar was the "integral part of the spirit of Judaism."[6] They believed ethics to be a prerequisite to Judaism. Without the Mussar teaching, the ethical component, a student would be receiving an incomplete education.

Perhaps the first writer of ethics was actually Bachya ben Joseph Ibn Pakudah, the famous Jewish philosopher. Bachya lived from 1050 until 1120, and though we know very little regarding the details of his life, we do know that he lived in Moslem Spain and he held the office of judge within the Jewish community. He is best known for his major work, Duties of the Heart.[7] In these writings, he places the duties of the heart above all other commandments. Bachya was concerned primarily with the inner experience. He was not as concerned with one's actions as he was with their beliefs and their inner connections and commitment to Judaism. Since this emphasis is often forgotten in favor of the other exterior practical duties, he attempts to remind his readers of its importance.[8] Clearly Bachya placed a greater emphasis than most who preceded him on the ethics within Jewish law.

Seven centuries later, a man named Moshe Chaim Luzzato focused once again on this issue of ethics and morals within Judaism. Luzzato, an Italian

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6 Zalman Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1970), p. 13.

7 Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History*, p. 35.

8 Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 81.

Kabbalist and poet, as well as a Talmudist, was known for gathering a group of mystics around himself and imparting the Maggid's messianic revelations.[9] He had a great concern for man's search for meaning. He was even responsible for coining the expression "What is man's duty in this world?"[10] After he died suddenly from a plague in Acco, he was even considered to be a saint by many Eastern European Jews because of his ethical writings, the most influential of which was The Path of the Upright.[11] Like Bachya, Luzzato helped to develop the notion of Jewish ethics as it would come to be understood in relation to the world within the Mussar Movement.

It seems clear that these two thinkers helped to transform the idea of Mussar, of Jewish ethics and morals, into a more systematic Jewish world view.[12] Though there were certainly many other writers of Jewish ethics and morals throughout history, Bachya and Luzzato had a greater influence than most others within their respective communities and among the disciples who would become teachers of their teachings and beliefs.

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9 Luzzato believed that he had experienced a visit from a divine messenger, that being the Maggid. The Maggid, Dov Baer of Mezeritch, was a Chasidic leader who followed the great Kabbalist Isaac Luria. He was considered to be the closest disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chasidism and beloved Rebbe to thousands of followers. Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History*, p. 101.

10 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 13.

11 Comay, *Who's Who in Jewish History*, p. 239.

12 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 14.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF RABBI ISRAEL SALANTER [13]

"There are those who might say that it was the destiny of Rabbi Israel Lipkin, known as Reb Israel Salanter, to redeem the great Mussar teachings of the past from obscurity."[14] Perhaps from the time he was born in 1810 until the time he died in 1883, he was attempting to realize this prediction made regarding his purpose and promise in life.

From the time of his youth, Rabbi Israel had clearly been exposed to two different methods by which one can live one's life. Lipkin's father, Rabbi Zeev Wolf Lipkin, was a Talmud teacher and rabbi, renowned in his own knowledge of Talmud knowledge.[15] He represented the world of scholarship, while Lipkin's mother symbolized a wonderful and soothing spirit of soul and the proper kindness of one's heart.[16] Though many historians are quick to attribute Rabbi Israel's beliefs and values to his teachers, as well they should, it is clear that his unique combination of scholarship and ethical teachings developed first and foremost in his childhood home, among his own mother and father, and followed as he began to relate to his rabbis and teachers.

From the age of ten, Rabbi Israel was said to be the epitome of a child prodigy. After having studied with his father for several years, he was sent to

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13 Though it is quite challenging to separate the life of Rabbi Salanter, the founder of the Mussar Movement, and the foundations of the movement itself, this author will attempt to do so. However, the reader should realize that the two are intimately connected.

14 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 14.

15 Immanuel Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement: Seeking the Truth of Torah*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993), p. 68.

16 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 14.

Salant to study Talmud with Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Broide, the rabbi of Salant, who taught Talmud in a straight forward method. Because Rabbi Israel's father was as knowledgeable in Talmud as he was, he had his own criteria for the process by which one should study Talmud. He did not agree with the *pilpul* method,[17] and therefore he was very pleased with Rabbi Broide's methods, for he knew his son would learn the true essence of Talmud, as he understood it to be.

While residing in Salant, Rabbi Israel married his wife, the daughter of Rabbi Jacob Eisenstein. Fortunately, Rabbi Eisenstein was inclined to help Rabbi Israel financially while he continued his studies in Talmud as a married man. Because Salant was a center of Torah study, it was a much better place to be than his hometown of Zager in the district of Kovna.[18] Rabbi Salanter would begin to establish his desire for quietude during this time, escaping everyday craziness to find quiet and solitude.[19] This was a trait he would attempt to transfer to his future disciples.

As a very young man, just entering his twenties, Rabbi Israel began teaching Talmud to his own students. It is taught by a student of a student of Rabbi Israel that he headed a yeshivah in Salant during this time, and was able to

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17 As was earlier stated, the *pilpul* method is the method used in many of the traditional *yeshivot* by which students are matched with other students, of similar or differing levels. These partners study Talmud together for atleast several hours every day. Some who oppose this method believe students are inclined to move too far from the true meaning of the text in order to discover their own understandings of the laws and guidelines.

18 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement,* p. 68.

19 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series,* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1986), p. 46.

teach the tractates of Talmud at a rather rapid pace.[20] During this time, his students were mostly young boys who were just beginning their studies.

One of the leading teachers in Salant during this time was Rabbi Zundel, who Rabbi Israel viewed as "a living example of the integration of Torah and *yirah*."[21] It was clear from the onset that Rabbi Israel was drawn to Rabbi Zundel's unique personality. Though we will look in greater detail at the beliefs and teachings of Rabbi Zundel below, it can be assumed that Rabbi Israel gained many of his beliefs from his teacher and from the teachers of his teacher.

By the year 1840, Rabbi Salanter, as he was now to be called, left Salant and moved to the growing city of Vilna. Vilna had many *maskilim*,[22] and shortly after his arrival Rabbi Salanter was invited to serve as a *rosh yeshivah* in Rabbi Meile's Yeshivah.[23] Rabbi Meile's yeshivah was among the most exciting and well-established *yeshivot* in Vilna.[24] It was a rather unique opportunity for a relatively young man.

Rabbi Israel was adamantly opposed to earning any kind of a living from the study or teaching of Talmud. He himself was accustomed to living with very little.[25] For many years he was able to survive financially with the help of his

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20 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 69.

21 *Yirah* literally means fear. In the context of Mussar teachings, it refers to the unbelievable emphasis the Mussar scholars placed on the necessity to fear God, in an awesome and reverential way. Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 71.

22 The *maskilim* are those who followed Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment Movement.

23 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 80.

24 Ibid., p. 81.

25 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 21.

father-in-law and through a variety of other means. His wife owned a business for a number of years, and the earnings from this business helped them to survive. However, in the 1840's, Rabbi Salanter's wife's business failed and he was finally willing to accept a salary in return for his teaching of Talmud, so that he could continue his studies and teaching.[26] However, he never held a formal rabbinic position within his community, perhaps as an influence of his teacher Rabbi Zundel.

Rabbi Salanter eventually left Rabbi Meile's yeshivah as a result of some confusion with another *rosh yeshivah*, and he began teaching Talmud in the *beit midrash* of Zarzecze, a suburb of Vilna. This *beit midrash* soon became known as the Yeshivah in Zarzecze.[27] At this point in time, Rabbi Salanter was already beloved by all of his students, and his unique character traits shined brightly via his teaching. A testimony describing Rabbi Salanter's method of study and his connection with the students is revealed in the following remarks in the name of one of his disciples, Rabbi Samuel Lovtzer:

> In 1840, a new star appeared on the horizon of Talmudic studies in Vilna, when the great and wondrous *gaon*, the Salanter, arrived there. His light shone upon the paths of study in that city. This *gaon* displayed wonders of acuity and dialectical subtlety, drawing nigh ingeniously matters as distant as east and west. He, with his mighty spirit, and by the power of his marvelous intellect, brought them together as one, and made of them delicacies of acuity and clarity which astonished the minds of all who heard them, and the whole city was astounded that such a sharp *gaon* had come to it. His contemporaries, the young men who were outstanding in halakhah, were jealous of him, and tried with all their strength to

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26 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 80.

27 Ibid., p. 83.

follow his method and to compose sharp dialectical novella as he did but they were not all successful in their wish.[28]

Rabbi Salanter was constantly being described as a unique and ingenious teacher. Perhaps it was the love of his students for his teachings and his ideas which encouraged Rabbi Salanter to create the basis for the Mussar Movement. He began to develop this foundation in the 1840's. Rabbi Salanter defined Mussar as "employed to attain religio-ethical self-perfection and self-restraint."[29] He takes several initiatives to spread this message, and other pertinent information, by printing Mussar works and preaching sermons on the topic of Mussar. He established during this time period the *beit Mussar*, or Mussar house, which can be understood as the equivalent of the *beit midrash* in a traditional yeshivah, but it is the room in which students would come to study Mussar, not Talmud. Through all of these different means, Rabbi Salanter was able to disseminate his teachings to his disciples.[30] He was committed to "fostering a spiritual and ethical renewal within Lithuanian Jewry."[31]

Though Rabbi Salanter was first and foremost an educator, in 1845 he began public activity related to the development of the Mussar Movement, though he was already well established within his own community by this point in time. In 1847 he founded the first Mussar society in Vilna, which many people saw as a reaction to Chasidism, to the contemporary yeshivah movement and to the then

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28 Lobtzer, *'Olat shmu'el*, Introduction. These comments were formulated by the son-in-law of Rabbi Lovtzer, Rabbi Agus, and is therefore second hand information. The translation is taken from Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 84.

29 Ibid., p. 3.

30 Ibid., p. 86.

31 Ibid., p. 3.

growing threat of secularism.[32] Clearly he was one of the best activists capable of strengthening and renewing the Jewish traditions.[33] He also began preaching more publicly on matters of truth and *yirah*, some of the basic tenets of the Mussar Movement to be discussed in greater detail shortly.

Rabbi Salanter's audience at this time was typically young and impressionable, and he was one to make an impression on them. He was known for his originality, and he well defined the understanding of human nature and attitudes.[34] This helped him to be a better preacher and teacher. He saw a fine line between *halachah* and *aggadah* and Mussar, and he tried to define these terms and make a connection between these two areas of Judaism for his listeners.[35] He was quite determined to draw his circle of friends and students to be preachers and teachers of Mussar, just as he attempted to do in his own life. His influence was incredibly substantial on many individuals.

Because he did not desire to head the rabbinical seminary in Vilna established in 1848, Rabbi Salanter left Vilna and returned to his hometown area, the region of Kovno. It was here that he founded a Mussar yeshivah, Kollel[36] Beit Yitzchak, which grew over the course of several generations.[37] By opening

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32 Gribetz, *The Timetables of Jewish History*, p. 270.

33 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 8.

34 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 63.

35 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 87.

36 The term Kollel then referred to a place of learning for young scholars who desire to commit themselves to Talmud study following their marriages. *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 88.

37 "Lipkin, Israel Ben Ze'ev Wolf", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 11, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), p. 279.

this Kollel, Rabbi Salanter desired to train future scholars in his two primary areas of concern, *halachah* and Mussar. As a result of the establishment of this yeshivah, other *yeshivot* were opened by Rabbi Salanter's disciples throughout the lands. Of his own six children, two daughters and four sons, two of his sons became leading teachers of Torah and disciples of their father in the generation to follow.[38]

In 1851, Rabbi Salanter began teaching in the *kloiz*[39] of Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Nevyozer. Because of his association with the *kloiz*, it became one of the most well-known institutions of its kind. He enjoyed this experience immensely because he was able to prepare the younger Talmud scholars to fill some of the rabbinic offices.[40] He realized how influential he could be with so many of these younger scholars.

By 1857, Rabbi Salanter had moved to Prussia. He was growing ill and he needed to take care of himself medically.[41] Much of his last twenty-five years was devoted to helping to direct the lost souls in both France and Germany.[42] However, as he grew older, he was unable to participate in the same amount of public activity, as one might imagine.[43] In his final days he went to Koenigsberg,

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38 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 92.

39 The *kloiz* was a small building set aside for the purpose of Torah study. It was a rather popular and widespread institution in Lithuanian communities. It was used as a place for study and sometimes for prayer gatherings for younger Torah scholars and youth who were studying independently. Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 213.

40 Ibid., p. 215.

41 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 72.

42 Ibid., p. 13.

43 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 251.

ailing and exhausted from a very full life, and there he died at the age of seventy three.[44]

Rabbi Salanter was a man who both lived and taught Mussar, ethics and values. He fulfilled and perhaps even exceeded every potential within him.[45] One author even describes him as "pure and humble, zealous and holy, pious and God-fearing... the complete Torah personality - that was Reb Yisrael Salanter."[46] Already during his lifetime, he was seen as a legend among scholars and secular men as well.[47]

RABBI SALANTER'S TEACHERS AND INFLUENCES

One of the basic premises of this thesis is that teachers can potentially be wonderful influences on their students. The author of this work would not be so incredibly interested in the relationship between teachers and students in the many different yeshivah models if she did not believe this relationship to be ideally and potentially of great importance in the life of a student.

It is clear from many historians' perspectives that Rabbi Salanter modeled his teachings and his methods after that which he learned from his own teachers. It is even more interesting that his most influential teacher, Rabbi Joseph Zundel, had a similar relationship with his rabbi and teacher, Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, who had a similar relationship with his teacher, the famous Gaon of Vilna. There is no doubt that the knowledge and the methodologies transmitted from these

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44 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 22.

45 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 13.

46 Ibid., p. 93.

47 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 21.

profound teachers to their students ultimately became very influential on Rabbi Salanter.

Rabbi Joseph Zundel

The best place to begin is by examining the life and teachings of Rabbi Joseph Zundel, so that one can best understand his influence on his disciple, Rabbi Salanter. Born in Russia in 1786, Rabbi Zundel was a disciple of Rabbi Hayyim in Volozhin. He maintained a very close connection with his own teacher, so much so that even upon his departure from Volozhin, he would continue to visit with and learn from his well-respected teacher.[48] However, a careful study of Rabbi Zundel would reveal the fact that he and Rabbi Chaim were not completely similar in every manner.[49]

Rabbi Zundel was rather meticulous in the way in which he dealt with other individuals. He would often guide people subtly, though there were certainly occasions on which he became a rather outward soul. Many people would approach him with questions of *halachah*, all of which he was pleased to answer.

Rabbi Zundel, already at this early stage, was an advocate of the teachings of Mussar, and he encouraged his students to be the same by explaining to them that they could strengthen their level of *bitachon*, security, through Mussar study.[50] He emphasized the relationship between study and practice as one of his basic tenets of Judaism. He saw Torah study as the best way in which to serve God, but that study, in his mind, needed to include Mussar as well.

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48 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 28.

49 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 57.

50 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, pp. 32-35.

Similar to Rabbi Salanter, Rabbi Zundel would not utilize his Torah scholarship in order to earn a livelihood. He did not believe one should benefit financially from the teaching of Torah. On occasion he would even hide his identity so that others could not recognize him. He recommended daily self-examination, in order to keep away any evil that might otherwise come his way [51] Clearly, his disciple followed in his footsteps in this instance as well.

According to one author, Rabbi Zundel held four distinct characteristics which Rabbi Salanter seemed to inherit as well. They included:

> (1) the effort toward the maximal realization of the halakhah, while attempting to derive practical conclusions even from the tentative arguments raised within the talmudic discussion and the rabbinic *midrashim;* (2) sensitivity and alertness of the power of the Evil Impulse, which constantly schemes against a human being [(one's]oppressive sense of sinfulness, whose source lies in the tendency toward severe self-criticism, is also related to this); (3) the assumption that, for purposes of the struggle with the Impulse and for ethical improvement, it is insufficient only to study Torah, but that one must also engage in some separate, distinct activity; and (4) self-examination and Mussar study as means of ethical improvement.[52]

From what has already been established regarding Rabbi Salanter and his beliefs, it seems clear to what great extent Rabbi Salanter learned and reflected the beliefs of his own teacher, the great Rabbi Zundel of Salant.

By 1837, Rabbi Zundel left Salant, where he had been teaching and thriving, in order to settle in Jerusalem. The heads of the Vilna Kollel in Jerusalem had already appointed him as their rabbi, though he gave this position to his son when he joined him in Israel. Eventually, at the age of eighty, he died, having shared the uniqueness of his greatness with many individuals who were on

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51 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 64.

52 Ibid., p. 71.

many unique paths of life.[53] However, he left behind a disciple who considered him to be the ideal ethical man.[54] His humility and good-heartedness became legendary, especially through the memories of Rabbi Salanter, his disciple and his friend.

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin

An indirect teacher of our Rabbi Salanter was most certainly Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, the teacher of Rabbi Zundel. Rabbi Chaim was born in 1749 and is primarily associated with the Yeshivah of Volozhin, founded in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Unlike his teacher, who will be discussed shortly, he had finally created a systematic doctrine by which he could live and teach. Many say that he created this system as a response to the *chasidim* and the *mitnagdim*, which will also be looked at in greater detail below.[55]

Once again, it is clear that a closeness existed between this master and his disciple. However, Rabbi Chaim was much more outright than his teacher the Gaon. Whereas the Gaon would not even attempt to debate the *chasidim*, Rabbi Chaim saw the movement as misguided and unsuccessful, but he was in fact willing to confront them. Perhaps this sheds light on some of the differences which did exist between this teacher and student pair.

Dr. Norman Lamm, the president of Yeshivah University and professor of Jewish philosophy, who has written in great detail on the life and teachings of

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53 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 42.

54 "Salant, Joseph Sundal Ben Benjamin Benish", *Encyclopedia Judaica* 14, (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971).

55 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 30.

Rabbi Chaim,[56] believes the two to be different in several ways. He feels that while Rabbi Chaim was a rather moderate character, the Gaon was quite a fanatic and rather stubborn. The Gaon lived as a recluse, whereas Rabbi Chaim seemed better acquainted with reality. Immanuel Etkes believes that perhaps the reason for their difference in relation to Chasidism is that the Gaon's position on Chasidism took shape in the 1770's, when Chasidism was only at the beginning of its development. Perhaps he did not realize to what extent it would eventually grow. Contrarily, Rabbi Chaim developed his position with regard to Chasidism at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when there was no question of the growing influence and effect of Chasidism in the greater Jewish community. Furthermore, the Gaon was a more mature, older man when he developed this opinion, whereas Rabbi Chaim was much younger and ready to take on the world. Perhaps that is the reason why many of Rabbi Chaim's thoughts and arguments are in direct response to Chasidism.

Regardless of the reason, Rabbi Chaim was primarily focused on reinvigorating Torah study as the highest religious value. He understood Torah study as an intrinsic value, not an instrumental one. He was certain that many Jews no longer viewed it as such. He was rather concerned that many of the *lomdim*, the students in the *yeshivot*, were setting aside Torah study and replacing it with those unnecessary chasidic practices.[57]

Because Rabbi Chaim was also influenced by Kabbalah, he developed a system that gives a mystical significance to the study of Torah. He preached that through Torah study a student can become attached to God. He finally reached

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56 Lamm, Norman, *Torah Lishmah - Torah For Torah's Sake: In the Works of Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin and His Contemporaries* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1989).

57 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, pp. 32-33.

his lifetime's work by defining *Torah lishma*.[58] He claimed that it refers to those people who must direct their thoughts toward Torah itself. There can be no ulterior motive in studying the Torah. He strongly believed, perhaps even more than his disciples, that nothing can be a substitute for the study of Torah, not even the study of Mussar.

However, similar to his disciples, Rabbi Chaim did teach his students that they needed to apply all of the lessons of fearing God and having faith in God to real life situations. He explained that they needed to attempt to discover the truth in Torah, just as Rabbi Salanter taught. He was always searching for a way in which to stimulate Jews to serve God on a higher level.

In 1803, Rabbi Chaim founded the yeshivah at Volozhin, perhaps his greatest accomplishment. It was in this yeshivah that Rabbi Zundel taught Rabbi Salanter. The institution attempted to develop the sense of religious individualism. Rabbi Chaim led his students through both advice and guidance. He was always trying to assist them, and he was seen as a very sensitive man.[59]

Though no one would deny his sensitiveness, Rabbi Chaim was not interested in giving his students a "free ride". He himself was a man of moderation, and he expected the same from his students.[60] Instead, he asked students to study for half of a day and to earn a living for the other half of a day. Some of the closest disciples were asked to devote most of the day to Torah, but even they were still obligated to work for a few hours every evening.

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58 As stated earlier, *Torah lishma* literally means the study of Torah simply for the purpose of hearing it; there is nothing gained from it other than hearing the words themselves.

59 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 47.

60 Lamm, *Torah Lishmah*, p. 9.

Furthermore, Rabbi Chaim would never ask of his students what he himself did not fulfill. He always set high standards for students, but he followed his own standards.[61] He taught them by example alone.

One method which was unique to the yeshivah at Volozhin was that of restoring texts and establishing the *peshat*, or plain meaning of the text. This was the same belief held by Rabbi Salanter's father when he sent his son to school at Volozhin. The Yeshivah at Volozhin avoided any use of the *pilpul* method, for Rabbi Chaim believed that it ran counter to the inner meaning of the text.[62] Clearly this had a true effect on Rabbi Zundel, who taught similar teachings to his student, Rabbi Salanter.

Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon. The Gaon of Vilna

The third of Rabbi Salanter's great teachers, though he was only exposed to him indirectly through these other teachers, was the Gaon of Vilna. Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon of Vilna, more often called the Gaon of Vilna, was born in 1720 and died at the end of the century. He defined scholarship and piety, and he held extraordinary religio-ethical qualities. However, there was no question that his main goal in life was to study Torah. He too, like his disciples, was separated from society. He lived in a period of seclusion on a regular basis, and he often encouraged his students to do the same.[63]

The Gaon of Vilna performed *mitzvot* in a rather meticulous manner, in addition to following *halachah* impeccably. He also taught and believed that the values of *yirah* (of fear) and of Torah should be intermingled into his way of life,

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61 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 50.

62 Lamm, *Torah Lishmah*, p. 30.

63 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 20.

though he, too, believed that Torah study was more important than doing *mitzvot*. He taught that study was a way by which one could acquire fear of God. Like his disciple Rabbi Chaim, the Gaon felt that study should be *Torah lishma*. The value of study must only be dependent on the psycho-spiritual motivation of the given student. He discouraged those who were studying solely for the purpose of becoming a rabbi from doing so.

The Gaon also understood the intentions and implications of Kabbalah. His student, Rabbi Chaim, even believed that his teacher understood kabbalistic teachings better than the kabbalists themselves. However, unlike the kabbalists, the Gaon did not look for kabbalistic attachment to God. Perhaps it is because of the Gaon and his beliefs that Rabbi Salanter maintained a clear connection with, though also a disassociation from, the Kabbalistic Movement.

Unlike so many of the *maskilim*, Rabbi Salanter's mentors and guides through life were not philosophers, free-thinkers and statesmen. Instead, they were truly learned men in *halachah* and Mussar.[64] Rabbi Salanter, his teacher Rabbi Zundel, his teacher Rabbi Chaim, and his teacher the Gaon of Vilna did seem to maintain certain similarities, so that it is believable that each one learned an enormous amount from his own teacher in the previous generation. They all shared the thought that Torah study must come above all other forms of study. They also agreed in the belief of *yirah*, fear of God, and the fact that one must live his or her life accordingly. Further, each of these teachers believed in a connection between study and practice; they did not believe one could be independent of the other. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, all four of these

64 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 64.

rabbis taught and preached the belief in character improvement, perhaps the teaching which separated them from so many of their peers.[65]

Though one might understand from the details above of the lives of Rabbi Salanter's teachers that all of them in fact created the foundation for the Mussar Movement, that would be incorrect. It would be more accurate to understand that the system of Mussar may have developed from Rabbi Chaim[66] and Rabbi Zundel, and indirectly from the Gaon of Vilna, but it most definitely was Rabbi Salanter who developed the Mussar Movement.[67]

THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER MOVEMENTS

During the time period of the development of the Mussar Movement, there were two main movements which held some manner of effect on the development and attitudes of the Mussar Movement. Included in this category are the Chasidic Movement, which perhaps works as one bookend of the Mussar Movement, and the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment, which may be seen as forming yet another bookend.

As was written above, some say that Rabbi Chaim, and certainly the Gaon of Vilna, were affected by the trends of the Chasidic movement. They were both concerned with the departure from traditional Judaism for the seemingly unstructured and non-textual chasidic trends. All of this has already been

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65 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 118.

66 There are some scholars, including Dr. Norman Lamm, who do not believe that Rabbi Chaim was even a follower of Mussar teachings and traditions. Instead, Lamm claims the rabbis desired to connect Rabbi Chaim with the Mussar Movement because the connection would automatically help the Mussar Movement to be distinguished from other newly formed movements. Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 15.

67 Ibid., p. 14.

examined. However, there are some historians who find some similarities between the Chasidic Movement and the Mussar Movement. Some say they were both trying to find a means to practice Judaism in a way that was meaningful to their various followers, though they clearly chose different paths. So why, one might ask, was the Mussar Movement never the mass movement that the Chasidic Movement seemed to become? Perhaps because the timing of Chasidism was right for a mass movement.

One writer describes that the scene must be right in order for a mass movement to actually develop. These conditions include: "leadership, followership, major ideas and ideals which fire the imagination of people, social, economic and spiritual bonds between leaders and followers, historical events which set the stage for change, the emergence of a powerful leader at the right time and the right place, that this leader be both, an efficient administrator and a man of vision capable of inspiring people to transcend the vicissitudes of the present and strive ceaselessly towards an ultimate goal."[68] Clearly the timing of the establishment and development of the Chasidic Movement was right for a mass movement to begin.

In general, Chasidism is a movement and a belief system which values a person right where they are, where as Mussar requires much greater thought. One large difference between the Chasidic Movement and the Mussar Movement, rather pertinent to this thesis, is the relationship between master and disciple within the two movements. Though the details of the this relationship within the Mussar Movement are yet to be discussed, the reader should have a general understanding of the atmosphere that these Mussar teachers tried to create. In Chasidism, disciples stand in awe before their rebbe. In the Mussar Movement,

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68 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 18.

students respect their masters, and the more they understand them, the higher level of respect they maintain. However, in this Mussar model, the student ascribes no transcendental powers to his mentor, as is true in the chasidic model. His purpose, instead, is to learn from his teacher and to emulate him. Further, in the chasidic model, the relationship between teacher and student is master-directed, where as this same relationship in the Mussar model is student-directed.[69] This means that chasidic masters not only pursue the relationship with their students, but they also shape the kind of relationship that will develop. In the Mussar model, students help to define and develop the teacher-stduent relationship. Though the teacher is clearly the "superior" in the relationship, it is a more equal relationship than the one seen in the chasidic model. This fact, in and of itself, helps to realize some of the many differences between these two models.

Regarding the movement toward Jewish Enlightenment, Haskalah, the activists in the Mussar Movement adamantly opposed these trends. They believed that Haskalah championed the secularization of Jewish life, which Mussar activists, including Rabbi Salanter, saw as a major threat to tradition.[70] Because those in the Mussar Movement were so devoted to the study of Torah, especially Torah as *peshat*, this path of learning negated all that they believed. Those in the Mussar Movement believed in discovering the true meaning of the text. They tried to understand it, in their minds, as close to the *peshat* as possible.

Though there existed many differences between the Mussar Movement and the trends in Chasidism and in the Enlightenment, there is no question that each of these movements had some effect on the establishment and development of the Mussar Movement.

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69 Ibid., p. 46.

70 Ibid., p. 19.

SPECIFIC TEACHINGS OF THE MUSSAR MOVEMENT

Hopefully, at this point the creation and thus development of the Mussar Movement are logical, given its founders and their personal stories and beliefs. However, it seems appropriate to shed some further light on the theoretical foundations of the movement, the basis of which the teachers in the Mussar *yeshivot* were disseminating to their students.

Rabbi Salanter, who was clearly the thinker behind the foundation of this movement, created this movement over a period of forty years.[71] He based his ethical theory on both theology and psychology. Though Mussar may not have brought forth a completely new doctrine, its creators did, in fact, develop new methods of approach in achieving human perfection. However, Salanter did acquire most of his doctrine from the Mussar works of earlier authors.[72] Actually, his idea of Mussar is rather close, ironically, to the modern Victor Frankl's definition of logotherapy.[73] Frankl, a Holocaust survivor, is focused on man's search for meaning and purpose, and this becomes the main force of his life and the lives of his followers.[74]

Like Frankl, Rabbi Salanter found meaning in human suffering. As a result of this thought process, Rabbi Salanter believed there are two stages of self-discipline, the bitter stage and the sweet stage. The first stage is the subjugation of bad inclinations, and the second stage is the correction of those bad

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71 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 91.

72 Dov Katz, *The Musar Movement:Its History, Leading Personalities and Doctrines* (Tel Aviv: Orly Press, 1977), pp. 11-30.

73 The object and challenge of logotherapy is to weave the threads of broken life into a firm pattern of meaning and responsibility. Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984).

74 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 23.

inclinations. The first one is bitter because it constitutes an unrelenting struggle with a person's evil inclination, and the second one is sweet because it ends in permanence and happiness.[75]

Rabbi Salanter, and therefore the Mussar Movement, strive to understand the connection between the *yetzer hatov* and the *yetzer rah.*[76] For perhaps the first time ever, Rabbi Salanter realizes that knowing about the *halachah* and the commandments is not enough. It is more important, perhaps essential, for a student of Torah to learn how to overcome the evil inclination, because he sees it as a distraction to each and every student. He even defines the evil impulse as "the confrontation between the appetite and the normative demands of the *halachah.*"[77] That, as Rabbi Salanter stated, is perhaps the hardest challenge which lies before any student of Torah. He saw the ultimate goal of Mussar as creating a connection between the normative demands of the *halachah* and a person's psychological capacity to actually carry out the laws prescribed.

The study of Mussar was considered to be a process. Perhaps that was one of its unique qualities. Rabbi Salanter, his teachers and his disciples, were continually stressing the need for constant Mussar learning in their lives and in the lives of their students. Further, it was to be an emotional experience, not just an intellectual one. Therefore, Rabbi Salanter created a group exercise, which he called a *va-ad*, which was tested and refined in the Lithuanian *yeshivot.*[78]

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75 Ibid., p. 34.

76 The *yetzer hatov* is a person's inclination to do good. The *yetzer rah* is a person's inclination to do evil.

77 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 98.

78 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 32.

Salanter challenged the idea that morality was a by-product of religiosity. He viewed the hallmark of a Mussar yeshivah as "the quest for moral excellence on the part of the individual student."[79] One of the largest accomplishments of the Mussar movement is perhaps the imparting of a new awareness of the *mitzvot*, the commandments, dealing with the relationship between fellow Jews.[80] This was one of Salanter's biggest foci during his lectures and sermons.

As has been stated, Salanter was very concerned with the experiential aspects of learning, in addition to the intellectual components. He therefore saw two kinds of Mussar study, intellectual and *hit-pa-a-lut*, meaning in a state of emotional excitement. This second category was completely Salanter's innovation. It is an experience of powerful emotional arousal. He preached and taught that one should realize the power of voice, the special melody and rhythm, almost as an ecstatic experience.[81]

It seems certain that Rabbi Salanter desired for the message of the Mussar Movement to travel between the mind and the heart.[82] It was intended to be an experience, not just an intellectual lesson. Rabbi Salanter inspired his listeners to look inside themselves and search for their own personal characteristics that needed to be improved. Mussar study could not be an end in and of itself. The study of Torah could not be separated from the personal desire for ethical perfection.[83]

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79 Ibid., p. 41.

80 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 9.

81 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 103.

82 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 44.

83 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 5.

Finally, he believed that "to be truly religious means to serve man while serving God."[84] His efforts were toward human beings, not just books. Therefore, he did not publish very many writings on his beliefs and convictions, because he believed more strongly in the power of the personal connection between human beings. Though he may have left behind little legacy in writing, he did leave the creation and development of an entire movement.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RABBEIM AND THEIR STUDENTS

Now that the development of the Mussar Movement has been established, as well as the basic beliefs of this movement's beliefs and values, it is appropriate to look in greater detail at the relationship between teachers and students within this model. Though not specified as a topic of study in most historical works, it was a running theme throughout all of the writings about Mussar. The reader should already have an inclination of this relationship from all that has been previously written within this chapter.

There were several important contributions which the Mussar Movement made in the area of teachers and students. The first real change was the addition of the role of the *mashgiach*. Though the *mashgiach* may have existed in traditional *yeshivot*, the role was very different. In the Mussar model, the *mashgiach*, or supervisor in the yeshivah, became responsible for including the ideas of Mussar within the yeshivah studies. The *mashgiach* was supposed to work with each student as an individual.[85]

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84 Ury, "The Musar Movement", *Studies in Torah Judaism*, p. 15.

85 Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, pp. 1-17.

Rabbi Salanter strongly believed that each *talmid*, or student, should work to his own potential, as he did so distinctly in his own life.[86] He was not interested in setting goals for the entire class or the yeshivah as a whole, for he realized that each individual student had different potentials and different qualities.

Rabbi Salanter made many changes in his role as a *rosh yeshivah*, or head of the yeshivah, with relation to the students. It had been common for students to be sent out for meals in the evenings, and the wealthier students would return to their nice homes at the same time. He changed the standard and had families bring meals into the yeshivah, so that no one had to leave and feel like a peasant being sent off for some bread crumbs. He was certain not to differentiate between the rich and the poor.[87]

Mussar also emphasized the aspect of studying ethics with other people. However, they were careful to maintain the focus on the *peshat*, and not to sway from the essence of the Torah. His primary focus was always on *Torah lishma* However, he did believe that the group could stimulate ethical behavior.[88]

Rabbi Salanter was the definition of a teacher who taught by example. He believed that "attending to the needs of the *talmedei chachamim*, [the students of the wise ones], was greater than [Torah] study."[89] He was therefore an exemplary teacher and guide. He taught others to do the same. He reinforced to his students

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86 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 14.

87 Ibid., p. 68.

88 Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement*, p. 236.

89 *Berachot* 7b.

that they should never perform a *mitzvah* by compromising someone else in the process.[90]

Let us look at some specific examples of these relationships. The story is told that sometimes in the yeshivah in Slobadka, Rabbi Netta Hirsch Finkel, who was not yet the grandfather of this yeshivah, would stop beside a youth and listen to him chant the texts. Though the student shook with fear, he also felt his teacher's respect and desire for him to succeed. Another story is told of the creator of this movement. They said that Rabbi Salanter gave individual guidance to various students with the Newyozer Kloiz. This was in addition to their group work, for he believed that both the student and the teacher benefited from this relationship.

It seems obvious, from all that has been learned of the Mussar Movement, that one of its greatest accomplishments was in allowing students and teachers to have wonderful, loving and unique relationships with one another. The love a teacher and student felt for one another was as strong as a parent's love for a child, though very different. Rabbi Salanter himself modeled this kind of love both as a student in relation to his teachers as well as his students. It is clear that Rabbi Salanter learned to be a gifted teacher from his teacher Rabbi Zundel, who learned it from his teacher Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin, who learned it from his teacher, the Gaon of Vilna.

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90 *The Story of Reb Yisrael Salanter, Art Scroll Series*, p. 87.

5. *Teachers and Students in the American Yeshivah*

Once the yeshivah model arrived in the United States, education would never again be the same. It made a lasting contribution to American education. To date, the only form of real Jewish learning in the United States was rabbinical school. Both the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion and the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Conservative Movement's rabbinical seminary, were already fully functioning educational institutions. However, the sole existence of rabbinical seminaries in the area of Jewish education was not enough. There needed to be a place to educate those who were Orthodox and those who did not want to be rabbis. That was the role of the yeshivah.

The yeshivah presented a new force of unique value in American education.[1] It allowed students to be pursue other non-religious avenues while remaining committed to Judaism and Jewish learning.

BEGINNINGS OF JEWISH EDUCATION IN AMERICA

When Jewish education first began in the United States, there was no indication that it would become one of the greatest centers of Jewish learning in the entire world. Beginning in the 1750's there was the creation of an elementary level yeshivah, the first of many to be created across the United States. During the nineteenth century similar schools were created, including a Jewish mission school founded in 1865, whose aim was more to teach morality than Jewish

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[1] Mendes-Flohr, *The Jew in the Modern World*, p. 401.

education.[2] Furthermore, in 1886 Etz Chaim Yeshivah was created, the first school of its kind for Eastern European immigrants. This was a real innovation in the history of Jewish education in the United States.[3]

The times in which this yeshivah was created were quite unique. The twenty years surrounding the turn of the twentieth century saw a great mass of Jewish immigration to the United States. Approximately two million Jews came to America from eastern Europe. Many Jews were immediately forced to break away from their traditional Jewish values in order to find employment and support their families financially.[4] They were urged to forget God and religion completely by many of the secular leaders of American Judaism, and they were encouraged to adapt the societal norms which they now observed all around themselves.[5]

Because the Jewish immigrant was finding such difficulty in becoming a "true American," an Educational Alliance was formed in 1889. Its goal was to Americanize the immigrant. Because of this alliance, young boys in the Hebrew Free Schools, established in New York City, were forbidden to wear *kipot.* Yiddish was prohibited as a language within these schools, for they wanted these children to learn English. However, the local synagogues were not helping the situation, for they did not acknowledge the problem in the school system.

There was yet another problem during this time. Because many of these Jewish families were forced, out of necessity, to find homes in the Lower East

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2 Gilbert Klaperman, *The Story of Yeshiva University: The First Jewish University in America* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 1-16.

3 Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva,* p. 18.

4 Ibid., p. 19.

5 Klaperman, *The Story of Yeshivah University,* pp. 1-16.

Side of Manhattan, with crime and juvenile delinquency surrounding their every move, the notion of family values that once existed was quickly vanishing. The old Orthodox model of Jewish living was being banished and replaced with a modern way of life. Many of the Jews viewed their Jewish traditions with regret and bitterness. Unfortunately, this caused Jewish education to be low on the list of priorities of many of the new Jewish immigrants.[6] Fortunately, there were some Jews in this time period who were frustrated with their lack of Jewish education, and they even found a void in their overall education they were now receiving for their children in the land of the free and home of the brave.

YESHIVAH UNIVERSITY

The establishment and development of Yeshivah University took place over the course of many years. It began as an advanced level yeshivah established in 1896 in New York's Lower East Side. It was called the Rabbi Isaac Elkanan Theological Seminary, otherwise abbreviated as RIETS. It was perhaps a culmination of the attempt at synthesis between Americanization and religious connections.[7]

Etz Chaim Yeshivah

In 1915, RIETS merged with Etz Chaim Yeshivah, though Etz Chaim remained responsible for training at the elementary and high school levels, in both religious and secular training.[8] By examining Etz Chaim Yeshivah, one can better

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6 Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, p. 19.

7 Klaperman, *The Story of Yeshivah University*, pp. 1-16.

8 However, the secular studies only received a fraction of the time devoted to the religious studies. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, p. 21.

understand how Yeshivah University was created. Etz Chaim had originally been a place in which to learn Talmud. It was founded in order to meet the growing needs of immigrants. It provided an expanded facility for a maximum Jewish education.[9] Originally, it was completely dedicated to religious study, not secular study. Being a community school, not a congregational school, it was open to all children from any congregation, and it was even available for those who were not affiliated with a congregation. Finally, Jewish education was not just a supplemental education, provided for by a Sunday School, but rather it was a full time way of learning.

Rabbi Isaac Elkanan Theological Seminary

RIETS was quite an interesting institution in its own right. Its purpose was to rear in America great Jewish scholars who would study and be influenced by the text like the scholars of the past.[10] They were very clear that this was not only an institution in which to train and ordain rabbis, but it was also a place in which Jewish men could simply come to learn Jewish text and history. In its early years, there was a tremendous growth in the population of the student body, and the older students began being viewed differently from the younger students. Eventually, the classes grew large enough that there was more than one class for each grade.

Each class at RIETS maintained no specific teacher. There were several rabbis who served as *roshei yeshivah*. There were also people who fulfilled the role of *mashgiach*. They answered questions in connection with the students' studies, as well as consulting them on all other pressing matters. Rabbi Baron,

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9 Klaperman, *The Story of Yeshiva Uniersity*, pp. 17-33.

10 Ibid., p. 60.

one of the better known *mashgichim* at RIETS, was known to be more than a supervisor to the students. He was a friend and a teacher who created the spirit and atmosphere of scholarship. He inspired his students with the love of Torah, and therefore his students would almost venerate him as a disciple might do to his master.[11]

Yeshivah College

Throughout the life of RIETS, the focus continued to be not only on the ordination of rabbis, but also on the general education of all men who were interested in such studies. Finally, in 1924, the school was granted permission to award the degrees of doctorate of divinity and doctorate of Hebrew literature.[12] This brought new respect for the school and its graduates.

The then president of RIETS, Dr. Bernard Revel, always maintained a vision of synthesis of religious and secular education. Ultimately, he was interested in creating a collegiate division within the Yeshivah. When Dr. Revel began his tenure as the president of RIETS, it became known as the Rabbinical College of America, taking into consideration his concern for the collegiate presence in the Yeshivah apparent even within its name. While advocating for a college division within RIETS, Dr. Revel stated the following:

> The Traditional concept of education and its aims are... the building of character and the harmonious development of man's intellectual, religious, moral and physical faculties.... The goal of education, according to Judaism, is the preparation of man for, and his dedication to, his duties as a member of his family, country and faith. The Yeshivah proposes to establish a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences... with the double purpose of educating both liberally and Jewishly a number of Jewish young men who have been

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11 Ibid., p. 80.

12 Ibid., p. 153.

already imbued with the spirit and the sanctity of Judaism and its teachings, so that these men may not be lost to us....

In existing colleges, Jewish students are led to efface their Jewishness.... Some of our idealistic and talented young men will find in a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences under Jewish auspices a congenial home, unhampered by real and psychological restrictions, which stifle the spirit; a home where they will be able to realize their energies and mental endowments for the enrichment of general and Jewish culture.

Jewish young men who wish to prepare themselves for the rabbinate, for Jewish social service, for teaching in religious schools, for Jewish scholarship or communal leadership are to be trained in an institution of higher learning of recognized rank, which is in keeping with the highest educational standards in this country....

Secondly, Jewish young men who consider Jewish learning an indispensable part of the moral and mental equipment that they wish to attain through a college education are to have the advantage of such a combined education.[13]

Although there did exist a great amount of opposition to the establishment of the college, in 1928 Yeshivah College was established, including in its curriculum a four year liberal arts program. Yeshivah College was attempting to integrate religious studies and secular studies, though this line of thinking was not respected nor admired by all parties involved. The name "Yeshivah College" was a combination of the two great traditions of learning that now were becoming part of the dual instruction program, the yeshivah of the olden days and the college of the more modern times.[14]

During the decade of the 1970's, Dr. Norman Lamm became the president of Yeshivah University. However, it was under the influence of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchek, the Rav who taught in RIETS, that the RIETS Yeshivah grew more than ever. His influence extended far beyond the yeshivah world to the

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[13] Ibid., p. 150.

[14] Ibid., p. 161.

community at large. Known as the Rav, the rabbi and master of hundreds of ordained rabbis throughout the world, Rabbi Soloveitchik has become the spokesperson for Orthodox Judaism in America, having delivered nearly as many lectures to the general public as he has given to his yeshivah students.[15]

Though Yeshivah College, now called Yeshivah University, has undergone many changes throughout its life span, it still remains committed to the combination of religious and secular studies. However, it has become a more modern institution.

WHO ARE THE YESHIVAH STUDENTS

Though it is virtually impossible to categorize all yeshivah students, there does seem to be a prototype of a yeshivah student in the late twentieth century.[16] Most of the students seem to come from fairly observant homes. Eighty percent of the students have attended some earlier kind of yeshivah schooling before university yeshivah. There are many different reasons why these students choose to attend a yeshivah after completing high school. "Sometimes a spiritual awakening occurs in high school, and usually the rebbe serves as the catalyst for such an experience."[17]

Admissions to *yeshivot* differs from school to school. Often times, the school desires to know how the student prays. They are curious as to what

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15 Ibid., p. 175.

16 Willian Helmreich, in his book *The World of the Yeshiva*, undertook a complete study of the yeshivah world. He is uniquely qualified to partake in such a study, given the fact that he both comes from the yeshivah world as well as being trained as a sociologist as well. He investigated a yeshivah from a critical perspective, as well as partaking in hundreds of relevant interviews. Therefore, he does have an accurate and informed perspective on the typical yeshivah student.

17 Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, p. 131.

possible *chevruta* difficulties a student might encounter, since the *chevruta* structure is such an integral part of the yeshivah environment. Typically, there is a personal interview with the *rosh yeshivah* or the *mashgiach* as well.[18]

Though all *yeshivot* are different, it seems that most of the modern *yeshivot* enroll students who are primarily interested in the continued study and pursuit of Jewish learning, in addition to secular studies. Since the study of Talmud is the main focus in yeshivah learning, the students are typically committed to the study of Talmud. They usually believe in the authenticity of the texts, and there is almost a sense of fear and reverence when studying the Talmud.

Because the students spend so many hours each and every day in *chevruta*, smaller study groups, the students must be interested in working with other students. Though some students will study in the evenings above and beyond the assignments given out during each day by the lecturer, they must be committed to the *chevruta* method of style as well.

Though not all yeshivah students are identical, there certainly do exist some common trends among many modern day yeshivah students. Perhaps by examining the life within the yeshivah, one can better understand the nature of the students as well.

LIFE IN THE YESHIVAH

As was true in the section above, it is virtually impossible to categorize the life in a yeshivah, since every yeshivah is so very different. However, once again it does seem that there are some trends within the general life of most yeshivah students. By examining their lives in the yeshivah, one can better understand how

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[18] Ibid., pp. 126-138.

the relationships progressed between teachers and students within the yeshivah model.

For most of the students, the yeshivah experience was their first experience away from home. Many of the students, and even some of the faculty, live on the campus of the yeshivah. However, many of the *yeshivot* are located in highly populated areas, so students and faculty are able to commute. Those who live in the dorms have quite a unique experience, different in many ways from the average college student's experience in a dormitory. In the yeshivah dorms, there is a feeling of concern for one another. The students appreciate the lack of parental involvement, though the experience might be unnerving and disappointing for some students.

There is a very interesting question which exists within the life of the yeshivah student. The question of parental control seems to be raised on a regular basis. Most students are in fairly constant contact with their families. However, there might be separation between a family and their child since the yeshivah often isolates the student in many different ways. It is actually inevitable that some staff members, especially the rabbis, will become surrogate parents for these yeshivah students.

The yeshivah world is truly a unique world unto itself. Though every yeshivah is certainly very different, there are some generalizations which can be made. One of the prominent issues is whether or not students can actually be individuals, or if they were only capable, and permitted, to be one of the disciples of the many rabbis in the yeshivah. Some *yeshivot* seem to encourage students to be who the yeshivah wants them to be. Other *yeshivot* are attempting to train individuals to think and be for themselves.

Furthermore, there is the issue of dress, which forces yeshivah students to stand out from all other college students. There is also the issue of language. In

most *yeshivot,* there is a constant mixture of languages heard, including English, Hebrew, Yiddish and even Aramaic[19], due to the constant study of Talmud. Furthermore, there is the issue of addressing people in the third person. Out of respect, students will never speak directly to their teachers; they will only speak about them, even if they are talking directly to them. Finally, there is the issue of social position. Many students who might maintain a certain social position outside of the yeshivah will not necessarily hold that same position within the context of the yeshivah.[20]

The only real way one can truly understand the life within the yeshivah world is by living there. However, it does seem that there are many general trends which exist within most yeshivah communities. It is a unique experience for any student, whether he is studying for rabbinic ordination or a doctorate in Jewish philosophy. Regardless of ultimate goals, the yeshivah students come together as a community in many different ways during their experience as students in the yeshivah.

ROLE OF THE RABBI

As has been detailed in previous chapters, the role of the rabbi is vast. The rabbi in the modern yeshivah is no different. He is expected to play many different roles for many different people. This study will be examining the role of the rabbi in relation to his students in the greatest of detail. However, there are a few other roles of the rabbi worth mentioning.

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19 Though Aramaic is not a spoken language, because it is the language in which most of the Talmud is written, it was a language heard often in the halls of *yeshivot.*

20 Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva,* pp. 139-179.

First and foremost, the rabbi is seen as the disseminator of Torah. As the yeshivah communities grew, they often gained a *rosh yeshivah* as well. The rabbi was often not invited to teach if the *rosh yeshivah* would take over in the teaching department. However, the yeshivah is not interested in having the *rosh yeshivah* become an executor of the yeshivah.

Though the role of the rabbi in the earlier years of Judaism in the United States was mainly concentrated in the local communities, it now was spread to the yeshivah world as well. This function became just as important as the congregational rabbi's roles. Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the rabbi in the yeshivah is his connection and relationship with the students who are under his tutelage.[21]

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

There is no question that the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah world is perhaps one of the most crucial elements of the yeshivah experience. The teacher is often much more than the traditional definition of a teacher. There is a closeness with the *rav* as well. He, too, teaches classes and is in and out of the *beit midrash* all day long. The relationship between the students and their teachers can be very personal.

It is clear that intellectual activity is not the end-all in Talmud study. There is a learning that goes on beyond the classroom, and the relationship between teachers and students can exist outside of the classroom as well. Though some students are only in the yeshivah because of their love of Talmud, most are interested in the traditions which surround the study of Talmud as well.[22]

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21 Ralph Pelcovitz, "The Rabbi and the Rosh Yeshiva", *Jewish Observer* (Ocober, 1967).

22 Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, pp. 139-179.

Some of the yeshivah students claim that the younger teachers are easier to become close to (as one might expect) but there is a certain level of prestige which comes with a relationship with an older and more respected rabbi within a given yeshivah. Many of the students come to look at their teachers, especially the *rosh yeshivah*, as a second father. Students may go as far as to emulate and imitate their *roshei yeshivot* as a disciple might do to a master.[23]

Many people might claim that this relationship is suffering from erosion in today's modern world. Perhaps this can be explained by the influence of the growing development of secular studies. Furthermore, students were beginning to resent moving from teacher to teacher. They much preferred to develop relationships with only one teacher, instead of pursuing relationships with many of the yeshivah teachers.

Perhaps because the teacher is aware of the uniqueness of each of his students, or perhaps because the teacher extends himself beyond the job as a teacher, the relationship between the teachers and the students in the yeshivah world is certainly unique. Actually, it seems that the entire yeshivah world is based on the notion that the teachers will create and maintain these unique relationships with their students. These yeshivah students seem to leave the yeshivah feeling as if they will need a rabbi, a teacher, for the remainder of their lives. This, in the minds of the *roshei yeshivot*, will help to keep these young men connected to Orthodoxy forever.

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23 Menachem Z. Greenfield, "The Rebbe-Talmid Relationship", *The Jewish Observer* (May-June, 1979).

Part Two

The Present:
Interviews of Yeshivah Students

6. *Interviews of Yeshivah Students: The Process*

In addition to the historical research submitted in the first section of this thesis, it is important to look at some current situations of yeshivah students in this modern day world. One of the foci of this thesis is not just the path which the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah world has traveled throughout the history of the Jewish people, as was represented in chapters one through five, but also the current situation of the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah world.

Historical research is one means of discovering information about a specific topic. However, in and of itself, it does not answer all possible questions related to the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah world. There is no question that personal encounters and interviews with people who have studied in *yeshivot* can open the eyes of any researcher and reader to a new dimension. However, one must be cautious in understanding an interview with an individual person as just that, an interview with one person on his views of his own experiences. Though some generalizations can be drawn, information from personal interviews provides for a different variety of knowledge. It allows a researcher to understand the experience of the interviewee, beyond an intellectual comprehension of the facts.

The next section of this thesis is devoted to a number of interviews which I conducted with a variety of people who have studied in different *yeshivot*. It will describe the process I followed and limitations of any conclusions I will draw from these interviews. In the following two chapters, you will come to

understand some details related to the various individuals interviewed in this process, as well as a number of conclusions I have drawn from these interviews. You should be able to draw some of your own conclusions as well.

THE PROCESS ITSELF

Because these interviews were performed in the realm of writing a rabbinic thesis and not a sociological study of any kind, the process was rather limited. I make no attempt to claim that every angle of this topic has been covered, nor am I attempting to generalize every yeshivah, every yeshivah student or every yeshivah experience. Contrarily, I am attempting to personalize and modernize the research available to me at the end of the twentieth century. By examining the reason for choosing these people and the questions asked, perhaps you will better understand the realm of the interviews and the framework for establishing any such conclusions or generalizations.

The Chosen People

The people whom I interviewed were chosen for several different reasons. First, they are individuals who studied in a yeshivah at some time in their lives. Second, they themselves are now working as rabbis or teachers, in some capacity. This element was crucial so that I could discover whether or not some of what these individuals learned in the yeshivah they now apply in their own teaching. Third, they are people who live in a city which was accessible to me, living in Cincinnati, Ohio. Therefore, these individuals all live in either Cincinnati, Chicago, New York City, or Jerusalem (where I happened to be traveling recently). Fourth, each one of these individuals has some unique perspective on the yeshivah experience, either because they studied under one of the great Soloveitchik rabbis, because they come from a Sephardic background and not an

Ashkenazic upbringing, or perhaps because they are no longer connected to the Orthodox world and the yeshivah world, but rather practice and live in a liberal Jewish environment. Finally, each of these individuals became accessible to me through my own personal contacts. Either my thesis advisor, Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman, put me in contact with them, or they are colleagues of acquaintances of mine.

Though this was certainly a limiting element of the process, it did allow me to connect with numerous interesting individuals. There is no question that if I had lived in another part of the country, if I were working with a different thesis advisor, or if I were connected with different individuals, the people whom I would have interviewed would have, potentially, comprised a different list altogether. However, I firmly believe that these people do represent a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, as well as different yeshivot and different time periods of being students.

Focus of the Interviews

Because this study is primarily examining the relationship between students and teachers in the yeshivah world, that was the primary focus of these interviews. However, I did realize that in order to understand this relationship, one must understand the background of each of these individuals. Just as one could not understand the relationship between teachers and students in the chasidic world, for example, without understanding the creation of Chasidism, its belief system and way of life, so it is true with these individuals in their yeshivah settings as well.

Therefore, the questions I asked began with descriptions of each individual's general background and upbringing. I then inquired as to their specific experience in the yeshivah itself, if that was not already included in the

general description. Though many of the interviewees automatically discussed their teachers in the context of their yeshivah experience, this was a topic pursued if it was left unanswered.

In these interviews I was primarily attempting to do two things. First, I was interested in hearing about these individual's experiences as yeshivah students. However, I was also interested in learning whether or not that experience had any effect on these individuals in their current lives, as teachers and rabbis. So I continued the interviews by inquiring whether or not they modeled any of their current relationships with their own students after the relationships which they had created and developed with their teachers in the yeshivah.

Finally, if the individuals held some sort of unique perspective, either because they were no longer part of the yeshivah or orthodox world, or because they held unique relationships with their specific rabbis, I would inquire as to this unique perspective and what they could offer this study from that perspective. Many, perhaps all of the individuals interviewed, had some unique perspective which allowed them to contribute to this study in a way different from the other individuals interviewed.

THE REALM OF THE STUDY

There is no question in my mind that this is by no means an all inclusive, definitive study on the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah world as we know it today. Not only did I not have those resources available to me, but it would have taken years of professional research and interpretation of data to produce such a study.

Instead, this process was intended to be a means by which I could better understand the personal aspects of the relationship between some teachers with

some students in some of the yeshivot that exist in today's modern world. I was interested in putting a personal perspective on the generic historical data compiled in the first section of this thesis. I realized the importance of being personal when dealing with a topic such as this one. Not only the words which these interviewees spoke, but also their inflection and body language affected my understanding of their situations and their affections, or lack there of, toward their teachers in the yeshivah and their own students today.

There are several components of this research which I recognize to be areas of limitation. First, some of these individuals studied at the same yeshivah, that being Yeshivah University in New York. This may be a skewed perspective on the yeshivah experience. Also, most of these graduates of Yeshivah University graduated more than twenty-five years ago, and there seems to be much emphasis placed by those graduates on the fact that Yeshivah University has changed a great deal during the last twenty-five years. Further, most of the people interviewed are middle-age or older, which perhaps is limiting in its scope. However, even with all of these limitations, these interviews did provide information which would have otherwise been lacking from this thesis.

Clearly, there are many different aspects to these interviews. The information gained from these interviews should certainly be taken in light of the limitations presented. However, in the opinion of this researcher, these interviews helped to shed light on some aspects of the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah model in a way which was not discovered by the myriad of research analyzed in the first section of this thesis.

7. *Interviews of Yeshivah Students: The People*

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this thesis is the aspect of people. In the book of Samuel, we read that we should listen to the voice of the people. Clearly there is nothing more influential or inspiring than actual individuals' personal reflections and thoughts on a particular situation. In the many various sciences in our modern day world, from psychology to anthropology to medicine or even law, people are the main focus of each area of life.

In education, the same is true. One cannot possibly analyze and criticize the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah model without connecting with real live people and discovering their personal understandings of their relationships with their teachers in their respective yeshivah settings. By interviewing a variety of individuals who learned in a yeshivah setting, one can better understand the personal aspects of this issue.

In the following section, there are brief summaries of each of the interviews with these various people. As stated above, in order to best understand the realm from which each person is relating his own personal experience, there is first a general background on each individual, followed by the specifics of the person's understanding of his relationship with his teachers during his time in yeshivah. Each section concludes with any thoughts the individual might have on whether or not what he learned has impacted him in his own teaching and relationships with his own students.

DR. SOL ROTH [1]

General Information

Rabbi Roth studied in the yeshivah all of his life. He began at an early age, studying at the yeshivah down the road from his family's home, and continued at a variety of yeshivot throughout high school. Then he attended RIETS at Yeshivah University, where he spent six or seven years studying in a variety of programs.

Following his yeshivah experience, Rabbi Roth pursued a masters degree from Columbia University, and he eventually received a doctorate from Columbia University as well.

Yeshivah Experience

According to Rabbi Roth, attending secular school was an intellectual experience. However, attending yeshivah was both an intellectual and a religious experience. He was often comparing the two experiences he had in the secular and religious worlds, and he believed that one of the main differences in the yeshivah was that the teacher was someone who was communicating God's word. The teacher was the ultimate connection with the Almighty.

Relationships with Teachers in the Yeshivah

Rabbi Roth had the wonderful opportunity of studying with Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, though he did not claim to be as close to him as some students were. Some people provided for Rabbi Soloveitchik's personal and physical needs, when he traveled and just in his daily practice. However, Rabbi Roth did

[1] See Appendix E for the transcript of this interview.

maintain a relationship with Rabbi Soloveitchik both in his years as a student and later in his life as a colleague and peer.

Rabbi Roth recalls that many people desired to study with Rabbi Soloveitchik, to hear his lectures. His lectures, it seems, were in many ways a constant dialogue. He would ask questions, and he would then ask the students to repeat the questions and answer them, clarifying on the commentators' perspectives. Next Rabbi Soloveitchik would begin to comment by way of analyzing the different positions, and he would check to be certain that there was a basic level of understanding of this material among the students. That was his great strength, according to Rabbi Roth.

Rabbi Soloveitchik seemed to be a magician par excellence. He acted as a rabbi and as a talmudist, dealing both with the analysis and the synthesis of the text. He was constantly analyzing the *shiur*, linking the discussion to other topics which were discussed at a previous time. He tried very hard to maintain a dialogue with his students.

Rabbi Soloveitchik would come to New York City from Boston to give a *shiur* on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and Rabbi Roth recalls vividly that students would need to spend many hours on Tuesday evenings in order to prepare appropriately for the Wednesday *shiur*. However, because the students desired to study with this *rav*, they were committed to studying what was necessary in order to be prepared. They were clearly fond of their *rav* and scholar. This was perhaps Rabbi Roth's unique perspective, that he actually studied with the great and well known Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

Current Situation

Dr. Sol Roth is currently serving as the rabbi of the 5th Avenue Synagogue in New York City. This is a modern orthodox synagogue serving the

New York City Jewish community. He is still connected with Yeshivah University. He continued to remain in contact with Rabbi Soloveitchik until his death.

Though he does not constantly think back to his experience in the yeshivah and apply it to his modern teachings and interactions, he does realize that whatever he absorbed during his days at the yeshivah became a part of his personality. He is certain that he applies some of this learned behavior in his life as a pulpit rabbi, and some of his congregants might even claim that he is too scholarly, more than they would like. However, he believes that his experience at the yeshivah changed his life and became a part of him forever.

DR. MICHAEL KLEIN[2]

General Information

Dr. Klein comes from a strictly Orthodox background, having studied in a yeshivah since kindergarten. His whole family was, and still is, ultra orthodox. He learned to read both Hebrew and Yiddish at a very early age. He stayed in the yeshivah through elementary school and high school, and he attended five years of yeshivah after high school.

However, when he was in a literature course as a freshman at the yeshivah, he had an eye-opening experience. He was asked to write an assignment on the ultimate concern. Of course, as a *yeshivah bochur*, a boy in the yeshivah, he knew what the ultimate concern was; he just needed to paraphrase Moshe Chaim.[3]

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[2] See Appendix C for the transcript of this interview.

[3] Moshe Chayim believed that this world was only a corridor leading to the next world, and there is the great light, and there is the great special light preserved for the *tzaddikim*. They would sit around the table with their *tallitot* (prayer shawls) on their heads and enjoy the emanations derived.

He remembers writing this assignment, wondering what the light was. He realized that he was using words without really knowing or understanding their meaning. He was not satisfied with the obvious answers deep down in his soul. Further, he was exposed to some fine arts, and some of the Greek and Roman literature, and he realized there was more in life than just Torah. That was his opening to the outside world.

He decided to take a year sabbatical from college and attend the Hebrew University in Jerusalem of 1962. Even though he was a mathematics major, he decided to devote that year in Israel to Jewish studies. For the first time in his life, he was exposed to a critical reading of those classical texts which he had studied from "nearly fundamental" points of view. That was his second revelation; hethen realized that he desired to study these texts from a more liberal perspective. Therefore, he decided to continue in graduate school studying ancient Near Eastern civilizations. All of these studies had a great impact on his life choices, and they led him to attend HUC as an archeological fellow. He returned to Israel for HUC in 1976, and he has been there ever since.

Yeshivah Experience

Though he did not stay in the yeshivah world for his whole life, there were certain aspects of the yeshivah experience which did affect Dr. Klein immensely. Though he now studies the texts from a more critical point of view, he is very appreciative of the basic knowledge of the classical texts which he received in the yeshivah. Because he was rather accomplished in his studies in the yeshivah, they encouraged him to study and read a great many texts, even more than the average student, and this helped him throughout his life. He is certain that all of his background has put him in "good standing" as an academic to this very day.

He realizes the importance of studying all of the texts, even if one chooses not to accept all of it, as he has come to choose for himself. He has also learned, partially as a result of his yeshivah studies, that he should not apologize for the texts either, as many of the rebbes in the yeshivah tended to do. The texts simply need to be studied and understood.

Relationships with Teachers in the Yeshivah

Because Dr. Klein was very successful in the yeshivah, he felt that the *rabbanim* and *rosh yeshivah* were especially encouraging of him. For a period of time he was the youngest student in the yeshivah in Lakewood, New Jersey, and many different *rabbanim* took a special interest in him. One rebbe would call him over after the *shiur* and tell him in Yiddish words of encouragement.

He felt that these *rabbanim*, especially the ones who were survivors from the old European Mir Yeshivah, who fled to Shanghai during World War II, had a profound influence on his life. Further, they took a personal interest in him. These rabbis were very devoted. They saw their job as a mission, as the reason why Judaism would survive. Knowing that so many of their *yeshivot* were totally destroyed in Europe, they wanted, even felt obligated, to disseminate and broadcast Torah in this new country.

In general, Dr. Klein felt that the lives of his rabbis were very different from his own. Since they were mainly Holocaust survivors who were immigrants to a new land, they struggled in getting established. Their lives were completely interrupted by the war. Perhaps because of this, Dr. Klein thinks that their personal contact with the students may have been a little more limited. Further, because they were from a different world, they may have grouped among themselves instead of spreading their wealth of information and knowledge to their many students.

Unique Perspective

Because Dr. Klein completely left the yeshivah world from which he came and became a well-known and well-respected scholar in the liberal Jewish world, he has a unique perspective on life as a student and his relationships with his teachers. He was able to learn from the yeshivah model and also apply what he did not like in the yeshivah model to the way in which he leads his life as a Reform Jew.

Current Situation

Dr. Michael Klein is currently completing his tenure as the Dean of the Jerusalem campus of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. He also holds the title of the Effie Wise Ochs Professor of Biblical Literature.[4] In his position as the Dean of the Jerusalem campus, he often realizes the desire of many first year rabbinic students to be in a more yeshivah like setting.

It seems that Dr. Klein has been able to take some of the aspects of the yeshivah world and apply them to the life of an HUC student in Jerusalem. He encourages students to study in the *chevruta* groups. He wants students and teachers to work together, more than just in the texts. He is also creating a new program, providing the equivalent of a *mashgiach*, a person who is available in the HUC library, to be a resource person while people are preparing their texts for class. Whether they are preparing individually or in *chevruta*, they can come to this individual when they are having trouble with a text or questions about a grammatical issue in modern Hebrew. He feels this may give people a little more feeling of authenticity and fulfillment of another study method or technique. He sees this method as borrowing from the old to create new.

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[4] This exact title was taken from the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion Catalogue for 1997-1999, page 16.

RABBI MARC ANGEL [5]

General Information

Rabbi Angel grew up in Seattle, Washington. He went to Jewish day school until the eighth grade, and then attended public high school. He came to Yeshivah College in 1963, where he studied for four years as an undergraduate, three years in the rabbinical program, and eventually received a Ph.D. from Yeshivah University as well.

Yeshivah Experience

When he first came to the yeshivah, Rabbi Angel was coming directly from four years in public high school, thereby needing some extra Judaic background. He attended the JSP, (Jewish Studies Program) for one year, which was geared toward people who had a slightly weaker background in Judaic studies. The purpose was to give those with less background a sense of security with the Jewish sources and confidence in themselves, allowing them to advance to the higher level of classes.

Because he was successful in the JSP, and even though he did not, at that time, desire to be a rabbi, Rabbi Angel was able to move into what was called the rabbinical program, i.e. the RIETS program (Rabbi Isaac Elkhanan Theological Seminary). He continued in the Yeshivah College, ultimately deciding that he did desire to become a rabbi and attend the rabbinical program as well.

He felt there was a large difference between the Talmud classes and all the rest of the classes. In the graduate school, while he was pursuing a Ph.D., his experience was very different. The style of teaching and studying was very

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[5] See Appendix A for the transcript of this interview.

different. In his mind, what gives flavor to the yeshivah is the rebbes, perhaps even more than that of the yeshivah system proper. In the morning, from nine until twelve, there was no class. He was supposed to go to the *beit midrash*, a very large hall where a few hundred people would gather. Everyone was assigned a particular table, and he would sit there each morning with his *chevruta* partner. Once he arrived at the *beit midrash*, he was supposed to prepare the Talmud text that would be studied later that day.

Then, as Rabbi Angel recalls, he would go to the *shiur*, and the rebbes would want to see that you had prepared. The rebbe would not read. He would ask questions, and from the questions he would try to see what was in the text. The rebbe would help them to understand the text by discussing certain questions. Toward the end of the *shiur*, the rebbe would add his own opinion, in addition to the review of the text and the commentaries. The rebbe's own theories and opinions were always a part of the teaching process.

In the evenings, some people would meet back in the *beit midrash*, though Rabbi Angel remembers that you were by no means obligated to do so. There were two very important things one needed to accomplish in the evenings. First, he would want to gain proficiency in the text. If a person cannot read and understand the texts, then it is impossible to study them on one's own. If there was a text they could not understand, they would go to the rebbe, usually the next morning in the *beit midrash* where the rebbes would often come, and they would receive help.

The other important thing to do in the *beit midrash* sessions was to learn how to ask questions. Rabbi Angel learned that you cannot just look at a text. You need to know what was bothering the rabbis of old, who were the authors of the various texts. He also remembers that it was important to keep the whole picture in mind, and though it was very complicated, it was also exhilarating.

Rabbi Angel believes that the focus of the yeshivah was not on the relationship between teachers and students, but rather on the interaction between student and student, in particular in the *chevruta* setting. He describes the *chevruta* experience as overwhelming. One could walk into a room with hundreds of people, all of whom would be studying Talmud, generally around the same tractate, chapters, and verses. There was always a tremendous amount of noise in the *beit midrash*. Some people are reading orally, others are pounding on the table. Some are walking up and down, others are shaking their hands, while pondering the text. You see all of this IQ, this intellectual energy pushing itself to its limit, all at the same time. Students are arguing with one another; the questions are continuous. There is a tremendous dialectic that is taking place. Rabbi Angel says that you cannot go into a *beit midrash* without feeling this dynamism. It is a truly phenomenal experience. Though he believed that the rabbis were the mentors, Rabbi Angel believed that the largest impact was felt by the student-student relationship, since for the majority of the week that the students were in the yeshivah, they were with other students, not the teachers.[6]

Relationships with Teachers in the Yeshivah

Rabbi Angel was able to recall many of the relationships he held with numerous teachers throughout his experience at Yeshivah University. During his first year in the JSP, he recalls that the teachers were specifically geared toward helping students, as well as toward building personal relationships. His teachers were phenomenal people, great human beings. They were prepared to help him

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[6] Though the emphasis of this thesis is on the relationships between teachers and students within the yeshivah model, it is important to note the importance of the relationships between student and student within the yeshivah setting. This relationship is the basis for this community of learning.

both in and out of class. They were even prepared to answer questions not related to the topics, but questions about religion or about life. Rabbi Angel further recalls that many of the teachers during his JSP year would even invite him to their homes for shabbat. They were very warm and helpful, and this helped him to have a very successful year in terms of Jewish studies.

During his first year at RIETS, Rabbi Angel studied with Rabbi Lichtenstein, the son-in-law of Rabbi Soloveitchik. According to Rabbi Angel, he is a magnificent Jewish scholar who also has a Ph.D. from Harvard in English literature. He is simply a genius, who knows everything about everything. However, when Rabbi Angel studied with Rabbi Lichtenstein, it was a very different experience than the one in his JSP year. He was very cold, and he never knew any one's name. He was very academic, as he still is today. He would help the students to push themselves to their limits. It was not that he did not care about the students; it was simply that a student was on his own in his class.

During the following year, Rabbi Angel needed to improve his Yiddish, for his *shiur* was taught only in Yiddish.[7] The teacher was an "old country rabbi," very fond of the European Mir Yeshivah. This was Rabbi Angel's first experience with such a teacher. He would use Mussar as a way to teach Talmud to his students. He would very often chastise students for being below his standards. He would call on you by name, but he would also talk about you in front of the whole class. That was old-style education, according to Rabbi Angel. As far as he knew, this rebbe was the only one of his kind in the yeshivah at that time. Though he was not conventional in many ways, he lived a conventional life. He physically looked like the old style rebbes, but he was actually very innovative in

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[7] Because he came from a Sephardic background, he needed to learn Yiddish in order to "learn" in this shiur.

his own way. Rabbi Angel recalls that everyone in the *shiur* was yelled at one time or another, but that was part of the experience.

During the following year Rabbi Angel studied in a *shiur* with Rav Volk. He was also an old time European rebbe, with only a white goatee, not a whole long beard like the previous rebbe. He wore a modern suit. and he, too, spoke only in Yiddish. However, he was a great scholar who wrote many books and would give them out as gifts. He was a very congenial rebbe. He wanted to teach the Talmud and the *halachah* in a masterful way. He was also a very warm human being. It was not as if a student could go home with him, nor were you his peer in any way. To the contrary, he was an older man who saw the student as just a young student. There was no personal relationship after class. However, in class he was very warm and very concerned with the student's progress. Rabbi Angel liked him so much that he studied with him for three years.

In his third year of the *smicha*[8] program, Rabbi Angel studied with Rav Weiss. He was an interesting character. He was born in the United States and attended Yeshivah College himself. He then went to study in one of the *yeshivot* in Europe, subsequently returning to the United States. He loved to speak in Yiddish, and even when he spoke English, he did so with a Yiddish accent. He was like an "old country" rabbi, even though he was a product of the United States. Also, he was Hungarian, and he took all the stringencies in *halachah*.[9] He was very, very rigorous in his interpretation of *halachah*. However, as a human being, he was not rigorous at all; he was really very pleasant. He treated each

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[8] The term *smicha* refers to Rabbinic ordination. The *smicha* programs was the program designed to train individuals to become rabbis.

[9] Hungarian teachers and rabbis were known by their "stringencies". They were either very traditional or completely liberal. There was no "gray" area in the middle for these Hungarian rabbis.

student as his emissary. He took a personal interest in the students to insure their success. He knew everything from top to bottom, for he had been teaching for so many years. He did not like questions outside of the field, nor did he want to be asked the question of why. He was there to teach you the "what," and he did it very effectively.

Unique Perspective

Because Rabbi Angel attended the Yeshivah University approximately a quarter of a century ago, he claims that there are many differences today, perhaps many improvements, from the way the yeshivah had been run in the past. Rabbi Angel's son, Rabbi Chaim Angel, just completed his own studies at Yeshivah University, and through a brief interchange with his son, it was clear that Rabbi Marc Angel did indeed have a unique perspective on this particular yeshivah. He was able to realize the ways in which the yeshivah has changed from the time he was a student to the time his son was a student, a generation later.

Rabbi Angel believes that in his day, the rebbe was just the teacher of Talmud. His job was to stimulate an entire generation of students to study Talmud. In their minds, everything else was peripheral. Today, however, the *rosh yeshivah* has a different position. He is supposed to do all that is above, but then they somehow are to become role models for the students. If you have any questions, you are supposed to go to the *rosh yeshivah*. He has a whole new authority, and much more sway now, among the students, than in the previous generation. In Rabbi Angel's day, no one ever saw the rebbe as a role model or saint, or even as a person to whom you would ask halachic questions. In Rabbi Angel's opinion, during the last twenty-five years there has been an evolution in the role of the rabbi as teacher.

Current Situation

Rabbi Marc D. Angel is currently serving as minister of Congregation Shearith Israel, the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue and oldest synagogue in North America. He claims that the yeshivah was a very high intellectual place, and he misses it immensely. He further states that anyone who has been involved in the yeshivah setting, and then removes himself from the setting, misses it. He is grateful for the time he had there.

DR. MICHAEL CHERNICK [10]

General Information

Dr. Chernick did not come from an orthodox background, nor does he consider himself *ba-al t'shuvah*.[11] He was already well on the path to a traditional, modern orthodox lifestyle, so it was not as if he suddenly discovered something new. His family was not orthodox; they were actually completely non-observant. His mother did not even light the shabbat candles. His father came from a much more traditional background than did his mother. She was an Odessa Jew, though his father was Lithuanian and therefore much more traditional.

Dr. Chernick celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in a conservative synagogue, though the congregations had many staff members who were connected to orthodox Judaism. It was during this time that Dr. Chernick discovered a

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10 See Appendix B for the transcript of this interview.

11 The term *ba-al t'shuvah* most commonly refers to an individual who was not raised in an Orthodox environment, but has "made a turnaround". For those individuals not completely submerged in the Orthodox community, there is a connotation of negativism toward those who are not Orthodox Jews.

connection with some of these more traditional staff members. Actually, there were a number of people from this synagogue who went on to study at Yeshivah University. Many of the people in this congregation were searching for something, and this rabbi was able to move them toward their desires and hopes.

He wanted to attend a yeshivah for high school, but his parents were adamantly opposed to that idea. They were committed to the public school. They thought he would not know how to interact with non-Jews if he attended an all Jewish school. Regardless of the reason behind their decision, it caused a problem between Dr. Chernick and his parents during his impressionable teenage years.

By the time he was ready for university, Dr. Chernick made the decision to attend the Yeshivah University, finally able to fulfill his dream. He enrolled in the JSP year, the Jewish Studies Program, designated for people with less of a background in Judaic studies. He was at the higher end of that program, and only one semester in the JSP was required of him. Eventually, he graduated from the college and he debated whether to pursue English Literature or to continue with his Jewish studies. He decided that he had always desired to educate himself Jewishly, and so that area of study would become his lifetime work. He realized there were many people in English Literature, but there was always a need for more people to study and teach *yahadut*, Judaism. He studied until rabbinic ordination. However, he chose not to take the Master in Hebrew Letters but rather a Master in Arts , because an MA could ultimately be turned into a Ph.D.

He was not quite sure whether he was truly interested in the rabbinate. He married someone who did not want to live in a "fishbowl," as she imagined would be the case for a rabbi's spouse. Dr. Chernick realized that he was a very good teacher, having worked in day schools and in Yeshivah High School, and he liked what he was doing in terms of Jewish studies. However, there still remained one

more question to be answered. He needed to determine whether or not he was going to focus on Talmud or Jewish thought. For him, that was a very challenging decision. However, he finally realized that the center of Rabbinic Judaism had always been the *Talmudim*, not Jewish thought, and so he decided to pursue the study of Talmud.

Like many graduate students, Dr. Chernick was in debt toward the end of his yeshivah career. He was working several jobs, trying to earn a living in order to support his family. When he finally completed his core courses, he went to the Dean's office and informed him that he had completed all of his requirements and only needed to write his dissertation. He realized that if he was forced to keep all of these jobs for financial reasons, he would never complete his dissertation. He was searching for some job which would allow him to complete his Ph.D. program. The Dean said that he would keep this information in the back of his mind.

Approximately two months later, Dr. Chernick met with the Dean of Yeshivah University who explained that he had a proposition for him. The professor of Talmud and other halachic literature at the Hebrew Union College in New York had retired, and they needed someone to fill the empty position. Dr. Chernick interviewed for the position a few months later, and thus began his career at the Hebrew Union College in the department of rabbinics.

Yeshivah Experience and Relationships in the Yeshivah[12]

One of Dr. Chernick's experiences in the yeshivah was a continuous complaint about the relationship between the *talmidim* and their *rabbeim*. The

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12 Because Dr. Chernick described his experience in the yeshivah in terms of his relationships with his teachers while in the yeshivah, these two sections are not separated for this particular individual.

students said that the relationship was not close. They would come into the classroom, and the rebbes would enter the room. The rebbes would give a *shiur*, and then leave. The students studied in the beit midrash in *chevrutot*, and the *rabbeim* were not necessarily in the *beit midrash* during that time. There was not even an expectation of being invited to shabbat by any of the *rabbeim*, though some of the staff in other departments might actually invite the students for shabbat or other holidays.

Dr. Chernick believed that part of the issue was the specific people who were teaching at that time. They were mostly European, and were lucky if they had received any public education. For the most part, these rebbes gave the *shiurim* in Yiddish, though there was a hardly a person in front of them that came from a Yiddish speaking background.[13] This was clearly one of the main barriers between the students and the teachers.

Along with the linguistic barrier, Dr. Chernick believed that there was a cultural barrier as well. The students were second, even third, generation Americans. The rebbes were Holocaust survivors, or people who had left and gone to Shanghai. Their memories and experiences of Eastern European culture were completely different from those of students such as Dr. Chernick. These *rabbeim* were sometimes extremely critical of the institution in which they were teaching, almost hostile to it. To the contrary, these yeshivah students made conscious choices to attend Yeshivah University, though the same was not necessarily true of their *rabbeim*.

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13 Dr. Chernick actually had a desire to know Yiddish because he had Yiddish speaking grandparents and he wanted to access things from them. Therefore, he studied German in high school and in college, so it was not a problem for him personally.

Unique Perspective

Because Dr. Chernick is still connected with Yeshivah University, he is very aware of many of the differences between the yeshivah during his time and the yeshivah now. He believes that now at Yeshivah University, you have a much more "yeshivasha" world, for better or for worse. He supports them even though he is not there anymore. He firmly believes that if the people who were around when he attended the yeshivah had taken over, there would not have been any changes in the yeshivah, and so he is thankful for the change. Otherwise, one would now see the same kinds of relationships between students and their teachers as existed then. What exists now are many people who are studying in *chevrutot* with the *rabbeim* standing in front of the group. There are many *mashgichim* available to work with the students today.

Today, one sees more and more students at Yeshivah University not viewing their task as somehow finding a combination of Judaism and something else. What they now really come to study is solely the Torah. More people today are studying more hours in the *beit midrash* than ever before. In Dr. Chernick's time, people did not study in the *beit midrash*, now it is typical. A person goes to the *beit midrash* in the morning and they come back at night. The motivation to study and please one's teachers seems to have grown in the last twenty-five years.

Furthermore, the relationship now between the *rabbeim* and the *talmidim* is much, much closer. They are *mashpia;* they have an influence over their many students. They are very much involved in the lives of their students, hoping that this will cause a spiritual formation of the parties involved. To their credit, they are highly motivated by their ideology, and that motivation is taken to the best educational and personal level possible.

Current Situation

Dr. Michael Chernick is currently teaching at the New York campus of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. He is officially hired there as a Professor of Rabbinics, as well as the Arthur-Dora-Morton Deutsch Professor of Jewish Jurisprudence and Social Justice.[14] In this capacity, he tries to deliver to the students at HUC what he sees as an ideal in the yeshivah world. Though he may not have experienced this "ideal relationship" with his teachers throughout his yeshivah experience, he held onto this "ideal relationship" and tries to create this relationship with his own students. He invites students for shabbat and holidays, though he realizes that not all students are interested in such an experience. However, he attempts to make this opportunity available for those who are interested in pursuing such a relationship. He tries to give them what he did not get from many of his own *rabbeim*.

RABBI ASHER LOPATIN [15]

General Information

Rabbi Asher Lopatin, a rather young man, has already led a very interesting life. Having been raised in California as an orthodox Jew until his elementary grades, he and his family moved to Israel for four years. It was only in Israel that he and his family became *shomer shabbat*[16] and basically observant.

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14 This exact title was taken from the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion Catalogue for 1997-1999, page 15.

15 See Appendix D for the transcript of this interview.

16 The phrase *shomer shabbat* literally means to observe the sabbath, and it is understood to mean one who follows the laws of shabbat, the acts which one is prohibited to do because it is shabbat.

He attended a religious public school in Israel, and on his return to the states his family settled in the Boston area where he attended a Jewish day school in Boston.

Upon the completion of eleventh grade, Rabbi Lopatin went to the Brisk Yeshivah in Chicago, where he began what would come to be a life-long relationship with Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik. It was a rather small yeshivah, with only approximately twenty students in the *beit midrash* program, the program in which Rabbi Lopatin was enrolled.

After one year at the Brisk Yeshivah, Rabbi Lopatin decided to pursue a degree from Boston University. He attended classes there for three years, though he would return each summer to the Brisk Yeshivah in Chicago. It was during these summer sessions that he became better acquainted with his teacher and rebbe, Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik. He took a sabbatical for one year from Boston University in order to study with Rav Aharon[17] for his *smicha*. He would give a *shiur* four days a week, and his second oldest son gave a shiur twice a week.

He returned to Boston University to complete his senior year and graduate, and after one more summer in Chicago, he decided to attend Oxford University in England, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. There he studied in the graduate program in Islamic studies, but after deciding that he desired to be a rabbi, he returned to the United States in order to study at Yeshivah University in New York. He attended classes for two years, and he became the *mishamesh*, or personal helper, to Rav Aharon, who would come to New York to teach two days a week. During the third year of his studies at Yeshivah University Rabbi Lopatin went to Israel to study at the Brisk Kollel as well.

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17 This is the name which Rabbi Lopatin, like many of his peers and many students of rabbis, called his teacher.

Yeshivah Experience

Rabbi Lopatin had several different experiences in yeshivah, all of which he thoroughly enjoyed and from which he most definitely grew. While at the Brisk Yeshivah during his summers at Boston University, he had a rather unique experience. He was one of the only students who was receiving a secular education while studying at the yeshivah. This made him different in the eyes of his peers as well as his teachers. However, in spite of this, he maintained a rather close relationship with the Soloveitchik family. It was very helpful to him that he studied in *chevruta* with one of Rev Soloveitchik's sons, thereby finding himself at his rebbe's home on occasion.

However, perhaps one of his most important experiences was while studying in his second year at Yeshivah University was when he became Rev Soloveitchik's *mishamesh*. The rebbe would come to New York from Chicago on Tuesday afternoons and leave on Thursday evenings, and while he was in New York, Rabbi Lopatin would be at his side. Rav Aharon maintained an apartment in New York, and Rabbi Lopatin would stay in a connecting room. He would bring him his meals and go with him to his lectures. At night, if Rav Aharon awoke and needed something, it was Rabbi Lopatin who would provide him with whatever he needed.

Relationships with Teachers in the Yeshivah

Clearly, Rabbi Lopatin's relationship with Rav Aharon was not like other students in the yeshivah. He did, however, begin his first year in Rav Aharon's *shiur* like many other yeshivah students. He desired to find the favor of the teacher, to get the eye contact during the classes and the lectures, the contact which seemed to be reserved for a select few. He found the rebbe to be warm in some ways, but he also realized that it was hard to break into his tight circle.

However, Rav Aharon's ideas and thoughts clearly influenced Rabbi Lopatin, even though he did not always agree with him. He was able to create a bond with him, and he believed in Joshua ben Perachiah's notion: *asey l'cha rav, u'k'neh l'cha chaver*, find yourself a teacher, get yourself a friend.[18]

It was during that year which Rabbi Lopatin served his rebbe as his *mishamesh* when he really came to know him. He spent so much time with him that he came to see a different side of him, a human side. He saw how he coped with the many different things in his life and his general attitudes in and of life. Though at times it was somewhat frustrating for Rabbi Lopatin, he actually saw his rebbe and teacher in a variety of different situations. He saw him working with all sorts of different people. He watched him deal with pain, as a result of a stroke in 1983. He heard stories of how Rav Aharon related to his teachers when he was but a student. Though it was frustrating at times to realize that his teacher was not perfect, there were other times when he seemed like a "superman" to Rabbi Lopatin.

Unique Perspective

Rabbi Lopatin had several unique perspectives on his life as a yeshivah student and his relationship with his teacher, Rav Aharon Soloveitchik. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of his experience is that he was able to compare his secular and education worlds. He said that spending every day with the rebbe helped to bring him closer to the rebbe, which was different from his secular training.

Rabbi Lopatin also created and maintained relationships with professors at both Boston University and Oxford University. He thinks it may have been as a

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[18] Pirke Avot 1:6, from Chaim Stern, page 12.

result of knowing how to do so from his experience in the Brisk Yeshivah, and his knowledge that it was possible to do so. Also, he realized that one could admire a teacher without trying to become that teacher.

Current Situation

Rabbi Asher Lopatin is currently serving as the Rabbi of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel, an Orthodox congregation in Chicago. What he loves most about being a rabbi is spending time with people, an ability which he is sure was formed and developed as a result of his relationship with Rev Aharon. He values relationships with his students, as well as spending time with people in general.

He believes the yeshivah worked for him, and if it had not, his position would probably be very different for him. He still turns to his rebbe and friend, Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, when he is need of a teacher and a mentor, since they are both still residing in the Chicago area. He is certain of his benefits from this rebbe-*talmid* relationship.

RABBI DOVID SPETTNER [19]

General Information

Rabbi Spettner was raised in an Orthodox home in St. Louis, Missouri. At the age of thirteen he left home in order to attend the Ner Yisroel Yeshivah in Baltimore. Little did he realize at this young age that he would remain in this institution for a total of eighteen years. Though he was very young to be leaving home, he was joining approximately one hundred and fifty high school students

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19 See Appendix F for the transcript of this interview.

from across the country. Furthermore, his sister and brother-in-law were at the yeshivah at that time, so he did not feel so very far away from home.

Because the rest of Rabbi Spettner's life is incorporated into his experience in the yeshivah, it will be more natural to examine his life as it relates to his yeshivah experience.

Yeshivah Experience and Relationships in the Yeshivah

Rabbi Spettner gained much insight and knowledge from his yeshivah experience. He attributes much of this fine yeshivah experience to the relationships he developed with his teachers throughout his career in the yeshivah. During those eighteen years, Rabbi Spettner studied in several different programs, and each program allowed him to create different types of relationships with his teachers.

While he was in the high school program, particularly during the first two years of the program, he developed perhaps the closest relationships with his *rabbeim* than he would at any point in the future. He felt that he was at a younger point in his life, and so the need was greater. Also, the yeshivah wanted these *rabbeim* to pursue close relationships with the younger students so they could become mentors for these students. This certainly occurred for Rabbi Spettner during his first two years in high school.

He even recalls a relevant story from the summer immediately following his ninth grade year. He had just received a letter from his rebbe of the previous year. This was a common practice among the *rabbeim* of the younger students. In this letter, Rabbi Spettner learned that his rebbe was going to be taking a trip to visit some of his students, but the farthest west he would be able to come would be to Columbus, Ohio. Rabbi Spettner was rather disappointed that he would not be able to see his rebbe over the summer, since he was living at his parent's home

in St. Louis. However, one shabbat evening, when Rabbi Spettner was home alone for the first time ever on a shabbat, he imagined that his rebbe would surprise him and show up at his door. This was representative of the relationship many of the students in this yeshivah maintained and developed with their teachers.

Rabbi Spettner recalls that when he was in his last two years within the high school, as well as four years in the college program and a number of years in the Kollel program, the relationship was not quite the same as it had been earlier in his yeshivah career. These later relationships were less mentoring and more modeling and sharing. He had many solid relationships with his teachers from different years, but each one was somewhat different.

Rabbi Spettner also recalls that some of the rebbes would teach in different manners. Some were interested primarily in the lecture style. Others were more interested in discussion or debating. Many of these rebbes taught in different ways because they each had their own teaching styles. However, some of the rebbes actually realized that students, as well, learned in different ways. Rabbi Spettner said that he much preferred the cooperative learning than the frontal lecture, which was perhaps true of many students within the yeshivah

Unique Perspective

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Rabbi Spettner's career in the yeshivah, and now as a graduate of the yeshivah, is his ongoing relationship with his *rosh yeshivah*. In the community in which Rabbi Spettner is now working, there are six graduates of the Ner Yisroel Yeshivah. They all participate in a conference call once a week with their *rosh yeshivah* in order to continue their studies with him, even as they are now teachers on their own.

Rabbi Spettner further explained that he is in constant communication with his yeshivah, for they are of great help to him in his current position. He does not believe that it is worthwhile to "reinvent the wheel," and so he attempts to learn from those who have already spent time, energy and money creating what he is now attempting to create.

Current Situation

Rabbi Dovid Spettner is currently serving as one of the coordinating Kollel rabbis at the Cincinnati Kollel, created just over two years ago with Rabbi Spettner's personal guidance and support. He has brought six other rabbis, most of whom he knew from his time at the Ner Yisroel Yeshivah, to Cincinnati in order to work with him.

Though he sees his job today as primarily administrative and not as a teacher, he certainly realizes the impact that his yeshivah experience made on his life. He especially realizes the impact some of these relationships have made on the way in which he functions with other individuals now, as a rabbi and a teacher, and even as an administrator.

8. *Interviews of Yeshivah Students: The Conclusions*

Now that the reader has been introduced to the material by way of the interviews with these seven people, it seems appropriate to draw some general conclusions from this information. Though this researcher is by no means attempting to draw any scientific conclusions from this limited amount of research, it does seem appropriate for this researcher, and the reader, to make some intellectual connections between the information gathered from these interviews.

There is no question that there most definitely exist some general trends among most of the individuals interviewed for the purpose of this thesis. Though not all individuals interviewed were described in the previous chapter, they well represented the sample taken by this writer. Many of the thoughts stated by one individual were repeated by several others. These individuals were completely unaware of the responses of previously interviewed individuals, which would lead this researcher to believe that it is possible to make a variety of conclusions.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

There are perhaps four main categories of conclusions that one might make. Though each of these statements may not have been discussed by every individual interviewed, it was either confirmed or inferred by at least half of the individuals interviewed for the purpose of this thesis.

1. The Uniqueness of Talmud Study

It was stated time and time again by these individuals just how unique the study of Talmud was in the yeshivah as compared to both any other topic in the yeshivah or any other educational institution. When these former yeshivah students described the *beit midrash* setting, it was unique to the study of Talmud.[1] They further admitted that the rebbes who were teaching Talmud were in a completely different category than the rest of the rebbes and professors in the yeshivah environment.

Though it seems obvious, one must realize that the obvious reasons behind this unique category of study are both the content of the texts themselves and the emotion and belief attached to these texts. Those who studied these texts in the yeshivah believed it to be halachah, the law of the Jewish people. They firmly believed that the texts are a part of the Oral Torah, the laws and rules written by God and given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Furthermore, there is an emotional attachment connected to the Talmud because of this belief. They were in awe of the writings within these texts; one might even say that there is a sanctity of the text. The rabbis might take one step further by stating that there is a sanctity in the method of teaching this holy text. Perhaps some of what will be concluded regarding the relationship between the teachers and the students in the yeshivah is directly related to the fact that these teachers are seen as the connectors between the yeshivah students and the Author of these texts, the Eternal One.

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[1] This is still the case in the modern yeshivah and within some seminaries, including Jewish Theological Seminary. Many *yeshivot* and Jewish schools differentiated between Talmud and Jewish ethics and history.

2. The Holistic Nature of the Yeshivah

Though not one of these previous yeshivah students actually identifies the notion of holistic learning in the yeshivah model, from all that these individuals have described, it seems obvious for a modern day educator to describe the ideal yeshivah setting, which does exist in many *yeshivot*, in such a manner. "The holistic approach to learning advocates the completion of whole tasks rather than fragmented subskills..."[2] It allows a learner to function within the context of an entire entity instead of dividing the learning into smaller sections. Many educators believe that holistic learning is the key to the future in education.

It seems that the yeshivah clearly attempts to integrate many different aspects into a day in the life of a yeshivah student. What they learn in the *beit midrash* in the mornings is reinforced in the afternoons and reviewed in the evenings. Then the students are to use what they have learned in Talmud and other subjects while living their every day life. This way of life is modeled by the many rebbes connected to the yeshivah. The nature of the yeshivah community was automatically one of ethics and morality. The ethics and morals, in particular in the yeshivah settings where Mussar teaching took place, was one of the most influential aspects of the learning which took place in the yeshivah.

3. The Impact of this Relationship

The issue that individuals who studied in a yeshivah, in some way, shape, or form, used the methodology they learned in the yeshivah in their own teaching later in life was perhaps the most uncontroversial issue discussed during each of these interviews. Because all of the individuals interviewed are themselves rabbis or teachers in some way in their modern day lives, it was a question which they

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2 Thomas G. Gunning, *Creating Reading Instruction for All Children*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1996).

were capable of answering. All of them gave some credit to their yeshivah training with regard to their current teaching methods.

Whether these individuals teach Talmud in the way in which they learned it in the yeshivah, or simply teach other subjects in a similar educational format, this is one aspect which was repeatedly found among these former yeshivah students. Some of these individuals also applied aspects of the yeshivah model to their own educational institutions, either through the use of *chevruta* or the *beit midrash* format. Perhaps one of the goals of Jewish education should be to expose those non-trained yeshivah individuals to the ways and means within the yeshivah, both good and bad. However, that will be discussed further in the following section of this thesis.

4. Changes in Yeshivah University

Though not all individuals interviewed are products of the Yeshivah University in New York City, those who are, and even a few who are not, continually repeated the idea that the university has changed dramatically over the last twenty-five years. It seems that those who are still connected to the university realize, in particular, that the relationship between teacher and student has become closer as time passed. Furthermore, the role of the *rosh yeshivah* is very different than it once was. The *rosh yeshivah* has many more aspects to his job than he had in the past.

MODELS OF STUDENTS

Though it is virtually impossible to categorize all of the individuals interviewed, and even those who were not, into categorical models of yeshivah students, it does seem that three prototypes can be clearly determined from the information available to this researcher. The categories are by no means meant to

be limiting, but only a way by which one can better understand some of the personality types within the yeshivah. Though not each category is one in which some of the individuals interviewed actually should be placed, these categories seem like the obvious ones given the information acquired during those interviews.

1. Students Who Are Sponges

One might say that the first category of students is students who are sponges, implying that they absorb all that they can during their time in the yeshivah. They will look back on their yeshivah experience with no regrets, nor will they have any complaints about both the information that was taught in the yeshivah or the educational process by which it was taught.

These students only receive a yeshivah schooling. They do not pursue any kind of secular education during or after their yeshivah experience. Furthermore, they do not depart from the yeshivah world in their later years. They remain connected to the orthodox yeshivah environment, committed to its ideals and its teachings.

2. Students Who Are Observers

These students study many years in the yeshivah world. They also learn from and enjoy their yeshivah experience. They view their yeshivah experience in a fond manner, and they do not regret the experience they have during the yeshivah years. Many of them even consider it to be some of the best years of their lives.

However, these students are lookers. They were interested in the world outside of the yeshivah, though they do not, by any means, abandon the yeshivah world in order to attain a secular education. Some of these students might attend

Brooklyn College in the evenings, while studying at the yeshivah during these days. Others attend the yeshivah for university and then pursue more advanced degrees in the secular world. However, they never leave the yeshivah world completely, nor do they view it with any sense of disrespect.

3. Students Who Are Birds

These students also study in the yeshivah world. They learn the texts and come to understand the methodologies used in the yeshivah model. Some of them will even recall wonderful experiences they had while studying in the yeshivah. They may even come to remember close and influential relationships with some of their rebbes while studying in the yeshivah.

However, these students flee from the yeshivah world. At some point in their career as a yeshivah student, or some time after this career ends, they are unsatisfied with the answers given in the yeshivah world and within orthodox Judaism. Though they do maintain some positive recollections from this experience, they are fairly negative toward the yeshivah experience in general. They feel as if they were almost brainwashed to maintain certain beliefs, and they discover a desire to create and establish their own answers to the many questions of life. They do, though, recognize that which they learned during this experience.

Though not every yeshivah student can be categorized into one of these three categories, it seems that these categories do well represent many of the students studying in the *yeshivot* today, as represented by those who were interviewed by this researcher.

HISTORICAL CONCLUSIONS VERSUS MODERN CONCLUSIONS

In order to best compare the historical facts learned in the first section of this thesis with the more modern information discovered from these interviews discussed in this section of this thesis, one must understand some of the historical conclusions and then determine whether or not they are applicable to that which is learned from the individuals interviewed by this researcher.

By looking at the following five categories as related to both the historical information and the modern findings, one should be able to determine whether the history paves a way toward that which was discovered from these interviews of former yeshivah students. It is important to note that the historical perspectives encourage one to look at the relationship between teachers and students as a process, and so it will be presented in such a manner.

General Conclusions from the Historical Information

Though some very general conclusions were drawn at the end of each chapter in the first part of this thesis, this section will provide for a rather detailed and organized review and interpretation of the material presented in the earlier parts of this thesis. The evidence for these conclusions can be found in the work presented earlier and through the interpretations of this author. Each reader should be able to create his or her own generalizations and conclusions as well. Though it is impossible to summarize the relationship between teachers and students throughout the history of the Jewish people, this is an attempt to draw some general conclusions from the factual information presented earlier in this thesis.

1. *The environment affects the development of a movement.* At the beginning of each historical chapter, it was necessary to establish the conditions

of the time before examining the detail of each specific time period. Within each of these different periods of time, there is no question that the conditions of that time affected the future development of a movement. Though each time period was different, with different characters and different conditions, any movement that might have developed in a specific time period would probably not have been created if the conditions were not right for its creation.

It is clear that the establishment of the Rabbinic Era was certainly a response to the environment in which the Jews were living. The rabbis of these earlier periods in Jewish history were established because there was a need for them to exist. Certainly the rabbis who wrote the *midrashim*, the Mishnah and the Talmud did so because the time was right for such pieces of work to be written.

During the period of Jewish prosperity in Eastern Europe, there is no question that the conditions in Poland and the other Eastern European countries were opportune for the establishment of *yeshivot* and a yeshivah system. Jews were beginning to rule themselves, and the Jewish communities were continually growing in size. The Jews were feeling very much at home in their respective countries. They enjoyed being separate from the other non-Jewish communities surrounding them, and so they were in need of a system by which to educate their children. They wanted them to study the Hebrew texts and the Jewish heritage, and the creation and development of the yeshivah model allowed the Jews to do just that. The *yeshivot* in sixteenth and seventeenth century Eastern Europe flourished because the time was right and the need was great.

The development of the Chasidic Movement is perhaps the best example of a movement which developed because the need was so great and the conditions were right. When Chasidism was created, it was at a time when Jews were in need of direction and guidance. The distance between rabbinical leadership and the common people became vast. They needed both a sense of community and

charismatic, affirming leaders; they needed to feel as if they themselves were capable of making a difference. The Jews were tired of being misguided by false messiahs, and they wanted to regain a feeling of freedom and redemption. They did not want to experience any more persecution or massacres, and Chasidism brought them new hope and belief in a better way of life. It would not have been nearly as successful and widespread if these conditions had not been present.

The path of the Mussar Movement was quite parallel to that of the Chasidic Movement, though the details certainly differed. Once again, the conditions of the time were opportune for the creation of a movement that would help to satisfy those who were no longer satisfied with Chasidism but were not interested in moving toward Jewish Enlightenment. When Rabbi Israel Salanter decided that the notion of Mussar must be added to the yeshivah world and to Jewish education in general, it spread to as many different circles as it did because the people living in this era were ready and willing to add an ethical component into their lives, but also challenges to other models of yeshivah education.

Finally, the creation of the American Yeshivah Movement was certainly a direct result of the times and the desires of the people for whom this movement was attractive. When the Jews came to the United States, they needed to be Jewish and yet they needed to be American. The ultimate plan of American *yeshivot* like Yeshivah University to include both Jewish and secular studies was a result of this desire by so many new Jewish Americans. Furthermore, if there were no desire by these immigrants to continue the ways of their older generations through the study of Torah and Talmud, then the American yeshivah would not have survived. Just as the initial interest in the American yeshivah was a direct result of the conditions of the time, so is the lack of interest among more modern and liberal Jews a condition of these times. However, one cannot exist without the other.

In every period throughout Jewish history, it is clear that the establishment of these different systems and movements was a direct result of the conditions that existed at the time of these establishments. One exists as a direct result of the other, or at least a necessary connection and condition joins the two.

2. *The movement forces the creation of teachers.* Once each of these different Jewish communities realized its needs, it also realized that teachers would be necessary in order to transmit the information and beliefs of the various teachings and ideologies. Whether it was during the early establishment of schools or the advanced formation of American *yeshivot*, competent teachers were essential in order to allow the various systems to function properly.

In the early years of Jewish history, teachers became necessary in order for these schools to function and in order to pass down the teachings established by the rabbis of different time periods. As a result of the creation of *midrashim* and the Talmud, there was an even greater amount of information to disseminate to the younger generations. The establishment of the concept of rabbis and disciples learning together was necessary so that these texts and stories could be passed down *l'dor vador*, from one generation to the next.

During the times of prosperity for Jews in Eastern Europe, there was certainly a need for teachers. Whether it was in the *cheder* or in the *beit midrash*, teachers were essential in order for these various institutions to function. Also, as the development of synagogues spread throughout Eastern Europe, more rabbis were necessary in order for those communities to maintain spiritual leaders. However, those spiritual leaders ultimately became teachers of Torah.

With the creation and development of Chasidism, there is no question that rebbes were needed in order for this system to function. They were the basis of this entire movement. Without the rebbes, some of whom were more commonly

called *tzaddikim*, Chasidism would have crumbled. These *tzaddikim* were the source of inspiration and the reason for joining the Chasidic Movement. These *tzaddikim* were the central focus for the communities as well as the individuals. They were the *neshama*, the soul of Chasidism, from its inception until its end. What remnants still exist in the twentieth century of Chasidism also rely on the rebbe as it did hundreds of years ago.

As the Mussar Movement developed, the need for teachers grew as each yeshivah opened its doors. Though different from the Chasidic Movement, the Mussar *yeshivot* were in great need of teachers as well. Each yeshivah was based on a model which involved students interacting closely with their teachers, their *rabbanim*. Even the *mashgichim*, the helpers, were in great demand throughout the establishment of the *yeshivot*. Like the earlier periods of time, the Mussar movement depended heavily on the transmission of information from teachers to students, from *rabbanim* to *talmidim*.

Even during the creation of the yeshivah in America in the modern era, there was a great need for learned and experienced teachers. Actually, one of the reasons that so many of the yeshivah rabbis came from Europe, though the European rabbis were not necessarily as good as some of the American trained rabbis, is because there were not enough rabbis to work in the various *yeshivot* in America. One might even say there was a sense of superiority of the "*rav* of Europe" versus the "rabbis of America".[3] They needed to train a generation of teachers before there were enough teachers who were American born and American trained to fill the many *yeshivot*.

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[3] There was certainly a general understanding by those who came from the Eastern European *yeshivot* that these *yeshivot* were superior to the American *yeshivot*.

3. *The teachers always maintained unique relationships with their students.* Though within each movement and during each time period the relationships were different, it is historically accurate, and can be traced throughout the research presented in earlier chapters, that the relationship between teachers and students always existed in the Jewish school setting. There was never a belief that teachers were simply meant to lecture on information with no ulterior purpose or hidden agenda. There was always some *kesher*, some connection, that was unique between these Jewish rabbis and their students.

During the earlier periods of Jewish history, the rabbis had different types of relationships with their students, depending on who the teachers were and when they were living. In the Biblical Period, the relationship was perhaps more subtle. However, there were relationships between people, like the one between Moses and Joshua, which were clearly unique relationships between leaders and their named disciples. In the Rabbinic Period and Post Rabbinic Period, the rabbis were not only searching for students to whom they could teach their texts and stories, but they desired to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *talmud torah*, the study of Torah and all that surrounds it, and the *mitzvah* of *v'shenantam l'vanecha*, teaching the laws diligently to your children.[4] In the Talmudic Period, there were also models of teacher-student relationships. These rabbis believed the relationship between teacher and student to be the most important relationship which existed within the community. During the Medieval Period, the rabbis were more similar to role models for their students, so that they could guide them in their prosperity to continue the performance of *mitzvot* and to follow all of God's rules and laws. Though this relationship between teacher and student adapted new faces during

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[4] Deut. 6:7.

different periods of earlier Jewish history, the relationship did exist unconditionally in each of these times.

As relationships developed between teachers and students in Eastern Europe in the following period within Jewish history, the nature of the relationship expanded. These teachers, often called *rabbeim* or *roshei yeshivot*, were constantly creating new methods by which they could teach and connect with their students. Methodologies such as *pilpul* and *chevruta* were being named and spread out to many *yeshivot* throughout the lands.

As was stated in an earlier chapter, the relationship between the rebbe and his disciple in the Chasidic Movement was perhaps the most intense and influential of all relationships between teachers and students throughout the entire history of the Jewish people. The rebbe, more commonly referred to as the *tzaddik*, was seen as an almost super-human being. No one before this time would have paralleled this relationship to the relationship between God and the Israelite people. However, that is the level on which the *tzaddik*, and ultimately the relationship between the *tzaddik* and his disciple, was placed. The *tzaddik* fulfilled so many different roles for the *chasidim* that this relationship became an almost "inhuman" understanding of a human being.

Though during the Mussar Movement the relationship between the *rabbanim* and their students was not quite as intense as it was during the Chasidic Movement, it was still important in the life of a Mussar yeshivah. These teachers were very concerned with individual students, and they desired, for the most part, that the students work to their individual potential. These teachers were interested in having wonderful and loving relationships with their students. They believed that they would only persuade their students to find favor in the Mussar belief system if they befriended them and showed them a great amount of love and affection, and so they did. What these Mussar teachers learned from their own

teachers they transmitted to their students in the future generations, to it would not break the chain of *l'dor vador*, the chain from generation to generation.

Though the relationship between students in the American yeshivah world was quite different from that previously mentioned, it still existed differently from the average relationship between a teacher and his student. As was researched and mentioned earlier in this thesis, there seemed to be mixed reviews with regard to the type of relationship between these teachers and their students. It seemed that the relationships were sometimes very close, but at other times these relationships were rather distant, almost foreign. Many students would actually attribute this notion to the idea that their teachers were not American and did come from a different world than the one in which these students were born and raised. However, regardless of one's understanding of this relationship, the fact of the matter is that the relationship did exist, and was different from an average teacher-student relationship.

Clearly all of the periods throughout the history of the Jewish people did allow and in fact encourage for the establishment of relationships between teachers and students, though this relationship was very different, depending on the need of the community and the types of teachers who were being trained for their various positions.

4. *These relationships between teachers and students did have an effect on these students.* The simple notion of creating and maintaining relationships between teachers and students does not impact on any individual if this relationship does not have an ultimate effect on the student in his future. There is no question that students throughout the history of Judaism have been deeply affected by these relationships with their various teachers.

In the earlier periods of Jewish history, the evidence of the effect of this teacher-student relationship was different depending on the time period. For example, during the Tannaitic and Amoraic Periods, those who were students of some of the great rabbis about whom we read in *midrashim* and in the Talmud became teachers in their own right. Their teachers, from Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon to Hillel and Shammai, impacted those students enough that they desired to become teachers in their own right. The love which these teachers felt toward Torah and text was inherited by the students of these great *rabbanim*.

During the development of the yeshivah in Eastern Europe, the relationship between teachers and students also impacted the students of this time. Similar to the previous times, these teachers were very concerned with transmitting the teachings of Torah and *mitzvot* to their students. Whether the teacher was the *rosh yeshivah* in the Volozhin Yeshivah or the *mashgiach* in Rabbi Yaakov Pollack's yeshivah, the relationships these men created and maintained with their students most definitely impacted the students in their future adventures. Some would even claim that the level of Jewish academia and intellect during this time period had never been higher. These students responded positively to their teachers as a result of *kavod*, understood as both respect and honor.

As is true of many aspects of the Chasidic Movement, the effect of the rebbe-disciple relationship is perhaps more vivid than in the previous eras. The basic examination of this movement causes any reader to realize that the rebbes held a certain amount of awe and fear over their students. When the life of the Besht was examined earlier in this thesis, it was realized by this author how great an effect he had on his thousands of disciples. They listened to his every word; they were inspired to act and to believe as their rebbe and leader did and thought. These students, in some ways, were idyllic; they were "sponges" who absorbed

anything and everything their teachers offered them. However, there was certainly a danger in this type of a relationship, given the amount of improperly intentioned people existing in the world. Regardless of this fact, though, these students who learned with the Besht and the other leaders of the Chasidic Movement were affected by this experience in an almost indescribable way. Their lives would never again be the same.

Though the relationship between teachers and students during the Mussar Movement was certainly not understood and not demonstrated with the same intensity of that relationship during the Chasidic Movement, this relationship still affected the students in very tangible and real ways. Students of these *rabbeim* would never recite a lesson learned from their rabbi without stating that the lesson was in the name of such and such. They always gave great credit and honor to their teachers. Whether the teacher was Rabbi Salanter or any of his disciples, the students always felt great admiration and reverence for their teachers. They aspired to be teachers with students of their own, and they desired to teach them in a similar fashion to the way in which they themselves had learned.

Though the creation of the American Yeshivah was a different experience than the yeshivah had been in the past, the impact of the teacher-student relationship still existed. Whether the role of the rabbi was simply to be a teacher of Torah and Talmud, or whether he was to function as a rabbi with the many different aspects of the rabbinate intertwined in his work in the yeshivah, these relationships did affect these students. Sometimes it was not always in a positive manner, but it was effective. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the number of outside influences had grown so greatly as the Jewish communities resettled in the United States. Regardless of the reasons, the response to this relationship did become mixed, especially with the increasing influence of secular Judaism and secular studies. However, oftentimes it was the influence of a specific teacher on

a student which caused a student to remain in the yeshivah, or perhaps to search elsewhere for a meaningful Judaism.

Though the relationship between teachers and students clearly adapted different forms throughout the history of the Jewish people, there is no question that in every period of time, this relationship did have an effect on the students. Whether the relationship was teacher-student, *rav-lomed*, rebbe-disciple, or rabbi-*talmid*, these teachers, whatever their titles, affected their students in profound and irreversible ways.

General Conclusions from the Interviews of Former Yeshivah Students

Though the conclusions which will be drawn from the interviews of these specific former yeshivah students may not exactly coincide with the conclusions drawn from the historical evidence displayed above, there is no question that the experience of these modern day yeshivah students is very similar to that of the experience of students throughout Jewish history. Hopefully the parallels between history and the present will be as obvious to the reader as it was to this researcher.

1. *The environment in the modern yeshivah world did effect the development of the yeshivah movement in America.* When one examines the environment in which these modern *yeshivot* were created, as was somewhat represented in chapter five in this thesis entitled "The American Yeshivah," it seems clear that the needs of the American Jewish community fostered the creation and development of these *yeshivot* to occur. It was also obvious from several of the interviews with these individuals that some of the negative feelings and experiences they may have had during their time in the yeshivah might have been due to the fact that these rabbis were from a different world. However, that

was the general environment within many American *yeshivot* when they were first created.

The life in the American yeshivah does seem to be changing as time passes. Now, at the end of twentieth century, it seems that the environment has changed and is therefore causing a change, many would say for the better, in the system within the modern day yeshivah world. Perhaps as the yeshivah world begins to acknowledge and accept the environment in which it is existing, it will continue to grow to be a more modern institution.

2. *The modern yeshivah movement did lead to the creation of yeshivah teachers, typically called rebbes or roshei yeshivot.* Though this is certainly true with regard to the modern day yeshivah, one must note that many of these teachers were not products of the American Yeshivah Movement, but rather they were "borrowed" from Eastern European *yeshivot*. During the earlier years in which these former yeshivah students were studying in *yeshivot*, they were mainly studying with an "old world rebbe". The mannerisms and teaching methods were representative of this "old world" as well.

Certainly life is now changing in the current yeshivah experience. More and more of the teachers are trained in an American yeshivah, and they therefore can relate to and appreciate better the experience of the American yeshivah student. Many of these students, like those in the previous generations, are now becoming teachers in their own right, teaching both within the *yeshivot* themselves and in other places of Jewish learning (which is true for all of the interviewees researched for this thesis). Regardless of the manner in which they are teaching, they are clearly still transmitting Jewish learning to students in future generations.

3. *The yeshivah teachers always maintained unique relationships with their students, both good and bad.* Some of the individuals interviewed recall only positive relationships with their yeshivah teachers. They were able to list the many attributes of their teachers, and they wished to model much of their own teaching style after that of their teachers' styles. However, some of these individuals did not recall with as much fondness these relationships with their teachers. This writer, though, believes that the relationship did exist, because it ultimately did affect these students, as will be discussed below.

Furthermore, the yeshivah today is beginning to redefine the role of the teacher or *rosh yeshivah* so that he is allowed to be much more than a simple teacher disseminating information and facts, albeit facts of Torah and Talmud. The teacher in the yeshivah today, from all that these interviewees shared, is one who partakes in the student's lives in many ways, and if some of these students did not experience this aspect of the yeshivah, it became a goal for which the6y strived in their relationships with their own students.

4. *These relationships between these teachers and students did have an effect on these students for the rest of their lives.* As was stated above, whether the relationship between the teacher and the student was seen in a positive or a negative light, it did seem to affect each of the individuals interviewed in some way, shape or form. Those individuals who recall positive relationships with their teachers spoke about the effect that these teachers had on them. It was especially evident in the way many of them now teach Torah and Talmud, or any Jewish subject matter. For those former students who did not recall as positive an experience, they too learned from and were effected by these relationships. Those individuals in this category decided to the be the kind of teachers that they did not

experience in the yeshivah. The experience, therefore, still helped them to become the teachers that they are today.

For the generations of yeshivah students currently studying in the American yeshivah, it seems that their experience is quite different from those of previous generations. These students, including some who were interviewed for this thesis, hold only the highest respect for their teachers. Respect as a result of the knowledge they have acquired and respect because these rabbis have learned how to help their students to think for themselves and to make their own decisions based on the learning they have received in the yeshivah world.

There is no doubt in the mind of this writer that each and every aspect of the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah world, both throughout the history of the Jewish people and in the present, modern world, is by no means positive and awe-inspiring. However, it does seem that the overwhelming majority of historical research and present data does support the notion that this relationship which developed throughout time has primarily affected the students involved in these relationships in a positive, influential manner.

The result of such a statement and belief is that some of these aspects of this relationship between teachers and students can and should be applied to a variety of situations of Jewish learning which exist in the modern world today. The following section of this thesis will attempt to utilize this information, from both the past and the present of Jewish history, in order to idealize several various Jewish learning settings. As teachers and educators, it is naive to ignore that which has worked for the Jewish people for thousands of years.

Part Three

The Future:
A Vision for an Ideal World

9. *An Educational Perspective*

The relationship between teachers and students has been discussed in great detail throughout this thesis as it relates to the yeshivah model in the history of Judaism, past and present. Many different teaching techniques and practices have been discussed in non-educational terms, though it would have been rather easy to make some connections between that which was being practiced in the various yeshivot and that which is known in the modern educational world.

Now it is important to examine briefly some of these educational concepts which have been touched upon in an indirect manner throughout this thesis. These are concepts which this author deems directly relevant to the relationship between teachers and students. Each of these topics will be discussed only in the realm of this relationship. Though this section is intended to be only a survey of some of the educational material available, it should provide an adequate amount of light on these various topics.

The vast majority of resources utilized in this section of the thesis are secular educational materials. Many of these texts are books used by an average teacher in an average school setting, so the reader should understand that this is general information which a basic teacher should possess. However, there will occasionally be a citation of a Jewish text which is directly pertinent to the specific topic. The combination of both categories of these resources should better enable a reader to understand both sides of some issues within Jewish education.

These educational issues have been divided into two categories: teachers and students and teaching as an art. The first topic, teachers and students, will look at the importance of the teacher and teaching and the relationship between teachers and students in a general way. The second subject, entitled Teaching as an Art, will examine some specific educational concepts and practices which directly relate to the relationships between teachers and students.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

It seems clear to all educators, parents and students, in every school setting, that a basic variable in education is the teacher. If a child interacts with a "good" teacher, that experience will be vastly different from that of a child who interacts with an inadequate teacher. This entire thesis is based on the premise that the relationship between a teacher and a student will ultimately have an effect on that student. Hopefully the material discussed in this section will shed some light on that issue.

The Importance of Teachers and Teaching

Before examining the relationship between teachers and students, it is essential to realize the importance of teachers in a school setting. Being a teacher is perhaps one of the hardest jobs in the world. Teachers are expected to reach goals which are virtually unattainable, and they never possess the adequate tools with which they could potentially achieve these goals. "The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task."[1]

In Judaism, it is also understood that teachers are perhaps the most important individuals in the Jewish community. In the Talmud it tells us that

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[1] Haim G. Ginott, *Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers* (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 15.

there is no higher distinction than that of being a scholar or a teacher.[2] It is the highest position within any community. It was even decided that a Jew should be prohibited from living in a city where there are no teachers of children,[3] for those parents would not be able to perform the *mitzvah* of teaching their children the Jewish texts and Torah. Rabbi Yonatan, one of the famous rabbis of the Talmud, determines that "he who teaches a child, it is as if he gave birth to him."[4] If teaching a child is compared to giving birth to one's own baby, it seems clear that Judaism, like the secular world, views the act of teaching as one of the highest responsibilities an individual could hold.

The Relationship Between Teacher and Student

There is no question that "teaching... creates a special relationship between instructor and pupil."[5] This relationship has existed throughout time, and will continue to exist as long as there are schools and institutions of learning. Jerome Bruner, one of the leading authors on educational theory, understands the relationship between teacher and student in the following manner. He states that "the regulation of this authority relationship affects the nature of the learning that occurs, the degree to which a learner develops an independent skill, the degree to which he is confident of his ability to perform on his own, and so on."[6]

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2 *Baba Batra* 8b.

3 *Sanhedrin* 17.

4 *Sanhedrin* 49.

5 Alvin I. Schiff, *Contemporary Jewish Education: Issachar American Style*, (Dallas: Rossel Books, 1988), p. 4.

6 Jerome S. Bruner, *Toward a Theory of Instruction*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 42.

Another education expert makes similar claims. In her book *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, Charlotte Danielson understands the importance of the relationship between teachers and students. She states that "teaching is a matter of relationships among individuals. The relationship should be grounded in rapport and mutual respect... between a teacher and students."[7] These relationships are the sole responsibility of the teacher, for the student would be unable to create such a relationship which was not initiated by the teacher.

In Judaism as well the relationship is discussed from an educational perspective. During the twelfth century, Rabbi Joseph Aknin said that "the teacher should treat his students as if they were his very own children."[8] The relationship that should exist between a teacher and a students should be as special as the relationship between a parent and a child. The Sages said that one should "let the honor of [his] students be as dear to thee as one's own."[9] Maimonides even goes as far as to say that a teacher should love his student, for that student is the teacher's spiritual child who will bring the teacher happiness in this world and in the world to come.[10] However, Maimonides does insist that this relationship remain a professional one, and teacher must always keep some distance with a student. A teacher is to inspire awe into his pupils,[11] but he is

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[7] Charlotte Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching*, (Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Management, 1996), p. 79.

[8] *Baba Metzia* 33:1.

[9] *Pirke Avot* 4:15

[10] Maimonides, *Mishnah Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah* 5:13

[11] *Ketubot* 103b.

discouraged from creating a relationship that goes beyond the realm of appropriate between himself and his student.

Just as the teachers were told to honor their students, so too were students told to honor their teachers. The pupil was even told that he should honor his teachers even more than he honors his own parents.[12] Furthermore, in the Sayings of the Fathers, it even states that you should "let the reverence for your teacher be like the reverence for Heaven."[13] Only a teacher and God can experience a similar kind of reverence.

TEACHING AS AN ART

Education and teaching are really more an art than they are a science. "As such, teaching is an individual matter, and each teacher practices [his or her] art in a manner consistent with [his or her] own style and personality. Thus, there is no one best way to teach, no 'superstrategy.' No program of instruction or curriculum is any better or any worse that the individual doing the teaching."[14]

There are so many different components to the art of teaching. From the language a teacher uses to the way in which she designs her classroom, every aspect of teaching and being a teacher takes a variety of skills which all teachers must develop if they desire to be successful in the classroom. Though it is virtually impossible to find teachers who are highly competent in all areas of

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12 *Baba Metzia* 33:1

13 *Pirke Avot* 4:15.

14 David Jacobsen, Paul Eggen, Donald Kauchak and Carole Dulaney, *Methods for Teaching: A Skills Approach,* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing, 1981), p. 176.

teaching, it is important that a teacher can prove her capabilities in many of the following areas of teaching.

Instruction

The actual instruction which takes place in the classroom is perhaps the most obvious aspect of teaching. Teachers who are able to excel in the domain of instruction do so by creating an atmosphere of excitement about the importance of learning and the significance of the content.[15] A teacher needs to encourage a student's intellectual involvement with the content or the understanding.

It is also important to realize that the acquired knowledge of a given subject matter alone will not cause an individual to be a good teacher. Teachers must also have knowledge of pedagogy. Eventually, the hope is that the knowledge of the content and the knowledge of pedagogy will grow and evolve over time.[16] Perhaps these two realms will even intercept at some point in the life of a teacher's career. In many university settings, one will often find teachers who have mastered the knowledge of content to an incredibly high level; sometimes they are even the experts in their fields. However, if they have no desire to understand the world of pedagogy, then they will have difficulty in teaching their vast amount of knowledge to their students.

In his forward to the book *Guide to Classroom Teaching*, Thomas L. Good discusses this issue from a different perspective. He states that:

> at one time, teaching was frequently characterized as a relatively simple and straightforward task, and in the 1960's and earlier many social scientists were quite negative about the quality of teachers and teaching. However, because in the 1970's researchers began to

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15 Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, p. 95.

16 Ibid., pp. 62-63.

> study classrooms... most educators and social scientists realize that teaching is sophisticated cognitive activity that demands many decision-making skills, as well as teaching skills and sophisticated knowledge about students and subject matter.[17]

Clearly Thomas Good agrees with Danielson that teachers need to know as much about pedagogy as they need to know about the subject content which they are teaching.

The instructor must also learn how to be fair to his or her students. He should realize that teachers need to become just as good at listening as they are in the area of teaching. They need to hear the feedback which students will offer them.[18] Teaching is a dialogue which must take place between two individuals who are willing to work together toward one goal.

Dialogue and Interchange

As was just stated, teaching is a dialogue between two individuals. It involves an interchange of words and thoughts, information and feelings. "Dialogue is critical in creating successful relationships between teachers and their students."[19] Without this dialogue, a teacher would be incapable of communicating high expectations,[20] nor would they be able to check on the understanding and enjoyment of the material being taught. It is also important for

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17 Robert McNergney, ed, *Guide to Classroom Teaching*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1988), p. ix.

18 Thomas L. Good and Jere E. Brophy, *Looking in Classrooms*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 29.

19 Marilyn Cohn, Robert B. Kottkamp and Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., *To Be a Teacher: Cases, Concepts, Observation Guides*, (New York: Random House, 1987), p. 305.

20 Good, *Looking in Classrooms*, p. 169.

teachers to express the goals and objectives of a class,[21] and this should be done by way of a dialogue, not a lecture or an information session.

Even as early as the nineteenth century, John Dewey said that education involved a process of dialogue, and he sought to achieve this important and influential aspect of any educational setting. He believed that two things were necessary in order to create a community of teachers and student learners: a sense of community and a quality of communication which would foster this notion of dialogue. Even Martin Buber agreed with Dewey that human beings cannot achieve fulfillment in isolation. They need to have human interaction.[22]

Mentoring

One of the ways in which teachers can become even better teachers is through the process of mentoring. If and when teachers actually mentor their students, they will undoubtedly see a change in the student's ability to function in the classroom setting. Mentoring is not something which is necessary or beneficial for every student. However, there are those students who will grow from a mentoring experience beyond any teacher's imagination.

In the Bible, mentoring existed in many different realms. Educators were charged with helping young people to learn how best to live their own lives. This relationship was developed throughout history. Certainly during the Chasidic Movement, one saw mentoring in the rebbe-disciple relationship. The rebbes were sought out by their disciples for advice on all practical and religious matters. All of this has been discussed in greater detail in previous sections of this thesis.[23]

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21 Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, p. 68.

22 Cohn, *To Be a Teacher*, p. 306.

23 Please note that many of the comments in this section on mentoring are from the following source. Though this book is written to help Jewish

Mentoring can have many different purposes. "Discussion between the mentor and the protégé deal with more than just 'what works' as the mentor helps the novice become sensitive to the cultural context in which decisions are made and actions are taken."[24] A mentor is always seen as a person who will be encouraging toward a student who is that mentor's protégé.

There is a developmental cycle of mentoring in this setting. As the two individuals grow closer through openness, sharing and trust, they know that at the end of the process, they will ultimately need to part from one another. The mentor gives a protégé advice, support and feedback, but the ultimate goal of this relationship is to help the protégé to act autonomously. If the student cannot function eventually without the help and encouragement of the teacher, then the teacher has not been completely successful with this given student. A teacher is a good mentor if the recipient of the mentoring, the student, can eventually function independent of that mentor.

Modeling

Yet another way a teacher can help a student and further the relationship between teachers and students is through the vehicle of modeling. If a student sees a teacher as a positive model in the classroom, that student will desire to build and enhance the relationship with that teacher, which will ultimately cause the student and the teacher to be more successful in their ultimate goal, that being learning.

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professionals mentor other Jewish professionals, the author of this thesis believes the information can be applicable to any relationship between a teacher and a student. Michael Zeldin and Sara Lee, *Touching the Future: Mentoring and the Jewish Professional*, (Los Angeles: Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, 1995), p. 15.

24 Ibid., p. 17.

Many modern educators believe that teacher modeling teacher behavior teaches students about many more things that any form of systematic instruction.[25] It is confirmed that a student will tend to follow the behavior of an individual rather than the oral instruction given by that same individual.[26] For example, imagine that a teacher is standing before a classroom telling her students that posture is very important and they should always stand upright and never lean. However, she is leaning on her desk, hunched over her papers as she is providing them with this information. The chances are much greater that the students will do as she is doing, rather than listen to what she is saying.

Teachers need to model their interest in the content of the material being taught. If a mathematics teacher does not show his love for math while teaching the material, it is unlikely that his students will ever gain a true love of math either. However, it is important that teachers also teach a general commitment to learning and to knowledge in general.[27] If a student does not sense that a teacher likes being a teacher, nor does it seem that she has a high respect for learning, there is no reason for that student to value education or learning any differently than his teacher was doing.

Even Maimonides understood in his time that a teacher should be a good model. He explained the teacher should face his class, so that the pupils are around the teacher "like a crown, so that they can all see the teacher and hear the teacher's words." The teacher should never sit on a tall stool while the students are seated two feet below him on the floor.[28] Teachers need to teach at a level which

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25 Good, *Looking in Classrooms*, pp. 138-140.

26 Ibid., p. 119.

27 Ibid., p. 131.

28 Maimonides, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 2:2.

is parallel to the students. These aspects of modeling will help to strengthen the relationship between teachers and students.

Individualized Attention

Yet another aspect of teaching which can help to improve the relationship between teachers and students is individualized attention to each student in a class. There is no question in the minds of educators that students need individualized attention.[29] Though not every student needs special attention every day, most children will need some individualized attention at some point in their educational career.

Students need to be taught each according to his or her own ability.[30] If a teacher only views a class as a whole, and not as a number of different parts grouped together to create a whole, it will be virtually impossible for that teacher to work with each student at his or her own ability. Some students will need to be challenged in a way beyond where the average student in the class is challenged. Other students will need to be helped with concepts which are too hard and confusing for them to understand.

Some educators understand this concept in great detail, and they have even named it "humanistic education." "Humanistic education" is:

> "an attempt to personalize education. It is part of a general societal reaction against the excesses of the scientific and technological norms and values that seem to have dehumanized the individual. We have been through an era in which the technical solution to problems reigned supreme and unquestioned.... Then came the turbulent sixties with assassinations, racial strife, riots, and a continuing unpopular war, events that blatantly contradicted the

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29 Schiff, *Contemporary Jewish Education*, p. 4.

30 Ibid.

> promise of control [promised by technology].... Instead modern man has begun the search for identity, for meaning, for authenticity, for soul, for himself....[31]

In order to continue this search, individuals must be judged as just that: individuals. There must be a personal aspect to education and teaching. Teachers must learn to respect and respond to a student's individuals needs. By doing so, the relationship between teachers and students will be strengthened like never before.

Knowing Your Students

As teachers come to realize that teaching must be done on a personal level, they will quickly come to know their students in a totally new light. Teachers will realize that students all have different learning styles, and when teachers can recognize and understand each individual student's learning style, they will become more successful teachers, their students will become more successful students, and the relationship between teachers and students will be stronger.

If the teacher is competent, she will know "that learners progress at different speeds, learn in different ways, and respond to different kinds of motivation. Few generalizations about learning are better established than this one."[32] Even Maimonides understood the notion that students learn at different speeds.[33]

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31 Richard L. Curwin, *Discovering Your Teaching Self: Humanistic Approaches to Effective Teaching*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. xvi.

32 Jacobson, *Methods for Teaching*, p. 211.

33 Maimonides, *Hilchot Talmud Torah* 4:5.

There are many ways to explain this idea, but the best might be through several examples. To begin with, if a student is a very visual learner, and a teacher never once teaches a lesson in a visual manner, a student could sit through an entire year of classes and never understand what the teacher was attempting to teach. Furthermore, if a student can only learn in an organized fashion, always aware of the whole picture before attempting to understand the various parts of the equation, that student would be very frustrated in a classroom where no course outline was offered, nor were any general goals or objectives distributed at the beginning of the class. Being aware of these seemingly minor issues could help a student to function at a very high level, a student who would otherwise seem unexcited or uninterested by the material being presented.

Since teachers do not teach in a vacuum, they must come to know their students in many different ways - developmentally, intellectually and emotionally.[34] By understanding their students in all of these ways, they will better understand the ways in which they learn, and they will be better teachers as a result of this information. Some educators even believe that a teacher can only be effective if she can understand and empathize with her students.[35] Though this may be rather extreme for some teachers, it is certainly heading in the right direction.

Teachers must come to understand the what and how of a student's function in the classroom. That teacher must understand the feelings and frustrations of a student as well as the accomplishments and intellectual capacity of the student. "Recognizing and accepting the feelings behind a person's words and behavior is a difficult skill. It is certainly essential to a good relationship.

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34 Danielson, *Enhancing Professional Practice*, p. 65.

35 Curwin, *Discovering Your Teaching Self*, p. 24.

Teachers more than anyone need to develop this skill. Often we evaluate and judge, but the very process of evaluating keeps us from understanding and accepting.[36]

Beyond understanding a student's feelings and emotions, a teacher must also come to understand a student's interests and experiences. "The competent teacher knows that learning is facilitated when content is related to learners' interests, to common experiences, or to information with which they are familiar."[37] They are interested in helping a student to relate that which is being learned to the student's own personal life and personal life experiences. Learning about the student in a dialogue relationship adds to the closeness of this relationship.

By getting to know a student in a more personal way, a teacher will become a better teacher. It is impossible to teach to a classroom of unknowns. Once this knowledge has been ascertained and acted upon, the relationship between that teacher and her students will be much stronger and more reliable.

From all that has been described throughout this chapter, it is clear that there are many characteristics which help to make a teacher a "good teacher." It is also clear that many of these characteristics relate directly to the kind of relationship a teacher might develop with his or her students. The impact of this relationship has been proven to have a great effect on the student, as well as potentially changing the life of the teacher.

If a teacher is able to succeed in all of the following areas, as described above, it seems there will be a direct improvement in the relationship between that

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36 Ibid., p. 87.

37 Jacobson, *Methods for Teaching*, p. 193.

teacher and his or her students. Be it the kind of instruction a teacher chooses to use in her classroom, the allowing and fostering for dialogue and interchange between teachers and students, the encouragement and fulfillment of mentoring relationships, the use of modeling as a teacher before her students or the gift of giving students individualized attention and thereby getting to know each student as an individual, with his or her own unique learning style, there are many goals which a teacher potentially needs to fulfill.

Though the real world of teaching includes many situations not listed above, it seems obvious that one might create in one's mind the ideal teacher in the ideal world.

10. *The Ideal World: Schools and Camps*

Given the information provided in the previous chapter, this notion of an "ideal teacher" may seem very far removed from the situation of teachers and teaching today. However, there are many teachers who will strive toward this level of "perfection," and a large number of these well-trained and well-established teachers will come very close to this ideal model.

From this ideal model of a teacher in the secular world, one might be interested in applying this model from the secular world to the world of Jewish learning. One might even be interested in using the information known by education experts and education philosophers to enhance the situation within the Jewish school setting. Specifically, one might desire to take these educational components from the secular world, which clearly impact the relationship between teachers and students, and apply these findings to the relationship between teachers and students in the Jewish school setting.

A vast amount of information related to teachers and students has been presented in all previous sections of this thesis. Though this next section is my personal vision of the ideal situation for some Jewish learning settings, with specific foci on the relationships between teachers and students (though the term student will be defined very loosely in some cases), I did create these models with a great amount of thought and insight. I utilized all of the information gathered in the previous sections of this thesis. By studying the development of the relationship between teacher and student throughout the history of the Jewish people, by means of the various yeshivah models, I was able to understand better

the true basis of this relationship. Furthermore, by interviewing a variety of individuals who were formerly yeshivah students in their own right, I was able to be exposed to a world in which I was not raised, nor could I ever truly be exposed to it as a woman.

This vast amount of factual and personal information will contribute to my interpretation of the following Jewish educational systems. However, one cannot ignore the fact that I myself have had many experiences which are relevant to this section of the thesis, as well as a fair amount of training in this area. There is no question that my personal experiences and personal biases will become apparent, and hopefully benefit, this section of this thesis.

Finally, let me explain how I will elaborate on my vision of these ideal settings. I have chosen four school and camp environments in which I perceive there to exist a relationship between teachers and students: in a supplemental religious school, in a Jewish day school, in a Jewish camp environment and in a rabbinic seminary. Though each of these topics can potentially be very large, I will narrow each topic down and describe each area as I understand it to exist in the present day, how it might potentially exist in the future, and the specific relationship between teachers and students within each of these models.

Furthermore, in order to limit the scope of these situations, and to allow myself to be more specific, I will be examining each of these areas of interest from a Reform Jewish perspective. I believe strongly that Reform Judaism can and should learn from the yeshivah model of the past and present in creating and developing our Reform Jewish institutions of the future. Whether one is examining the relationship between a professor and her student, a camp counselor and his camper, or a Sunday school teacher and her student, it should be obvious that there is much to be learned by examining similar relationships throughout the

history of the Jewish people, by looking at the various *yeshivot* which have existed from the Biblical Period until today.

As Reform Jews, we should not omit nor forget that which our ancestors struggled to achieve. We should not close our eyes to the knowledge that can be gained from someone else's discoveries. We should embrace our history so that we can make our future even brighter. Perhaps by doing so we will someday be able to turn these ideal situations into realities. We now must turn these visions into realities, as the famous Rabbi Hillel said: "if not now, then when?"[1]

The future of Jewish education and the growth of the relationship between teachers depends on our visions and our implementation of these visions into actions.

SUPPLEMENTAL RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

Supplemental religious schools have become a part of every Reform congregation across the United States. For the overwhelming majority of Reform Jews in the twentieth century, it is the only way by which their Jewish children learn about Judaism. It has gone through many phases and trends, and an entire study could actually be conducted on this topic alone.

There is no question that supplemental schools are different in every congregation across the country. They depend on the personality of the congregation, the population of the community, the skills of the educator, the visions of the rabbis, the capabilities of the teachers and the ultimate desires of the students. They also rely upon the ultimate vision of those who are leading the congregation, in particular those leading the education departments within the congregations.

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[1] *Pirke Avot* 1:14.

Most congregations facilitate the running of both a Sunday School, which meets on Sunday mornings, and a Hebrew School, which typically meets after a child's secular school during the week. The common link between all secondary schools is that the students who are attending the school are sent to a "regular school" during the days, and the supplemental school is seen as just that: supplemental to the secular education the student is otherwise receiving. Perhaps the thoughts below can help one to better understand the issues and concerns relevant in secondary schools as the twenty-first century quickly approaches.

Current Situation

The supplemental school is perhaps the most problematic aspect of Reform Jewish learning as the twentieth century comes to a close. Though the skills of the educators have improved over the past fifty years, there are many more complications which contribute to the present situation of supplemental education. It is a problem which must be solved quickly, so that we do not lose entire generations of Jews who are "Jewishly illiterate."

Commitment. First and foremost, there seems to be a general lack of commitment on behalf of both parents and students. There are so many other interests which transfer a child's potential interest in the synagogue to activities outside of the synagogue and usually distant from Judaism. Many parents feel torn when their child, for example, wants to attend a soccer game instead of Hebrew school. Perhaps even more importantly, many parents are willing to enroll their students in these supplemental schools, but there is no sense of commitment or seriousness connected to this student's enrollment.

When I was the director of a Reform community supplemental school for high school students, we were required to close the school, or reschedule classes,

on Halloween, Martin Luther King weekend, President's Day weekend, Mother's Day and Super Bowl Sunday. Because this was the desire of the Board of Directors (comprised of many parents and a few educators and rabbis), as well as the wish of the vast majority of the parents within the community, we often were only able to schedule twenty-four sessions in the entire year, if we were lucky. Clearly the commitment was lacking on behalf of both parents and students.

Knowledge. Yet another problem in the current situation within supplemental schools, perhaps as a direct result of the previously mentioned lack of commitment, is the lack of general knowledge. Where as once Jews were highly educated in their religion, that is simply no longer the situation. Most adult Jews can barely tell you the holidays which occur in the Jewish year, or the names of the Jewish life cycle events, let alone any customs and rules related to each of these observances. Certainly, the level of literacy in the areas of Jewish history, Jewish text, Jewish thought and Jewish ritual is even lower than that of Jewish holidays and life cycle events. In general, more American Jews have become a rather "Jewishly illiterate" population.

That is not to say that every Reform Jew is ignorant. There does seem to be a movement of some Reform Jews toward education and Jewish literacy. Many congregations are offering more adult education classes and workshops than they have for the past century. Family education is also growing within many congregations. However, the supplemental school is simply not performing its task of educating and exciting the children within the Reform movement.

Continuing Education. Notice that Jewish education is not just a process of "teaching Torah;" it must also a way to excite and capture Jewish students so that they want to continue their Jewish education. This is simply not the case at

this time in our history. This lack of continuing education is obvious if one were to examine the great numbers of students who do not continue their Jewish education after becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and certainly the numbers after Confirmation diminish greatly.

Once these students reach college, it is rare to find them connected to their Judaism in any way other than a superficial one, and they typically do not return to a synagogue setting until they have children of their own and are ready to enroll their children in religious school.

Relationship Between Teacher and Student. The relationship between teachers and students in the supplemental school is typically not one which strengthens a child's connection to Judaism or Jewish learning. On occasion, a child might connect in an unusual manner with one of his or her teachers in Sunday School or Hebrew School. However, the trend is more often that the child comes to the supplemental school for a few short hours every week, and when that child leaves the building, no thought is given to the student by the teacher nor visa versa. Often times, these teachers are doing the best that they are capable of achieving. However, many of them are simply not competent enough to be teachers in supplemental schools, nor is the setting right for a true relationship to develop between this teacher and his or her students.

This is not to say that a teacher-student relationship never exists within the supplemental setting. I recall vividly a relationship I fostered with my fourth grade Sunday School teacher the congregation in which I was raised. We had just changed congregations, and I was in a class with highly unmotivated students, none of whom I knew from regular school. My teacher not only recognized my interest in Judaism, she took the time and had the desire to develop a relationship with me throughout the entire year. I even recall that when the year was over, she

gave me a book that I still possess today. This teacher was one with whom I still maintain a relationship today, and she may actually have helped encourage me to become a rabbi. It was not the case that she spent hours of extra time with me, or favored me over the other student in my class. Rather, this teacher enabled me to perform that which is discussed in Pirke Avot: *aseh l'cha rav, u'k'neh l'cha chaver*, find yourself a teacher, get yourself a friend.[2] It simply took a desire to do so on her behalf.

Clearly there do exist examples of relationships between teachers and students in the current model of the supplemental school. There also exist good and productive methods of learning to discover within this model. However, there is much improvement necessary to bring us to a higher level of learning, a level which allows each student to partake in *talmud torah*.

Ideal Situation

Creating an ideal situation within our supplemental schools as we know them today seems virtually impossible. It is challenging to see beyond our limitations and current situation within these supplemental religious schools. However, if one is unable to have a vision for a better system of education, then one will never be able to move beyond the world of today to the world of tomorrow. Though it may be challenging, try to erase from your mind the supplemental school as you know it today, so that you can appreciate one vision of a supplemental school in the future.

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2 *Pirke Avot* 1:4.

School Structure. Let us begin with the basics. Imagine a school which is based on the notion of parental commitment. These parents are dedicated to helping to educate their children and develop their children's Jewish identities. Parents are willing to maintain the importance of Jewish learning for their children, and therefore the commitment on behalf of the students is much greater. Of course, the school has helped to increase this commitment.

Students are allowed to choose which days of the week they would prefer to attend religious school: two days during the week, for example Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays. They would also attend school on Sundays, either in an earlier shift or a later one. Hopefully the flexibility with the timing would allow for less scheduling conflicts with other activities within the greater community. Furthermore, by creating a three day-a-week religious school program instead of a two day-a-week program, which is currently the situation in the vast majority of Reform congregations, the amount of learning which could potentially occur would be much greater.

The school would not simply be functioning on behalf of the children of the congregation. There would be a sense of family learning and adult learning as well, for Judaism should not be viewed as a pediatric religion. Adults would continue to study for the rest of their lives, either in Torah study or history classes, spirituality groups or Israel discussions. The importance of continuing education for parents and all adults would be strongly stressed and encouraged.

Teachers. Next, imagine a community which has actually produced individuals who have substantial knowledge of Judaism and excitement toward Jewish life. These individuals who would become the teachers of the next generation. Communities would not need to rely on outsiders to fulfill the role of

teacher, they would be able to produce teachers from within their own communities.

Though it may be understood that for the first generation within this ideal model, teachers would need to be brought from other institutions, it is not necessarily true. If a community is truly committed to recreating their school environment, they would start by training a number of potential teachers one or two years prior to the beginning of this model, so that those individuals could then become the teachers within the school.

These teachers would be special. They would have good Judaic knowledge, as well as well-developed teaching skills. It is important to note, however, that these skills could be learned within the context of the synagogue itself. They would need to be caring individuals who are simply interested in the well being of their students, as Jews and as human beings. They would desire to build relationships with their students that would last for a life time, rather than creating limited relationships which only exists for the sixty classroom hours which most teachers now spend with their students, if they are lucky.

These teachers would always remain students themselves, participating in adult education programs and continuing teacher workshops and conferences. They would also remain with the same group of students, three times a week, for an entire year. Each year the students would change teachers, but the teachers would remain within the same grade for a longer period of time. Teachers would be people who desire to stay in these positions for more than just one year. They would also desire to continue these relationships with their students beyond both the walls of the classroom and the length of the year.

One might assume that this teacher would need to receive a decent salary, but in an ideal world, individuals would desire to teach simply because they believe in the Jewish practice of *talmud torah*. Clearly, those who would be in

need of a larger salary would be able to receive such compensation, if that would enable them to remain in the Jewish teaching world. However, there would be enough excitement around Judaism and teaching that many would be interested in fulfilling such a *mitzvah*, simply for the sake of fulfilling the *mitzvah*.

Course of Study. Once the teachers have been established within the schools, it is important that the level of Jewish learning be at the highest level possible. In the younger grades, a child would be exposed to topics of Jewish holidays, life cycle events, and Israel, while always maintaining a focus on Torah, prayer and Hebrew. They would partake in many activities and programs related to these topics, and these programs would be facilitated in a very creative interactive way.

When a younger child would enter the classroom, it would simply be exciting. Not only would the teacher be able to create energy toward Judaism and Jewish learning, but the atmosphere of the room itself would do the same. There would never be an empty wall or a sign left without a Hebrew word, and the *aleph-bet* and the names of the books of the Torah would be in every classroom. There would be Jewish books throughout the room, with Jewish symbols and Jewish objects on every shelf.

There would also be programs for parents of these younger children, directly related to the topics being taught in their child's classroom. They would take place during school hours, so that it would be most convenient for the parents. These programs would occur monthly, so that parents could continue the job of educating their children once they would leave the school and return home. Also, these parents, in this ideal world, would be products of this environment, so that they would be "Jewishly literate" as well. They would be educated not only

as parents but also as Jewish adults looking to further their own Jewish knowledge and understanding.

Older students would need to study at a more advanced level. Those students in the upper elementary grades would cover such topics as Jewish history and liturgy, while always continuing their pursuit of Torah, prayer and Hebrew. They might even begin to study some *midrash* stories at a basic level. Students at the junior high school age would need to advance themselves by pursuing the study of Holocaust and Israel, at a higher level than it was studied before, and they would certainly continue their studies of Torah prayer and Hebrew. Though these students would become Bar or Bat Mitzvah during this stage of their education, the process and study for becoming a bar or bat mitzvah would be completely separate from their supplemental religious school studies. Furthermore, no students would complete their studies at Bar or Bat Mitzvah age. They would continue until they would graduate from high school and move away to attend college.

The situation for these older students within the classroom would be rather different than the program for the younger students. For these students, the type of learning would change. They would attend classes as well, with one teacher throughout the year, but once a week, perhaps on Sundays, these students would study in a *beit midrash* program. They would enter a large room, perhaps one room for every grade, depending on the size of the school. In that room would be books and resources, with several teachers always present in each *beit midrash*. Students would be assigned a task, perhaps a project or an assignment, related to the topic they would be studying that week. They would work in *chevrutot*, in small groups, and the teachers would be available to help them when they fell upon questions or difficulties within the material.

The atmosphere in the *beit midrash* would be one of high energy and excitement. This would not be the equivalent of a library. Students would be allowed to talk and argue, to discuss and debate, so that they would share their ideas with the *chevruta* members. Each *chevruta* would be located at a table, and students would work with the same *chevruta* each week; they might change *chevrutot* at the end of each semester. Teachers would be aware of special learning needs among their students, and they would assign the *chevrutot* accordingly. Furthermore, project assignments might be adjusted to meet the needs of the individual students. While high levels of learning take place in the *beit midrash*, so would fun and activity.

High School Students. Upon entering high school, the program would change for these students. They would still continue to attend Sunday mornings sessions, but they would do so as *ozrim*, as helpers assigned to the younger classes. However, one other time during the week, perhaps on Sunday evenings, these high school students would continue their own studies in a separate program. They might even join with other Reform congregations within the greater Jewish community. They would cover topics including comparative religion, Jewish issues in the modern world and the application of Torah and Talmud to their Reform Jewish lives.

They would study with the same teacher for one semester, but every third week they would also study in the *beit midrash* setting. They too would have projects appropriate for their various levels of learning and their knowledge of Judaism. Upon completion of high school, or upon return from college, many of these students would return to be teachers within a Reform supplemental school.

Clearly, this ideal world would enable and influence individuals to continue their Jewish education even after they have completed high school. Their knowledge base would certainly be strong, and their commitment to Jewish learning and living a Jewish life would be great. They would maintain relationships with their teachers beyond the hours they would spend with them in the classroom, and they would always consider those individuals to be available to them for questions and discussions throughout their lives. Though their level of knowledge could not possibly compare to a student in a Jewish day school or a yeshivah setting, it would be much greater than the level of knowledge which exists among many individuals who are products of supplemental Jewish education today.

DAY SCHOOLS

Jewish day schools are perhaps the fastest growing trend within the Reform movement. In the past, Reform families who desired to send their children to a Jewish day school would need to rely upon the Conservative or community day school in their given community. However, today there are over twenty Reform Jewish day schools spread throughout North America.

Jewish day school learning exists within a completely different learning environment than that of the supplemental religious school. Though each day school is very different, depending on the teachers, the principal and the community, there are some common links among all day schools.

Unlike the Jewish supplemental school, where many of the problems stem from the lack of the commitment on behalf of the parents, and certainly on behalf of the students, most day school parents are committed to the importance of Jewish education. Typically, one of the major problems among day schools is enrollment. Parents need to choose to send their child to a day school. They need

to weigh the positives and the negatives, so that a child can benefit from the best place for that individual. Perhaps in the ideal day school setting, which will be explained shortly, the negatives will become non-existent.

Current Situation

The Jewish day school creates a very different system of learning than the one previously described.[3] As stated above, parents have made a very large commitment, financially and religiously, by sending their child to a Jewish day school. Some of them came to this decision without any difficulties. Other parents weighed this decision for a very long time.

One of the simple facts of day school education is that parents send their children to day schools for a variety of reasons. Some parents are very committed to the values being taught in the school. Others are looking for a private school because they are not satisfied with the local public schools, and the Jewish day school simply solves that problem. Still others think that they will have more control over their child's education by sending their child to a day school. Yet another category of students in the day schools is that of immigrants, often Russians and sometimes Israelis, who are often given a decreased tuition at the day school, and they therefore decide it is a good place to send their children to school. As one might imagine, it is very challenging to meet all of these different needs and desires of the parent community. It is also important to remember that the students have their own needs, needs which are not always the same as their parents' needs.

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[3] Because there are still a limited number of Reform day schools, I will model the current situation of day schools after both Reform day schools and other community day schools.

Furthermore, a Jewish day school has one major issue which will always exist. Students are expected to learn the same amount of material in their English studies, material which their public school peers master in twice the class time, in addition to the fact that they have an additional load of classes in their Judaic studies. Day schools are constantly struggling with this dilemma, searching for the best way to achieve both goals adequately.

Course of Study. Students in the day school spend half of their day in English studies and half of their day in Hebrew studies. There is typically a vice-principal responsible for the English studies who is different from the vice-principal responsible for the Hebrew studies. The division seems to be rather deliberate.

In many day schools, there is a general lack of an integrated curriculum in which students are able to combine their Judaic studies with their English studies. For example, when a second grader is learning the names of the books of the Torah in her Hebrew class, she does not study those names in her English class. Furthermore, if a fourth grader is learning to do problem solving in his mathematics class, the problems never seem to relate to that which is being learned in his Hebrew class. The two subjects are completely separate.

Teachers. There also exists a problem regarding the teachers in these day schools. First, most of the Hebrew teachers are Israelis. Some of them do have a background in education, but many of them do not. They are often hired because they have Judaic knowledge, or at least the language skills, though they might not be trained as teachers. Also, it is important to note that those Israelis who are trained in education were trained in Israel, where schooling and education is very different than here in the United States.

Furthermore, many of the English studies teachers are not Jewish in the day schools. Though this may not seem to be an immediate problem, it makes it almost impossible for the two halves of the day to mix with one another. These non-Jewish English studies teachers are typically incapable of relating that which is being taught in their classrooms to the Jewish world in any way, especially as it relates to the topics being studied in the Judaic studies classes.

Another problem related to teachers in the day schools is one of salary. It is rare that a day school will be able to pay comparable salaries to those within the public school settings. This causes many "good and experienced teachers" to stay far away from day school teaching. Though teachers certainly did not choose their profession because of the salary level, many of these teachers do rely upon their salary to completely support them, and oftentimes this is simply impossible with a day school salary.

Relationship Between Teacher and Student. The relationship between teachers and students in the day school model is mixed. Some teachers, in my experience more often the primary teachers than the secondary teachers, do create and develop relationships with their students. Because many of these primary teachers do stay in the school system for a longer period of time than the secondary teachers, their students come to understand that this relationship could potentially last a lifetime.

Other teachers, more often those in the upper grades, are simply there to teach the given material during the given amount of time, and when the class ends, so does their relationship with their students. These teachers are not interested in mentoring their students, nor are they interested in modeling certain behaviors or in creating a dialogue between themselves and their students. They are simply interested in teaching the material assigned to the particular class.

It has been my experience that, unfortunately, more teachers in the day school setting fall into the latter rather than the former category. In the community day school in which I taught for one year, very few teachers were interested in talking with students at the end of the day, nor did they pursue any kind of a relationship with these students outside of the classroom.

However, there was one teacher in this particular school who was truly an example for all teachers in day school environments. He spent as much time as he possibly could with these students. He prayed with them, he taught them, and he even took them on social outings and educational trips to other cities. They loved to do work in his class because they loved him. These students knew they could go to this teacher with any kind of a problem, and this teacher was always available for his students. Because of his relationship with his students, this teacher was able to create a level of excitement toward Jewish learning that I have rarely seen, if ever, in all my years of experience in Jewish education. He should give us hope that it is possible to achieve this level of *talmud torah*.

The Individual Learner. Though the above teacher may be an exception to the rule, most teachers within the day school setting have great difficulty in working with students as individual learners. As was established in the previous chapter, all students have individual needs related to their learning style. It is important that a teacher and a school work to help students achieve within the context of their individual learning style.

Within many day schools, teachers are unable to adequately work with students as individuals. Whether it is students who are above their "grade level" or students who are struggling, students who are visual learners or students who can only learn in a written manner, these students need to be seen as individual

learners. There is no question that when their individual needs are met, their learning levels will improve.

In the day schools, there is not enough team work. Teachers working with the same students in Judaic studies and English studies do not typically meet with one another to discuss the needs of the students they share in common. Because teachers only spend time with a given student for half a day instead of a whole day, this notion of sharing information is even more necessary than in a public school, where the teacher is with the student all day long. This seems to be especially true in the younger grades.

Social Issues. There are many interesting social issues which exist within the world of Jewish day schools. First, many individuals are concerned that these children are only being exposed to Jewish children. They are very limited in the realm of the world, and for those who choose to attend day school through the eighth or even the twelfth grade, it can be a very hard adjustment period when they do eventually enter into the secular world.

Furthermore, the day school classes are often very small. Students might be with the same fifteen or twenty children from kindergarten through sixth or eighth grade. They have little opportunities to meet new children, to make new friends, or even to enjoy new perspectives. They live in a very limited and very Jewish world.

Greater Jewish Community. Many students who attend Jewish day schools have a difficult time participating in a local congregational setting. They feel very lost, for they are not in the same category as their peers who do not attend the day school, and yet the supplemental school does not provide a program for these day school students.

Imagine, for example, that a child who attends day school through the sixth grade decides that she wants to become a Bat Mitzvah, and she wants to hold the service at a local congregation. She might be required to attend Hebrew school, or atleast Sunday school, where she knows far more than any of her peers, and typically more than her teachers. She is easily frustrated and bored, and she quickly loses her excitement toward Jewish learning.

Clearly the situation within the Jewish day schools is unique. Though there are many positive aspects to day school learning, and there are certainly many good teachers who develop wonderful relationships with their students, there are also numerous examples of situations which are frustrating and unfulfilling for these students. The Day School Movement is a movement still developing, particularly within the Reform Movement, and perhaps a vision of a Reform Jewish day school in its ideal form might help to move the process at a faster pace.

Ideal Situation

Because the Reform Jewish Day School Movement is only beginning to create a great amount of momentum, it is a wonderful time to envision an ideal vision of a Reform Jewish day school. Though there are so many different aspects to these day schools, because they incorporate both secular education as well as Jewish education, I will attempt to focus on the highlights which are crucial to the development of this ideal phase. Some of the holes will need to be completed by your own imagination, following the model which I have created.

School Structure. Because the day school is rather unique in its structure, there are many aspects to be included within this section. The ideal Reform day

school would be a place overflowing with love and excitement for Jewish learning and learning in general. Students would leave this school with a wonderful sense of Jewish identity, in addition to an excellent secular and Jewish education.

The school day would still be broken down into one half day of Judaic studies and one half day of English studies, but the students in the younger grades would not change rooms in the middle of the day. Instead, they would remain in one classroom the entire day, and the teacher would need to change rooms. This would allow for the integration of English studies and Judaic studies to occur more frequently and more informally.

In the older classes, not including high school, students would rotate from room to room, but English classes and Judaic classes would not be in completely separate areas. Instead, if Mrs. Goldstein is teaching seventh grade Hebrew and Mrs. White is teaching seventh grade science and math, they should be located in the same wing of the building, perhaps next door to one another. This would again help to integrate the lessons in English studies and Judaic studies.

Furthermore, all teachers, in both the primary grades and the secondary grades, would meet weekly with the appropriate people to discuss particular students and share lesson plans and goals. For example, the fifth grade Social Studies / Language teacher (assuming there was only one fifth grade), the fifth grade Science / Mathematics teacher and the *kitah hay*[4] Judaic studies teacher would all meet weekly in order to share their observations and concerns regarding the shared students in their classrooms, as well as the content of their lesson plans. That would enable the English studies teachers to incorporate some of what is

[4] *Kitah hay* refers to the fifth grade, implying the fifth grade Hebrew class. The word *kitah* simply means class, so that the phrase *kitah aleph* would mean first grade and so on.

being taught in the Hebrew class into her lessons, while the Hebrew teacher might incorporate some of the lessons in English studies into her classroom.

Course of Study. As was stated above, English studies and Judaic studies need to be integrated. However, beyond that issue, what should be the content of the curricula? The English studies curricula is parallel to all curricula taught within the given state. The state creates standards and rules which all schools, private or public, need to follow.

The Judaic studies program should be structured as follows. The children would begin to learn Hebrew in the first grade, so that they can read and write by the end of the first grade year. During that first year, they would be exposed to basic vocabulary words, in addition to the various holiday terms which occur throughout the year. They would also be taught to speak a limited amount of modern Hebrew. As they progress through second and third grade, these students will be introduced to Torah, reading basic stories from workbooks and readers. They would also continue their learning of modern Hebrew so they can enhance their reading, writing and speaking skills. By the time they reach the intermediate grades, students would be studying Torah in greater detail, and as they would approach the junior high school level, they would actually study texts from Tanach, Midrash and Talmud. The themes which would be taught in these classes would be similar to those taught in the supplemental school, though these issues would be studied in greater detail. Furthermore, all Judaic studies classes would be conducted in Hebrew, so that the student would hear the language from the time they begin their studies in the day school.

There are many exceptions to this situation which must be noted. If there are students who join the day school program after first grade, they would be in a smaller class for Judaic studies, so that they would be able to function in the

regular class within a short period of time. If there are Russian students, they would also be placed in this smaller class with other English speakers, never separating them from all of the Americans. If there are Israelis or children of Israelis within the school, they would need to be given some added work, though they would not be grouped as a sub-group within a class or the entire school.[5] If there are students who have special needs, those needs would be met by the classroom teachers and other specialists who might be necessary to further advance a given child's level of learning.

Furthermore, teachers would be fully aware of a student's unique learning style. These teachers would recognize the fact that all students are individual learners who are in need of individualized programs. Though it is understandable that no teacher could customize his or her classroom to twenty different children, teachers would always be aware of more extreme situations, and they would teach accordingly. They would vary their teaching styles as well, so that they would better understand which children learn better from which styles.[6]

All classes, both in the English studies and in the Judaic studies, would be taught in experiential, innovative ways. Frontal lectures would be used only when completely necessary, and it would always be complemented by activities and programs. Often times English studies and Judaic studies teachers would assign projects which would incorporate some of the tasks being learned within both the Hebrew and the English settings. On Friday mornings, students would have an opportunity to work on these projects in a *beit midrash* program. They would go to a large room, perhaps by grade, and they would work in smaller groups, *chevrutot*, in order to complete these projects. As was true in the supplemental

[5] By separating the Russians and/or the Israelis, it would not help to create a sense of one community within the school setting.

[6] This is especially important in the teaching of a foreign language.

school model, there would always be several teachers available for these students within each room, as well as a variety of resources. Also, as was stated above, this *beit midrash* would not be meant to act as a library; rather, students would discuss and share as much as is necessary.

Though the model for high school students would be similar, they would be working at a more advanced level. The English classes would be very similar to a typical secular high school. However, there would be a strong focus on the application of traditional texts to the life of a modern Reform Jew within the Judaic classes. These students might even study passages of Talmud and then look at the appropriate Reform responsa. They would certainly understand the theory of Higher Criticism, and they would come to learn how to adapt that which is written in Tanach to life in the twentieth century.

One topic which would certainly be included within the structure of the school would be *t'fillot*, the issue of prayer. Students would be exposed to a variety of prayer situations from the time they are in first grade. They would learn the liturgy used by the Reform movement, but they would also be exposed to creative services and creative prayers. Students would be encouraged to lead *t'fillot* with some regularity, and at times they might participate in smaller services as a class or even as a small group. Students would learn the language of prayer, the objects of prayer, and they would begin to understand the notion of spirituality. As they would grow older, students would learn to read and chant Torah and Haftara, so that becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah would not be a major chore. The students would learn to question and ponder the unquestionable contradictions between that which they are learning in their classes and that which the prayers are saying to their hearts. They might even find a way in which to balance the two seemingly opposite extremes. The improvement of this prayer

component would perhaps be one of the most meaningful aspects to the school day.

Teachers. First and foremost, these teachers would be trained both as teachers and in their respective areas of study. This is to say that a Judaic studies teacher who is teaching eighth grade Jewish history must hold a degree in both education and at least a concentration in Jewish history. No person would be hired to work in this ideal school if they do not have the proper background.

Furthermore, these teachers would be practicing Reform Jews. It is important that they would be Jewish because we want our teachers to be role models for our children, and within the day school setting, we want these role models to maintain Jewish ideals and beliefs. These teachers would also be Reform, with a commitment to and belief in the Reform Movement: its ideologies, its history and its ways of interpreting Torah.

If all of these aspects are present within the teachers in this school, then these teachers will actually be like the teachers in the *yeshivot.* Students might be invited to a teacher's home for shabbat once a year. Holiday celebrations might take place at a classmate's home and the teachers would become students in that child's home. Teachers would both lead and participate in the *t'fillot,* not stand on the sides and monitor behavior.

These teachers would be excited about teaching, about learning and about Judaism, as well as the subject matter which they would be teaching. Their enthusiasm and energy would be contagious, and their students would feel and act in a similar manner. These teachers would be creative and innovative, never feeling stifled by the community in which they work. They would become true *rabbeim,* true teachers of Torah, in the most general sense.

Family Issues. As a result of this incredible amount of Jewish knowledge gained by these students, it would be important to recognize the need for continuing parent education. There would be a variety of programs offered in this area. First of all, there would be *shiurim* taught for parents, divided by their child's grade, at least once a month, so that parents could understand that which their children would be learning in their Judaic studies classes. Second, there will also be beginning level Hebrew classes available each fall, so that any parent who was not fortunate enough to have learned Hebrew as a child, could learn it along with their own children. Third, there would be holiday workshops as each holiday approaches, so that parents would be able to celebrate the Jewish holidays, know the customs and the songs, the activities and the stories, just as their children have learned in schools.

Finally, there would be several family learning days throughout the year, on a variety of topics, so that families would learn to work together as families and as units. Teachers and principals would be involved in these family days, as well as representatives from the different classrooms. These days might deal with current issues or matters pertinent to Reform Jews. Certainly all of these ways a family could continue their education would help to make Judaism a more prevalent part of every child's life.

Social Issues and the Greater Community. Because one of the controversial issues related to Jewish day schools, and certainly to Reform Jewish day schools, is that of separation from the community, this school would attempt to deal with this issue. In Pirke Avot, Rabbi Hillel teaches that "you should not separate yourself from the community...."[7] In order to obey his teaching, it would be crucial that a day school student interact within the greater community.

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7 *Pirke Avot* 2:4b.

Therefore, this school would plan programs, both educational and social, with other schools, both private and public. They would teach about other religions; perhaps they would even partake in discussions with children of other religions, sharing beliefs and practices. This would help both parties to realize both their differences and their similarities.

Furthermore, this school would help students to connect with the greater community, both Jewish and non-Jewish. For example, there would be programs to integrate these students into their own Reform congregational settings, and there might even be classes available through the school which would be in cooperation with the various Reform congregations. The purpose of day school education is not to separate children from their community, but rather to bring them closer to their heritage and their customs. This school would be very aware of that goal, and it would do whatever necessary to see that it would remain so.

It seems that the ideal world within a Reform Jewish day school is not so far from where we are today. For a new movement, it has already made much progress. However, it is important to recognize the downfalls of general day school education, and one must avoid them at all costs. By following the model described above, a child would become a well-educated, Jewishly connected young man or woman by the time he or she would leave the day school to pursue different avenues, at whatever age that might be. Day schools are perhaps the key to educating the leadership of the next generation; we must not dismiss the impact they could potentially have on our entire Jewish community. They will most definitely produce the next generations of Jewish leaders.

CAMPS

Reform Jewish camps have become quite a phenomenon within the second half of the twentieth century. Many young individuals who are now active within the Reform Movement, especially among those now attending rabbinical school, are found to be "products" of one of the Union of American Hebrew Congregation's[8] nine camps dispersed throughout the United States.

Though each of these camps functions quite differently from one another, depending on the director of the camp, the region in which it resides, the staff in any given summer and the rabbinic involvement within the camp, there do seem to be some basic similarities from among all the Reform Movement's camps. The ultimate goal of these camps is to provide the campers who attend with an educational, social and Jewish summer experience. Each of the camps defines this goal through different means and different programs and activities.

Having spent seventeen summers of my life in one UAHC camp, I have a very detailed understanding of the workings and the beliefs held by one camp and one camp director. Much of what will be shared in the following section relies heavily upon this experience.

Current Situation

Reform Jewish camp is perhaps the model within Jewish education and learning today that is currently closest to the ideal model; the distance needed to travel between the current model and the ideal one is not very far. As was stated above, many of the young Reform Jews who are active within the Reform

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8 The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) is the national lay body within the Reform Movement. It functions in close proximity with the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the other two branches of the Reform Movement.

Movement, in a variety of ways, have become the people they are because of their experiences within one of these Reform Jewish camps; this statistic should speak for itself. Much of what is taking place within the camp setting today is exciting, new and contagious to others throughout the Reform Movement.

Camp Structure. The Reform camp with which I am connected was one of the larger camps within the Reform Movement. There exist eight different camper units,[9] which enable approximately one thousand Jewish youth to pass through the doors of this camp each and every summer. The units, called *eidot*, run for different lengths of time, depending on the age of the campers, or *chanichim*. There are over one hundred and fifty staff members, counselors (*madrichim*), unit heads (*roshei eidot*) and specialists (*moomchim*). There are also approximately fifty faculty, including rabbis, educators and cantors, who participate in the camp at some point throughout the summer.

Though each *eidah* maintains its own focus and its own schedule, every *eidah* will typically include similar activities throughout the day. Each *chanich*, or camper, will participate in *t'fillot* twice daily, Hebrew lessons, a group educational *shiur*, or lesson, plus all of the fun aspects of camp including swimming, sports, activities, called *chugim*, and much more. However, there is a different focus within each *eidah*. One of the *eidot* focuses on social action, one focuses on the arts, one focuses on sports, one on Hebrew learning, and one *eidah* even focuses on the outdoors and camping. They all are located within their own areas in the camp, though they come together for shabbat and other all-camp programs.

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9 Included in this list of camper units is a program to send high school teenagers to Israel and a Jewish outward bound program.

Shabbat is a entity unto its own in the Reform camp world. Typically, *chanichim* will begin to prepare for shabbat in the late afternoon on Fridays. They will clean-up their own unit's areas, as well as some of the shared spaces throughout the camp. Then the *chanichim* have an opportunity to shower and change clothes, for everyone dresses a little bit nicer on shabbat. There is much singing and Israeli dancing, and the various *eidot* all come to eat in the dining room, or *chadar ochel*, though there is not enough room for everyone to eat together. Following dinner and Friday night *t'fillot*, the entire camp enters one building for an all-camp *shirah*, or song session. A story is usually told by the camp director, and this is perhaps the favorite time of the week for much of the camp community.

On Saturdays, shabbat is celebrated in a way different from that of the rest of the week. All *eidot* have their own *t'fillot* in the mornings, and then everyone comes together to eat lunch under the trees surrounding the *chadar ochel*. The afternoon is very loose programmatically, and the lake is always open for those who would like to swim. There are several different sports games taking place, including a staff basketball game and a big soccer game. The day ends with the *havdalah* ceremony, the ceremony which separates shabbat from the rest of the week.

The prayer experience in this particular camp is often quite moving. In the morning *t'fillot*, the faculty lead the service. In the evenings, the *chanichim* lead the services, either by cabin or tent group or in another group structure. They work with the faculty the few days preceding the service in order to plan the *t'fillot*. Though some of the *t'fillot* are rather generic and uncreative, others are quite innovative and exciting. However, the liturgy itself is not actually studied or questioned in most of the various *t'fillot*.

There is most definitely a hierarchical structure within this particular camp. There is one director, a few assistant directors, *roshei eidot, madrichim* and *chanichim*. Somewhere outside of this ladder of authority are the faculty and the *moomchim*. Each day, there is a staff meeting, typically in the evenings after the *chanichim* have gone to bed, within each *eidah*. Also once a day there will be a "senior staff meeting", comprised of all the *roshei eidot*, the assistant directors and the director. This is their most efficient way to disseminate necessary information throughout the entire camp.

Though there are special programs throughout the summer for the entire camp or a part of the camp, including activities for the Fourth of July and Tisha B'Av, most of what occurs within the camp is during the regular day in each separate *eidah*. There are also trips that the different *eidot* might plan, from a day at a water park to a three-day canoe trip or rock climbing trip. There are also creative "educational days", including *Yom Yisrael* (Israel Day), Maccabia (color wars), and even special activities like a Sculpture Marathon. However, all of these programs and trips are "extras" in the mind of the camp.

Course of Study. The educational parts of a Reform Jewish camp certainly differ depending on the given camp. In this particular camp environment, each *eidah* has a theme which they study during the *limudim* sessions. Typically a unit's theme was determined by a committee of faculty during the course of the previous year, and there was usually a cycle which each *eidah* would follow so that no child would study the same theme twice. The themes typically studied within the camp environment included shabbat, social action, *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), prophets, the American Jewish Experience, Israel, Chasidism, and many more.

The faculty prepare general materials before the summer, and the staff are given these materials upon arrival to the camp at the beginning of the summer. The staff are then divided into small groups in which they plan more of the details of these *limudim*. Some of the faculty create programming options, but others do not. Usually the smaller groups of staff plan the program one or two days prior to its implementation, and they share the ideas of the program during the staff meeting the evening before the program is to occur.

It is rare that the educational topics are discussed or shared beyond the hour block of time set aside specifically for the *limud* session.

Staff and Faculty. Many people might say that the staff and faculty of a Reform Jewish camp truly determine the quality of the programming at the camp. Let us begin by examining the *madrichim* within the camp environment. Because there are many aspects to the *madrich's* role, they need to be multi-faceted. Some of the *madrichim* are able to teach Hebrew well, lead a *shiur* group, create a *chug*, an activity group, and simply be a good well-rounded counselors. However, many of the *madrichim* only exemplify some of these attributes, not all of them.

Many of the *madrichim* in this camp have grown up through the camp as *chanichim*, though there is a group of new staff members every summer. Most of them are college students, with a counselor-in-training program called *Machon* for those individuals entering their first year in college. Approximately ninety-five percent of the *madrichim* are Reform Jews by practice and upbringing, and many of them are active in their Reform communities on their college campuses. They were typically active in NFTY, the North American Federation of Temple Youth, (the Reform Movement's national youth group) as well. Some of these *madrichim* will leave the camp setting to pursue careers as Jewish professionals, while others will never be involved in Judaism after they leave the gate of the camp.

The *roshei eidot* are in a slightly different category in this particular camp. First, they must be graduates of college, so that they are no younger than twenty-one years old. Second, they must be products of this camp environment. This camp director is not interested in bringing a new person to the camp in the role of *rosh eidah*. He believes that those who have "come through the ranks" are more qualified and competent to fulfill the duties of the *rosh eidah* than those who are new to the camp community. Many of the *roshei eidot* are studying to be rabbis or Jewish educators, though some simply hold regular jobs which allow them to take the summers off and work at a camp. Some of them have decent Judaic knowledge, while others have more practical camp knowledge. Many *roshei eidot* will remain a *rosh eidah* for more than one summer, perhaps as long as four or five years.

The *moomchim* are truly in a category of their own. They are a variety of specialists who bring their unique skills and knowledge to the camp environment, though they are often inexperienced in the realm of children. Included in this group are the drama specialist and the dance teacher, the waterfront director and the Alpine Tower coordinator, the cook and the camp driver, the stable staff and the maintenance man. Though most of these people are Jewish, there are some occasions where it is virtually impossible for the camp to find a Jewish staff person to fill these jobs, and therefore a stable staff or a camp driver the cook or the maintenance man, might not be Jewish. However, typically what these individuals bring to the camp is their expertise in a very specific area. Throughout the past ten years, the level of expertise among these individuals has grown. They have also become a larger part of the camp program.

The faculty of the camp are an entirely different body of people. These are the rabbis, cantors and educators from within the camp's congregational community, who volunteer to be at the camp for a period of two or three weeks.

They are responsible for helping with the Hebrew program, facilitating the *limudim* sessions, or the educational learning sessions, in addition to leading the morning *t'fillot* and helping the *chanichim* to lead the evening *t'fillot*. The faculty are also understood to be general resources for any Jewish questions or issues which might arise, or any issues in general. For example, if a *chanich* learns that one of his grandparents has died, the faculty within the *eidah* would be the persons to sit with that child and comfort and console him or her. Many of the faculty return to this camp summer after summer.

Relationships Between Staff, Faculty and Campers. The relationships between staff, faculty and campers are very different from the relationships between teachers and students in a variety of ways. However, there are some parallels which can be drawn between these two models, and it is therefore worthwhile to include this type of relationship in a thesis dealing with the teacher-student relationship.

Let us begin by examining the relationship between staff and *chanichim*. In many situations, the staff, including *madrichim*, *roshei eidot* and *moomchim*, are simply people who enable the camp program to function. These individuals will do their job, but most often are not interested in creating life-long bonds with their *chanichim*. However, there are some individuals within the camp setting who make enormous impacts on the lives of their *chanichim*.

I can speak from personal experience in this realm. When I was a camper in the oldest camper unit, the Hebrew speaking program, I became friendly with my *rosh eidah*. She became one of my strongest role models, and I am certain that much of why I became a *madrichah* for five years and then a *rosh eidah* for another five years was because of her. Furthermore, when I was a staff member, and she had already completed her long tenure at the camp, I recall contemplating

what she would have done in some of the difficult and challenging situations which I encountered. She is someone with whom I still am in touch, and there is no question that she affected my life forever. She is a wonderful example of a staff member who really cared about the relationships she developed with her *chanichim*.

There also exist relationships between *roshei eidot* and *madrichim*. These relationships are somewhat different, but can potentially be as influential as those relationships between *madrichim* and *chanichim*. Because *roshei eidot* are usually people who themselves worked as *madrichim*, they have a unique perspective on the role of the *madrich*. Some of the *roshei eidot* become teachers to their *madrichim*, guiding them through their program and teaching them along the way. Other *roshei eidot* are simply administrators, who are capable of doing the job, but do not go beyond the realm of the tasks at hand. Clearly the type of relationship which develops depends both on the desires of the *rosh eidah* and the interests of the *madrich*.

In the camp setting, there also exist relationships between faculty and *roshei eidot*, *madrichim* and *chanichim*. Some faculty pursue these types of relationships, while others are only interested in working with the staff, and some are only interested in the one-on-one relationship with the *rosh eidah*. If the faculty member does pursue any or all of these relationships, they are typically responded to in a very receptive manner. However, it very much depends of the personality and desire of the faculty member.

Lastly, there is no question that there is a relationship between the director of the camp and the rest of the camp body. He is almost the equivalent to the *rosh yeshivah*. In this particular camp, the director seems to have a rather close relationship with some of the "higher ranked" individuals, but he is not as close to the *chanichim* or even most of the *madrichim*. Many of the *roshei eidot* are able

to develop relationships with the director, though some are certainly closer to him than others. He also maintains companionship with many of the faculty, though it is a relationship between colleagues more than anything else.

There are many potential relationships which can develop within the camp setting, some of which exist in a strong way, and others of which are still growing and being strengthened. Clearly much of this depends on the individuals involved in the given relationships.

One can now understand why much of what is taking place in Reform Jewish camps, especially at this particular camp in which I was raised, is both positive and influential. However, there are always ways to improve a program, and having spent so many long hours in a variety of different programs in my own camp, I have always dreamed of an ideal camp setting for a Reform Jewish camp in the United States.

Ideal Situation

The ideal camp setting would be one in which the highest levels of Jewish education and learning are combined with an atmosphere of Jewish living, while providing children and adults alike with an opportunity for relaxation and fun. It is a holistic experience, where no two parts can be separated from one another.

This camp does not simply function during the eight weeks of the summer programs: it is a year-round facility in which Jewish learning and activity can occur twelve months of the year. Furthermore, the learning which does take place during the summertime cannot end when the *chanichim* return to their families and their homes at the end of their session. Jewish camping must become a part of a child's process in becoming an adult Jew.

Camp Structure. The camp structure would remain, in many ways, as the above model was described. There would be a variety of camper units which would maintain different foci. Though each *eidah* would still function as an entity unto its own, there would be a greater focus on bringing the entire camp together. Much of the greatness of the camp would come from the fact that hundreds of young Jewish men and women, boys and girls, would be working within the context of one vast community.

Shabbat would remain a time to be different from that of the rest of the week. However, there would be *shiurim* about shabbat on shabbat, so that *madrichim* and *chanichim* alike could learn more about the role of shabbat and some customs and interpretations which are traditionally connected with shabbat. The *madrichim* and *chanichim* would work to create a Reform definition of shabbat, and not simply follow the schedule given to them by their *rosh eidah* and the director of the camp.

The prayer experience needs to be somewhat different from what it has been in the past, though the camp model for *t'fillot* is certainly much improved over most of the models in the congregation and day school settings. First, all individuals within the camp environment would not take any aspects of prayer for granted. They would study the liturgy, at their appropriate levels, discuss the implications of the liturgy on a Reform, modern Jew, and they would create liturgies which would speak to the individuals involved within the prayer service. They would learn some of the traditional customs related to prayer, though they would not be held to uphold customs simply because they are from the Jewish tradition. Prayer would not simply take place within the *beit k'nesset* (house of prayer), but it would also take place while walking through the woods, climbing the Alpine Tower, swimming in the lake or eating lunch in the dining hall. Prayer would occur when people are awakening in the morning as they thank God for

renewing their soul once again, or it would occur as they are going to sleep and they recall all that they experienced during that given day. Prayer and spirituality become a part of every individual's life within the camp setting, so much so that they would be comfortable in bringing this experience and practice to their homes and their everyday lives.

Course of Study. One of the ideals within this camp environment would be the creation of a completely new curricula for the educational components of the camp experience. Most importantly, Judaism and Jewish learning would go beyond the theme of study for a specific *eidah*, entering a new mode of thinking and teaching. Every aspect of the day would incorporate Judaism, Jewish values and Jewish practice.

The same would be true for the study of Hebrew. Hebrew words would be used for every place and item within the camp, as well as the common terms like *madrichim* and *chanichim*. Though there would still be Hebrew lessons each day for all *chanichim*, there would also exist Hebrew lessons for *madrichim* and others who might be interested. Modern Hebrew would quickly become a second language to all those within the camp environment.

In an ideal world, supplemental schools within the same community would be teaching similar topics to similar grades. This would allow a Reform Jewish camp to take these topics and extend and elaborate on them throughout the summer. For example, if all of the religious schools in the Chicago area are teaching social action their seventh graders, it would be most appropriate to teach this same topic from a different perspective and a different vantage point to the seventh graders within the camp setting. Because camp is a twenty-four hour a day experience, seven days a week, the level of understanding and application for

each topic taught during the year can go much farther. The cooperation of the supplemental schools with the camps in this process is crucial.

Furthermore, the *shiurim* which are being implemented during the time set aside for *limudim* would be planned in a very different manner. Staff members would receive information to read regarding their given topics several months before they would arrive to the camp for the summer. They would become educated on their specific topics. They would also have a one-day workshop during the staff orientation week, during which the faculty would teach, in interactive and creative ways, about the topic at hand. The staff would be given a great amount of ownership regarding these *limudim* sessions, while learning a great amount as well.

Finally, these educational topics would not be confined or restricted to the one hour *shiur* which would occur six times a week. Instead, this process would become a holistic process, as was described in the previous chapter. For example, if one unit's theme was *mitzvot*, they would not only study the various *mitzvot* during the time set aside for a *shiur*, but they would also incorporate *mitzvot* into situations within the cabin or tent, into relationships between peers, and even into actions which might occur during the course of the day directly related to the notion of *mitzvot*. The *limudim* would no longer be a separate part of a camp member's day.

Staff and Faculty. The staff and faculty within this ideal camp would be highly educated and highly motivated. They would be working or volunteering in a camp environment in order to have an effect on their "students." Though they would certainly be at the camp to learn and to enjoy in their own right, their first priority would always be the *chanichim*. They would be individuals who have

some knowledge of educational theory and practice, and they would be further taught during the staff orientation week.

These staff members would also be interested in creating and developing their own Jewish lives. They would desire to celebrate Judaism: academically, spiritually and religiously, and they would be interested in disseminating this information to their "students." They themselves would pursue Judaic learning during the remaining parts of the year, and even throughout the summer. They would return to the camp for numerous summers as *madrichim*, *roshei eidot* and in other various positions, so it would certainly be worthwhile for the camp to invest in them as individuals.

Relationships Between Staff, Faculty and Campers. One of the disappointing occurrences within Jewish camp environments is the notion of "missed opportunities." This can be understood as times when *madrichim* or other staff and faculty could have made an impact on a child's life and missed their opportunity to do so. This would not occur in the ideal setting of a Reform Jewish camp. Staff members would be searching for these special moments, these "teachable moments," where they can impact and influence a child so that they can begin a relationship with this given child.

It is important that modeling take place within the camp setting between "teacher" and "student," whether it is between a rabbi and a *madrich*, a rabbi and a *chanich*, a *madrich* and a *chanich* or the director and a *madrich*. By modeling for these "students," these "teachers" would enable their "students" to be able to function on their own. It is crucial that the *madrichim* function as teachers as well as students.

Furthermore, these relationships would exist beyond the eight weeks of the camp experience. These "teachers" would be available for their "students"

throughout the year, either by e-mail, mail or phone. There might even be web sights created to facilitate the maintaining of these relationships. These "teachers" would pursue some of these relationships as much as they would be available for pursuit by others. Certainly, there would be several programs throughout the year, sponsored by the camp, which would enable these "teachers" to reconnect with their "students," from the director and the faculty to the *madrichim* and the *chanichim*.

Family Issues. This camp, as was stated above, would provide programs for camp families throughout the entire year, not just during the summertime. These programs would allow families to understand the celebration of shabbat at camp, the type of programs and activities which take place for their child, in addition to the way in which a person can live their life as a Jew twenty-four hours a day.

Families would always be invited for at least one visiting day during each session, so that they would become a part of their child's camp experience, and so they would help to create some of these experiences for their families in their own homes. The camp would provide opportunities throughout the year to teach these camp families the prayers, songs and dances which their children learned throughout the summertime. These children would not feel as if they do not belong in their own homes.

Greater Jewish Community. Furthermore, this camp would work with the Jewish institutions within the greater community in order to help the supplemental schools and the congregations which many of these children attend to incorporate that which was learned in the camp environment. Congregations would offer camp *shabbatot*, where the children who attended the camp would lead the service

in the "camp style." Families would be encouraged to create "camp *chavurot*," groups of families who would gather together for holidays, *shabbatot*, and other various occasions in order to celebrate Judaism together.

This camp setting would allow all participants to learn from one another and give to each other. There would be a very warm and fun atmosphere, while learning would never cease. The excitement and the enthusiasm shared by all those on staff and faculty would be transmitted to the many different "students" within the camp setting.

RABBINICAL SEMINARY

Perhaps the best application within the Reform Movement of all that has been learned from the yeshivah world, both in the past and in the present, is in the rabbinical seminary model. Though clearly there are many ideas which one could apply from the yeshivah model to the supplemental religious schools, day schools and camp environments, it seems that the most to be learned is in the area of a rabbinical seminary.

As is true with many aspects within Reform Judaism, Reform Jews have typically avoided the use of traditional Jewish methods and beliefs simply because they are "traditional." Reform Jews are often not interested in particular customs or practices because "that is what Orthodox Jews do." However, we should be able to learn from our past, which is primarily an Orthodox model, and apply some of these methods to our modern, liberal perspectives on life.

This is certainly relevant when discussing the Reform rabbinic seminary. In the present, the Reform rabbinical seminary is a combination of classical Reform and educational theory from a generation ago. It has such great potential to become the model of Jewish learning and Jewish education within the entire

Reform Movement. Upon carefully examination of the current situation within the Reform rabbinical seminary, it is almost obvious where improvements are needed and what processes and methods might be borrowed from the yeshivah model.

Current Situation

Because there is only one Reform rabbinical seminary based in the United States and Israel, with four different campuses, it is obvious that when a Reform rabbinical seminary is being described in the current situation, it must be referring to the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion.[10] Though all four campuses do function differently, there are some similarities which connect each of these four campuses. Since I have only studied at the Jerusalem and Cincinnati campuses, not the Los Angeles and New York campuses (though I have visited both of the other campuses) my primary observations will be as a result of my experience at the Cincinnati campus.[11]

Furthermore, what I will describe, in both of these situations, is based on my personal experience as a student at HUC-JIR and the input I have received from my peers and colleagues. No two individuals ever experience this learning process in the same way. Because each one of us brings our own viewpoints and personal agendas, as well as develops our own visions for the future, each individual experience is quite different and unique.

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10 There is one other Reform Rabbinical College in London called the Leo Baeck College, though it is not integrated with the Reform Movement the way the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion is one of the three branches of the Reform Movement.

11 Though the entire HUC-JIR community is in the process of revamping their curriculum, I will describe the curriculum and the structure as it existed while I was a student.

School Structure. The Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion is a five year post-undergraduate program. Students begin the program by studying at the Jerusalem campus for one year, focusing primarily on Hebrew and basic text study, and then they continue at one of the three campuses within the United States. However, if students choose to attend the Los Angeles school as rabbinical students, they must transfer to New York or Cincinnati after two years in order to complete the program.

Each campus functions as an entity unto its own. The curricula are different depending on the campus, as well as the work load and the expectations of the professors. The personality of the students and the faculty also seem to differ depending on the particular campus.

Because students travel on the weekends quite regularly, classes are held Mondays through Thursdays. Most classes occur twice weekly for seventy-five minutes each period. Every day there are *t'fillot* at 11:10am, and on Mondays and Wednesdays there is a meeting time with no classes immediately following *t'fillot*, followed by a forty-five minute lunch period.

The *t'fillot* are lead most often by students. Though the chapel, as it is called on the Cincinnati campus, is supposed to be a place to do creative prayer experiences, it is most often found to be a place to perfect the skills needed to perform a "typical" prayer service lead in a Reform congregation. Only a few students are willing to experiment and be innovative, and very few professors ever lead the services, nor are they interested in leading creative services.

In addition to the classes required by the school, students are expected to serve congregations throughout the United States as student rabbis. Most students leave their home town, be it Cincinnati, Los Angeles or New York City, in order to serve smaller congregations which cannot support full-time rabbis. A few students work as rabbinic interns in larger Reform congregations. In addition to

these pulpit experiences, students often teach in local Reform congregations' supplemental schools, and they might even tutor children who are preparing to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. All of these activities occur above and beyond the responsibilities within the classroom.

Course of Study. At HUC-JIR, there is a very structured curriculum. Students have a number of required classes they must take, called core classes, including Bible, Midrash, Talmud, Jewish History and Modern Hebrew Literature. They are also required to take a number of electives in these areas of study.

In addition to the text and history classes, students are required to enroll in several practical rabbinics classes, including a basic practical rabbinics class for both second year students and fifth year students, speech, homiletics, human relations and education. These classes are taught by a variety of individuals, including professors, the dean, the president and local rabbis. Often, these courses are unrelated to what students are doing in their student pulpits, nor are these courses always taught in a timely manner. For example, a student might learn in their first year at HUC about life cycle events, and yet they might not perform these events until their fourth or fifth years in the program.

Students typically study for these classes in their homes, either by themselves or in smaller groups. Though there was a creation of a *beit midrash* room on the campus in Cincinnati, it does not really have all the elements of a true *beit midrash*. It does not have the book selection nor the *mashgiach*, the teacher available to help the student who is in need of help. It is rare to find more than a few students studying in this room at any one time, for it acts more like an extra room in the library than a true *beit midrash*.

Teachers. The professors at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion are a rather unique group of individuals. They are all very gifted academically, some of them being considered the specialist within their field and being world famous. Most of them attended the rabbinical seminary first, and then pursued a Ph.D. in a specific area of Judaic studies. Very few of these professors have worked in congregations beyond the HUC-JIR community, nor are they trained in pedagogy (which is true of most college faculty).

Some people would say that many of these professors come from an older style of teaching, where the model is the teacher as lecturer and the student as note-taker.[12] In this model, students are expected to sit in the classroom and absorb all of the information, and eventually they must prove that they can regurgitate the information on an examination. Some professors do take this evaluation step to one higher level, at least requiring students to process the information. On a rare occasion, one might find a teacher who actually helps students to apply the information learned to a real life situation which a Reform rabbi might encounter. However, this is not a common occurrence.

Very few, if any, of the current HUC-JIR professors within Cincinnati understand the notion of the individual learner. Many of them understand teaching and learning to occur in only one manner, and it is challenging for them to realize that not all students learn the way in which they themselves enjoy teaching, the way their teachers taught them. It is very challenging, for example, for a student who learns visually to never have anything written on a board during a lecture, with no handouts to support that which is being taught. It is also

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12 This occurs more often at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion than other institutions of higher learning because professors tend to teach many years after they have retired.

challenging for an active learner simply to sit for an entire seventy-five minutes without needing to move around and be active within the classroom.

Though there is no question that these professors maintain the highest levels of academic knowledge, they are not always successful in conveying that knowledge to every student in their classes.

Relationships Between Teachers and Students. In the current model within HUC-JIR, there is a variety of differentiation among faculty as to their relationships between themselves and their students. Some are open to meeting with students and discussing the student's needs and desires. Others are not as interested in spending very much time with students beyond the classroom.

With regard to the notion that a teacher might invite a student to his or her home after the class day has ended, there is also a mixed review. A few teachers do invite their students to their homes, perhaps once at the end of the semester. Typically the purpose of this visit is to hold a last class in a less formal setting, though not always. Further, few of the professors invite students to their homes for shabbat or holidays.

Beyond the subject matter being taught by a given professor in a specific classroom, there is little communication between students and teachers on a wider range of issues. Because most of these teachers are rabbis, one might assume that they would engage in "rabbinical training" for their students, but this is typically not the situation. They leave that training to those who are teaching the practical rabbinics courses.

The relationship between most teachers and most students at Cincinnati's campus of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion is typically one which is confined to the limits of the classroom and the scope of the topics being discussed within that class.

Though the picture painted above is certainly not every student's picture, nor does it describe every class and every teacher, it is a taste of the current situation within the walls of the Cincinnati campus of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion.

Ideal Situation

Though the above description of a Reform rabbinical seminary specifically described the Cincinnati campus of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, the following description of an ideal Reform rabbinical seminary should not be limited to the design and structure of HUC-JIR. As you will see and come to understand, it is heavily based on the yeshivah models, of old and of new.

Though it may seem very far from the current Reform rabbinical seminary model, I firmly believe that there are fewer challenges standing in the way in this model than in some of the other models presented throughout this chapter. Perhaps if you can imagine a blank sheet of paper, it will allow you to envision such a place as is about to be described.

School Structure and Course of Study. In order to imagine a Reform rabbinical seminary in an idyllic state, one must understand the new structure and basis for this seminary. The ultimate purpose of this seminary is to train Reform Jews to become Reform rabbis. The basic premise on which this institution would be created is that learning must take place within and outside of the classroom walls, and teachers must be more than simply fountains of information.

First, students would attend this institution of higher learning in order to study Torah for the sake of study, meaning ***torah lishma***, and they would desire to

acquire the skills in order to be good Reform rabbis. The students would enter the school with a solid background in Hebrew, as well as a basic understanding of Jewish history and introductory Jewish concepts. If they have not yet acquired these skills, but they are worthy candidates for rabbinic school, then they would be encouraged to attend the equivalent of a liberal yeshivah, like the one recently opened in Jerusalem.[13]

All text classes would take place on Monday and Wednesday mornings, for one hour per class session, from 9:00am until 12:20 (with ten minutes between classes). On Tuesdays and Thursdays, in the morning, there would be a *beit midrash*. All students would attend the *beit midrash* according to the text classes in which they are enrolled. For example, all those enrolled in Midrash would be in one room, while those enrolled in Talmud would be in another room. Since a student would not enroll in more than three text classes in any one semester, the *beit midrash* time would also be divided into three sections, from 9:00am until 12:20am as well.

In the *beit midrash*, there would always be at least one professor who teaches the course being scheduled available for questions and problems. The *beit midrash* would be a medium sized room, with many resources including books and computers. There would be good lighting, comfortable chairs and tables for

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13 Perhaps for many of the reasons listed throughout this thesis, there is now a *Beit Midrash* / A Liberal Yeshivah in Jerusalem. According to its literature, it is "dedicated to the passionate study of Jewish text and tradition in an egalitarian and liberal setting. Of particular interest for this thesis is the emphasis on the faculty within this institution. Their instructors "are devoted to [one's] spiritual and personal growth through the development of community and study." There are activities beyond the classroom situation, including holiday celebrations, shabbat dinners, special events at faculty members' homes and trips of relevant sites with Israel. This yeshivah is meant to establish a "spiritual learning community." It is based on interactive learning in classes, *chevrutot*, and interaction with a dedicated staff. For more infomation, contact *Beit Midrash* / A Liberal Yeshivah, 838 5th Avenue, New York, NY, 10021.

four people, so that students could study in *chevrutot* and be comfortable. The atmosphere in the *beit midrash* would not be one of competitiveness, but rather it would be a very helpful and creative environment.

On Monday and Wednesday afternoons, from 1:30pm until 4:40pm, students would attend non-text classes, once a week for ninety minutes each class. These classes would be discussion based and very applicable to the happenings in a student's congregation or teaching environment. There would be no examinations in these classes; instead, there would be final projects which allow students to apply the information they would have learned to the real world of the rabbinate.

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, during the same time period as above, students would be experiencing a very different kind of education. These afternoons would be reserved for a variety of events and programs. As each holiday would occur, workshops would be held to inform the students about the holidays, the customs and practices that accompany each holiday. There would be two different levels at each of these holiday workshops. The first level would be for new students, and it would be a lesson on the basic information. The second level would be a review of level one and an opportunity for students and faculty to share the creative ways which they have personally and in their congregations experienced these holidays.

When it is not a holiday season, these afternoon sessions would be reserved for discussions. These discussions would be on a variety of issues, including the future of Reform Judaism, Israel, intermarriage, Judaism and homosexuality, the future of Jewish education, gender neutral God language, working within a greater Jewish community, and many more. The students would help to create the topics and formats for these discussions. These would be opportunities for students and faculty to share their thoughts and perspectives with

one another, and there would be times where guests would be invited to join the discussion, bringing an outsider's position.

Prayer and spirituality would become a part of every student's day, both in the *beit k'nesset* and outside of it. The day would begin at 8:30am with *t'fillot*. Students and teachers, even administration, would participate in these *t'fillot* and lead them. The *beit k'nesset* would truly be a laboratory for prayer ideas and activities available, for all individuals connected with the school. However, *shiurim* would also begin with prayers; there might even be prayers at meals, and spirituality would become a part of each individual's life. Furthermore, students and faculty would be creating a sense of *k'dushah*, of holiness, while acknowledging the fact that they, as Reform Jews, do not believe all that is said in Torah or Talmud. It would be crucial for this institution to create a liturgy which would be satisfying to a vast majority of its "congregants". The *beit k'nesset* would be as much a learning room as any other room in the building.

Teachers and their Relationships with Students. The teachers in this institution would be academically knowledgeable and excited about their given area of expertise. They might even be rabbis themselves, as well as Reform Jews, so that the Reform rabbinic student would learn from them in a variety of different ways. They could also simply be good teachers, mentors and spiritual beings who relate well with students. However, they would also be trained in pedagogy, attending yearly workshops or other teaching enhancement programs in order to renew their own personal skills. They would be aware of individual student's needs, as well as ways in which to help these individual students. Their methods of instruction would be varied, so that all students would learn from each teacher.

Teachers would also become teachers beyond the classroom. Whether it is for shabbat or holidays, teachers would invite students to learn from them and celebrate with them outside of the classroom. Teachers would become true role models for their students, sharing ideas and practices, above and beyond the classroom situation.

Teachers would meet regularly with the other teachers who would be sharing similar students, so as to discuss any issues that might arise regarding particular students. Because all individuals who are enrolled in this institution are there because the administration believes they will be good Reform rabbis, the rabbinical seminary would do anything and everything in its power to teach each student all that they can learn.

As older students begin to master the texts, they would become teachers as well. They would not only share their academic knowledge with those in the classes behind them, they would also share their practical experience with those who have had less practical experience. There is no reason that every student begins "at the beginning" each and every year. They would be acting, in many ways, as *mashgichim* did in the yeshivah setting.

Finally, the *rosh yeshivah* would take on a new role in this yeshivah. He or she would be the equivalent of the *rosh yeshivah* in the more traditional *yeshivot.* The *rosh yeshivah* would teach the entire school on occasion, presenting visions and goals for the student body and the faculty alike. The *rosh yeshivah* would work with the teachers and the students, creating intimate relationships with both groups of people. The *rosh yeshivah* would gain the respect and admiration that would be deserved.

As was certainly true in the supplemental school model, the day school model and the camp model, the Reform rabbinical seminary has much to learn

and to gain from the yeshivah model in the past and the present. All of these models are products of the Reform movement, and yet there is no reason that they cannot be connected and modeled after the schools which existed for so many centuries throughout Jewish history, the *yeshivot*.

Though each of these perspectives was limited and confined to my personal understanding of the models and my vision for the future of these educational models, I hope it is now apparent how one can adapt that which is a part of our history, to make it a part of our present day world and our future visions. Teaching is perhaps one of the most challenging professions within any community, Jewish or Christian, Reform or Orthodox, and we should attempt to help these teachers as best as we can, so they can simply help others to become *talmidei Torah*, students of Torah.

11. *The Ideal World: Congregational Settings*

In the previous chapter, several different models were described, both in their current state of being and in their idyllic state. Each of these models was clearly an educational model, with either a teacher-student relationship or staff member-camper relationship as a part of the model. However, these are not the only models in a Reform Jewish community which can gain insights from the yeshivah model.

Let us contemplate the following scenario. Throughout the history of the Jewish people, rabbis have functioned in many different capacities. They have been teachers and scholars, politicians and theologians, philosophers and historians. They have worked with those who were ill, those who were young, those who were old, those who were to be wed, those who were giving birth and those who were dying.

Today, as the twentieth century nears an end, Reform rabbis function in a variety of positions as well. The definition of a "congregation" has changed throughout the twentieth century. They can be congregational rabbis, from small to large congregations, serving as assistant, associate and senior rabbis. They can also work as chaplains in hospitals or the armed services. They can even function as Hillel directors on university campuses. Though these models are not the traditional models of teacher-student relationships, the rabbis in each of these models do need to determine how they can function as "teacher" toward their "students." These "students" may be congregants, other professional staff members or children, or they may be patients or staff in a hospital. They might

even be the college student functioning as a congregant in a university campus setting. Though each of these rabbis function in very different ways, each one can certainly gain something from the yeshivah model described earlier in this thesis.

Because this chapter is quite different in nature from the models described in the previous chapter, it will be formatted in a different manner. I will describe the various relationships a rabbi could ideally establish with a variety of people within the congregation, be it a synagogue, a hospital or Hillel. Because there exists such a wide range of current situations with relation to these models, I will not attempt to describe the current situation. Instead, I will focus on that which I believe, from all that has been presented previously in this thesis, to be the ideal model for rabbis in these various congregational settings as it directly relates to the relationships between rabbis and their congregants.

SYNAGOGUES

Perhaps the most obvious role a rabbi plays as the twenty-first century is about to begin is the role of a synagogue rabbi. Whether a rabbi is serving a two hundred family congregation in the middle of Texas or a thousand family congregation in New York City, all synagogue rabbis do have certain things in common.

These rabbis are required to act as teacher and preacher, counselor and spiritual leader. Sometimes they are even required to be financial advisors, fund raisers and administrators. Regardless of the place, it is clear that each of these roles of the rabbi demands that a rabbi interact with people. By interacting with a large range of people, in different capacities, the rabbi is required to develop relationships with these people.

The synagogue rabbi needs to develop different relationships depending on the different types of people with whom the relationship is being created.

Rabbis relate to other professionals within the congregation, adult congregants and child congregants. Rabbis also have different categories of relationships within the context of a synagogue community. Sometimes the rabbi relates to people individually, sometimes as a family, sometimes in the context of an entire class, and other times as an entire congregation. Each of these relationships requires different skills and perhaps different methods of relating, some of which can even be learned from the traditional yeshivah model.

Relationships with Different Groups of People

When rabbis are relating to different groups of people, they need to learn to adjust their foci and their goals. If a rabbi wishes to teach the lesson of honoring one's children, for example, that rabbi will certainly teach that same lesson in a different manner, whether it is with professional staff within the congregation, who already have a certain knowledge base, with adult congregants, who might have children of their own, or whether these rabbis are creating relationships with children in the congregations.

It is important for rabbis to realize that they must determine which categories of people they are teaching, and what is necessary for each group of congregants. It is also important to realize that the three categories about to be described are by no means the only categories possible in the life of a synagogue rabbi. They are but a sampling of many congregants who will eventually come through the rabbi's door.

Adult Congregants. The vast majority of the people with whom the rabbi will come in contact are adult congregants. Certainly it is hard to generalize about all adult congregants, so I will only make some brief statements in summary. Adult congregants are typically looking for a role model in their rabbi. They want

to know that their rabbi is moral and ethical, that she leads a good, Jewish life. They want to see their rabbi as a model of Jewish study as well, one who pursues learning he way she encourages her congregants to do as well.

Adult congregants are also looking for guidance from their rabbi. They want her to be a director, a leader who points her congregants toward the future. In this modern age, they are looking for spiritual guidance. They desire spirituality, but they desire to see it in their rabbi and then learn how to experience it themselves.

Most of all, adult congregants are looking for teachers. Adults are returning to the classroom, but they do not want to be treated as children. They want the rabbi to acknowledge the fact that they have much knowledge in a variety of areas, and many of them are professionals in a wide range of fields, but their Jewish knowledge may be somewhat weaker. They want their rabbi to understand their learning goals and to teach them to their "students," to their congregants, without making them feel illiterate.

Rabbis need to pursue as many of these relationships as they possibly can. However, it is important for the rabbi to realize that the congregants who never approach them are in as much need of developing relationships as are the congregants who never stop talking to them at the *oneg shabbat*. A rabbi also needs to realize when it is time to send a certain congregant to another place for some help, be it physical, emotional or mental. A rabbi must always remember that her power can sometimes be a disadvantage as well as an advantage when relating to adult congregants.

Children. Children are very different from adults. They have very different perspectives of and admiration for rabbis. They want their rabbis to be heroes for them; they want to see them as perfect. Younger children especially

want their rabbis to be God-like. They want them to have all the answers and to know everything about them; they want the rabbi to know their name and to know who they are. They want the rabbi to hang up their picture that they have drawn, which makes them feel special and perhaps even holy.

Older children, especially those in high school, are interested in developing a different kind of relationship with their rabbi. They want to discuss the harder questions with their rabbi, asking him things they may not want to ask their parents. Some high school students might even make appointments with their rabbis in order to discuss God or life as a teenager or a friend who is in trouble.

Rabbis need to develop these relationships with these children carefully. They need to be aware of the power they can potentially have over children, and they need to use it wisely. They also need to facilitate these relationships carefully so that these children will share thoughts and feelings with their parents and their teachers, as well as their rabbi. On occasion a rabbi might maintain a very special relationship with a child, though it would be unusual for this close relationship to form between a rabbi and his or her entire congregation. Instead, a rabbi needs to make children feel special when he is able to spend time with those children, be it through a story, a conversation, a pat on the head or a wave hello. These relationships can impact these children for the rest of their lives.

Professional Staff within the Congregation. Though rabbis should consider themselves to be team members with the other professional staff in their congregations, it is important for them to realize that they are still the rabbi. They will need to spend time developing relationships with the other rabbis, the educator, the administrator, the cantor and the programmer, just as they would spend time developing relationships with their congregants.

Perhaps the following illustration will help one to better understand this notion. Imagine that there is a big issue in the synagogue right now related to the topic of whether or not non-Jews should be allowed to participate in the congregational *t'fillot*. Though a rabbi will often see her fellow professional staff members as colleagues, they still look to her as the rabbi. The relationship is somewhat parallel to the relationship between a *rosh yeshivah* and the other *rabbeim* in the yeshivah. This rabbi needs to realize that each of these professionals has a professional opinion regarding this topic, and they also have a personal opinion regarding this topic; the two are not always the same. The rabbi needs to work with each of her staff to understand their positions and views, just as she would do with a congregant.

Rabbis also need to be models of study for the professional staff with whom they are working. Rabbis should therefore insist on weekly study sessions with the congregational staff, including the rabbis, the cantor, the educator, the administrator, the programmer and any other full-time professional staff, including a principal or even a retreat coordinator. By modeling continuing lifelong education among all of the staff, it will set the tone for the entire congregation.

The rabbi must always remember that she is in a different position as the rabbi, different from the cantor, educator, administrator and programmer. It is important that she realize this role and act on it. She must pursue the relationship with other professional staff, but she must do so very carefully. She does not want to come across as arrogant or egotistical; she simply wants to be a rabbi, a teacher of Torah.

Different Types of Relationships

There are many different opportunities for rabbis to interact with congregants. Sometimes a rabbi will connect with a congregant as an individual, either after a class or in an appointment. At other times a rabbi might interact with a family, in a home or a hospital room, or even in the rabbi's study. Certainly a rabbi will interact with congregants who are enrolled in classes or workshops. Finally, a rabbi will interact with an entire congregation, typically during a service or a large program.

When a rabbi interacts with these different people listed above in these different settings, the relationships they form are unique. A rabbi always needs to realize what the situation is, so he or she can best respond. These are but a few of the many possible ways in which a rabbi can interact with his or her congregants

Individuals. Individual meetings with the rabbi allow for different types of relationships than those in the context of a large group. These opportunities are wonderful for the rabbi to be a role model and a teacher, a mentor as we understand from the yeshivah model. The rabbi can be a teacher and at the same time he can be a counselor. Like the *tzaddikim* in the Chasidic Movement, the rabbi can play many different roles in these individual situations.

These meetings need not take place by appointment in the rabbi's study. They might be on the phone, passing in the hallway, as a parent is running to pick up a child from religious school, or certainly at the *oneg shabbat*. It is important for a rabbi to be able to focus on the individual needs and issues of this congregant, so he can help him and speak with him in a way that the congregant will hear him. Just like students who learn in certain ways, so too do congregants understand in a variety of ways. The rabbi must determine the best ways to communicate with these individual congregants.

Family. Sometimes a rabbi might interact and relate to people in the context of their family. Whether they have a family meeting with the rabbi, they are at a life cycle event or in a hospital room, the relationship the rabbi develops with a family is different from that of an individual.

When a rabbi relates to a family, she must realize that there are many different dynamics at work within the family, some of which the rabbi will be aware, and some of which she will be unaware. She must learn to be an eloquent listener. The rabbi needs to ask good questions so as to determine the "real" family situation, not just the one being told to her verbally by the spokesperson within the family. It is important for the rabbi to hear what is being said as well as what is not being said.

The following might help one to better understand the situation of the rabbi when relating to a family. Lester has just died, and his beloved wife of sixty-two years has already passed away. Lester and Cele had three children. However, one of the three children is not in touch with his two siblings, and he has not spoken with one of his daughters in more than ten years. When son number two comes to meet with the rabbi, the rabbi listens to the situation carefully and also interprets between the lines, realizing what is missing from the conversation as well as what is being stated clearly. The rabbi realizes that she needs to have a relationship with this entire family for the sake of their deceased father and grandfather, but that is not easy. The rabbi must become the one who eases the situation so that it can be comfortable throughout the process of the funeral and sitting *shiva.*

Working with families is perhaps one of the hardest groups with whom a rabbi can work, but it can also be the most rewarding. However, a rabbi must be well aware of family dynamics and issues of family counseling and family

therapy. A rabbi must make the most of every family situation, and acknowledge to herself the potential problems in any given situation.

Classes. Rabbis often relate to congregants in classroom situations as well. This is perhaps the closest situation to that of the yeshivah model. Rabbis need to reflect back to that model when they are involved in teaching within their congregations. They need to use the text as the rabbis in the *yeshivot* used it, looking for both intention and purpose.

Rabbis who are really performing the task of *talmud torah* need to model the way in which one can study Torah for their students. These rabbis must use all of the innovative and creative methods mentioned in the last two chapters of this thesis in their teaching, but they must also create a relationship with their students, their congregants, at an intellectual and academic level. That is the role of the congregational rabbi as teacher. That relationship could help a congregant to decide to return to the synagogue for a variety of other programs, in addition to the class itself.

Entire Congregation. Sometimes the congregational rabbi is only given the opportunity to establish a relationship with her congregants when they come together in a large group, typically for a service. On Friday evenings, a rabbi might relate to her congregants by acknowledging why they have come to celebrate shabbat. She might look at those who are there to celebrate shabbat for its joy during the *v'shamru* or the *yismechu* prayers. She might look at those who are there because a loved one is sick during the *misheberach* prayer. She might even look at those who are mourning as she reads the list of names before the *kaddish* prayer. This is certainly one way a rabbi can develop a relationship with congregants who are only a part of a large congregation.

Another way to develop this relationship is by preaching to individuals instead of to a faceless community. If the rabbi is speaking about the weekly Torah portion, she might use examples to which specific people in the congregation could certainly relate, which might strengthen the bond between the rabbi and those congregants.

Though this is a very difficult setting in which to create a personal relationship with a congregant, it is not impossible. Some rabbis do form these relationships quite well

HILLEL

Hillel institutions are becoming more common congregations in which Reform rabbis can serve in the 1990's. Many rabbis are choosing to work in these university communities when they first complete rabbinical school, and some even turn Hillel work into their entire career

Hillel rabbis are congregational rabbis, but there congregations are very different than a synagogue rabbi's congregation. Their congregations are typically comprised of students who are only in their congregation temporarily. Though many Hillel communities are attractive to community members beyond the university students, the vast majority of programs and activities focus around the student population.

These rabbis work with a variety of categories of congregants, including students, the most obvious, but also faculty and the greater community. Hillel rabbis sometimes teach in the university, and they certainly function in a different way than a congregational rabbi, though they are still hired to be a rabbi to a specific congregation. Hillel rabbis function in some situations which are similar to the synagogue rabbi, and other situations which are very different from that which was previously described.

Students

First and foremost, Hillel rabbis are designed to work with the students in the college community. They are often teachers in classrooms, leaders of *t'fillot* and parent figures for the many students who are living far from home. Perhaps this Hillel model has the largest potential for a rabbi to develop a wonderful relationship with his congregant.

It is important to note some general characteristics of college students in order to best understand their needs and wants. These individuals are often in search of answers to life's great questions. They are away from their parents, most for the first time, and they want to experiment and be creative, and that often includes religion. Some students who had very little Jewish education as children will pursue the programs at the Hillel, while other students who were raised in a very strong Jewish family are shying away from their religion. These students are searching for role models and mentors, guides and teachers. A Hillel rabbi can help to fulfill some of their desires.

If a Hillel rabbi makes an effort to create and develop relationships with the students in his community, it could effect that student for the rest of her life. These college students are intellectually and academically motivated, and much of what they learn in college, both in and out of the regular classroom, can potentially stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Hillel rabbis need to work with these students in order to help them to be comfortable with Judaism and comfortable with this particular rabbi. They should remember the atmosphere in the yeshivah, the love of learning Torah and Jewish text, and the excitement around Judaism in general, and they should attempt to convey those feelings to their students. Because college students are often making life decisions for their futures, a Hillel rabbi could potentially have a great effect on the Jewish college community.

Faculty and Administration

Hillel rabbis also function as rabbis in relationship to the faculty of the university in which they are working. Often, the Jewish faculty will choose to attend services and programs at the college Hillel instead of attending services at their own congregation, and sometimes they do not even belong to another congregation. These Jewish faculty see the rabbi in the same role that the congregant in a synagogue sees her rabbi.

The Hillel rabbis also are seen as the rabbi by the non-Jewish faculty. These faculty might have questions about religion or Jewish history, and they would turn to this Hillel rabbi to help to answer some of these questions. Often, if there is going to be an event on campus that is somehow related to Judaism, either positively or negatively, a Hillel rabbi would be requested to participate in some manner.

These Hillel rabbis are also utilized by the administrators on the college campus. Because they do often create and maintain relationships with the Jewish students on the campus, the administrators might turn to them regarding a particular student, either with a personal concern or a question about that student. Often the Hillel rabbi will know a student better than anyone else who works for the university.

It is crucial that the Hillel rabbi build and maintain these relationships, but she must realize that these relationships are very different than those created with the students in the university. The role of the rabbi in these situations adapts a new flavor. She is typically seen as a source of knowledge, perhaps a guidance counselor or even a spiritual leader. Though these people are colleagues, they are also congregants.

Though Hillel rabbis maintain very different positions within the Jewish community than synagogue rabbis, their work is clearly just as important. It is also just as important for these rabbis to create and develop relationships with all of their congregants, including the students, the faculty and anyone else who might wander though their door.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS

Perhaps one of the areas in the rabbinate which is growing the fastest is that of the hospital chaplains. More rabbinic students are being trained as hospital chaplains in a program called Clinical Pastoral Education (C.P.E.),[1] and more rabbis are entering hospital chaplancy positions as full time positions. It is a highly specialized field of work, for a chaplain needs to be trained in ways that rabbis were traditionally not trained.

Hospitals are certainly congregations in and of themselves, though the role of the rabbi working in a hospital is very different than the rabbi in either a synagogue setting or a Hillel position. The relationships a chaplain creates with his or her congregants within the hospital are very different from those created in a synagogue or a Hillel. They are often very temporary, typically involving an entire family and sometimes some extra people as well. These chaplains often work with patients who are not Jewish, and these relationships usually involve a fair amount of medical knowledge.

Perhaps by examining several different relationships a hospital chaplain would have within his or her congregation will allow the reader to better

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[1] It is important to note that the C.P.E. program does not always enable rabbis to draw fully and adequately on the Jewish tradition. Often C.P.E. is merely psychological in orientation and is lacking in the Jewish component. It is important to realize the necessity of including Jewish context in this "generic" training.

understand the dynamics of each of these relationships. Though there are many more possibilities for these relationships, these are just a sampling.

Relationships with Patients

A hospital chaplain's primary focus is on the patients in the hospital. Many patients are afraid of hospitals, of surgery, of doctors and certainly of death. A chaplain is available to try to ease some of these fears so that the patients can best be healed. Some patients have a large family to support and comfort them; others have no family at all. A chaplain must realize the needs of each of her congregants.

Some patients are admitted to a hospital for minor operations such as a broken bone or a slight concussion. Other patients are admitted to the hospital with no hope of survival; only a way to extend one's life just a few short days. Some patients even entered the hospital thinking they were entering for a minor operation only to discover they have cancer. Many of these patients are often searching for a rabbi with whom they can speak and pray, discuss and make decisions.

Though the relationship developed with a patient may not last a very long time, one conversation could absolutely change this person's life. Like the yeshivah teacher, they need to be patient and supportive. By helping a patient through a difficult time, by asking good questions and listening well, a chaplain can make an important, sometimes even life determining decision with her congregants.

Relationships with Families of Patients

Beyond the relationships with the patients, hospital chaplains need to build relationships with the patients' families. Often it is the families who suffer even

more than the patient, for the patient is sometimes unaware of what is taking place around her. The chaplain may have hysterical families and emotionless families, concerned families and angry families, and they need to address all of these issues.

Just like the congregational rabbi who met with families in his office or the hallway, so does the hospital chaplain need to find the right and appropriate way to communicate with and relate to each family that needs his support and his guidance. Hospital chaplains are often the ones who help families to make very hard decisions, and if a relationship has been established, or at least if the chaplain knows how to ask the right questions, then the situation will be drastically improved.

Relationships with Support Staff within the Hospitals

In all situations the hospital chaplain's services are needed to work with the doctors and nurses, in order to help them through difficult or confusing times. Though one might assume that nurses and doctors see death and pain and sickness on a regular basis, it does not mean that it becomes any easier for them to understand or accept. They are human beings like every one else.

When I worked on an oncology floor as a hospital chaplain, the nurses and the doctors would grow very close to many of the patients. Because the cancer patients were often kept in the hospital for months at a time, and would return regularly for treatments, this was not an uncommon situation. Often, when a patient would die, especially a young patient, the mood of the floor would deteriorate for days. Though other patients remained on the floor, it was hard for the nurses, and even the doctors, to continue forward. They were often in need of a prayer or a sense of hope, though I could certainly not provide many answers to their numerous theological questions. However, I could help them to better

understand, I could simply be there for them as a model. I might even shed a tear with them, to show them that it was all right.

Though rabbis work in a variety of congregational situations, including synagogues, Hillels and hospitals, the importance of the relationship created and developed with their congregants, with their "students," is great. These rabbis need to find ways, different as they may be, to relate in a positive manner to their many different congregants. They need to be rabbis, and they need to help their congregants to be the best students they can be.

Conclusion

The facts have now been presented and it is time to draw some conclusions. It is clear that the relationship between teacher and student in Jewish learning has existed throughout the history of the Jewish people, from biblical times until the end of the twentieth century, and there is no question this is a relationship which should and will always exist in the future of Jewish education.

From each of the various time periods examined in the first part of this thesis, a reader discovers different learning methods and different relationships between teachers and students. Whether it is the relationship between Moses and Joshua, the Besht and his thousands of disciples, Rabbi Israel Salanter and his teachers and his students, as well as the relationship between Rabbi Asher Lopatin and his teacher Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, relationships between teachers and students are a crucial part of the yeshivah world, the world of Jewish education.

One might even understand this relationship to maintain a sense of *k'dushah*, of sanctity. The holiness in this relationship can best be understood if one views the relationship between God and God's people as a relationship between "The Teacher" and the students. There is also a sanctity of all teachers, in some ways. Teachers have played roles, and continue to do so, which can truly be considered to be holy. Finally, there is a sanctity of the student. Students, as was true most obviously in the Mussar Movement, are as crucial a part of the teacher-student relationship as the teachers. The relationship must truly be a *kesher*, a connection between two individuals which links them in a variety of different ways.

Furthermore, it is important to note that these teacher-student relationships are not simply between children and their early childhood teachers. These relationships can and should be developed between high school and college students and their teachers, as well as between adult learners and their teachers. It is also clear that one need not be in classroom setting in order to establish and develop this relationship between teachers and students.

When we contemplate this relationship between teachers and students in these various yeshivah settings from the past, we should come to realize how much we can learn from these models when we create our future *yeshivot* and Jewish schools, both good and bad. Though not every aspect of the yeshivah setting was always perfect, it is an eye-opening experience to come to understand that which this setting did offer the Jewish people: both a unique relationship, in many cases, between teachers and students, as well as some unique styles of teaching and learning.

It is also crucial that, as Reform liberal Jews living in the modern world, we must realize that closing the door on our past places us at a great disadvantage. There is much to learn from the old yeshivah models and from the relationships between teachers and students within these models. The future of Jewish education is in our hands, and we must take advantage of all knowledge and materials available to us in order to create this educational system.

The notion of a liberal yeshivah, like the one created in Jerusalem by the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, is ideal. It is the combination of a place where Jews gather to study classical Jewish texts while it is dedicated to in-depth study of the Jewish past in order to forge a path to the Jewish future. Simply by studying the Jewish past through the vehicle of the

yeshivah and the relationships within these models, one can certainly forge a path to the Jewish future.

However, a liberal yeshivah is but one example of a way to create relationships between teachers and students. It is also important to recognize the fact that these relationships exist in all aspects of our Jewish world: in our schools, in our congregations, in our communities and in our homes. We must learn to adapt all that we have come to understand about this relationship to every aspect of our modern day lives. Once we come to realize that relationships can and will enable Jewish learning and Jewish history to continue into the twenty-first century, then and only then will we be able to pave our path to a Jewish future.

In *Pirke Avot*, we learn that "Moses received Torah from Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, and Joshua handed it on to the elders, and the leaders to the prophets. And the prophets handed it on to the members of the great assembly. They said three things: be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence for the Torah."[1] May we learn from the rabbis of old and always remember the importance of the dissemination of the teachings of Torah as well as that which is written in Torah.

Finally, Rabbi Ishmael teaches that one should learn in order to teach, and it is given you to learn and to teach. However, if one learns in order to do, it will be given to you to learn and to teach, to keep and to do.[2] We need to realize the importance of learning in order to teach those who will follow in our paths, and yet we must learn in order to do, so that our learning is not for naught. The

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[1] *Pirke Avot*, 1:1.

[2] Ibid., 4:5.

relationships we build with our teachers and our students can enable us to learn and to teach, to keep and to do.

Appendix A: Interview with Rabbi Marc Angel

Debbie: Tell me a little bit about your general background.

Rabbi Angel: I grew up in Seattle, Washington. I went to day school until eighth grade, Jewish day school, and then I went to public school for high school. Then I came to Yeshivah College in 1963, studied four years undergraduate, three years in the rabbinical program. And I got a Ph.D. at Yeshivah as well.

Debbie: Can you tell me a little bit about your experience when you were at Yeshivah University? I'm specifically looking at the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah setting.

Rabbi Angel: When I first came to Yeshivah, I was coming straight from a public school education, so I didn't have as strong a background as other students who had an all-yeshivah background. For the first year in yeshivah, I didn't go to what was called RIETS. I first went to the JSP, the Jewish Studies Program, which is basically for people with a little weaker background in Judaic studies. The first year I studied with ..., and the purpose was to give people with a little less background a sense of security with the sources, confidence in themselves, and advance as fast as possible, so one could go to the higher level of classes.

The first year, the teachers were specifically geared toward helping students out, personal relationships. In fact, they did. My teachers were phenomenal people, great human beings. Any help you wanted in class or out of class. And not only on the topics. If you had other questions about religion or questions about life, they would spend all the time you wanted. A lot of my teachers invited me over for shabbat. They were very warm and very helpful. So the first year of yeshivah was a very successful year for me in terms of Jewish studies.

And then I did do well, and the second year I already went into the rabbinical program. I didn't know that I wanted to be a rabbi then, but it was called RIETS, the rabbinical program, the talmudic program. My first year there was with Rabbi Lichtenstein, who is now the head of the yeshivah in Israel, who is a great, great scholar. He is the son-in-law of Rabbi Soloveitchik. He is a magnificent Jewish scholar, Talmud, he also has a Ph.D. from Harvard in English literature. He is just genius; he knows everything. When I studied with him I had a very different experience. He was very cold, he never knew anyone's name. He was really very academic. He is still the same way now. Very intellectual, you would push yourself to the limit. You didn't expect him to pat you on the back, you didn't expect him to remember your name. He was one of those abstract

professors who really was absolutely rigorous in his teaching, absolutely demanding, and if you flubbed around, you were on your own. Not that he didn't care, but you were simply on your own in his class. He came and taught, and then you were on your own. An entirely different experience from the first year. You see, a yeshivah education will vary from teacher to teacher and style to style.

The third year I went to *shiur* with ... , who only taught in Yiddish, and I did not know Yiddish at all. I came from a Sephardic background, so I didn't know Yiddish at all. He was very old world. He grew up in Europe, he was very fond of the Mir Yeshivah. He was an old country Yiddish Eastern European rabbi, which was my first real experience with that, since Rabbi Lichtenstein was American born and taught in English. I picked it up enough to follow along. In order to learn the Talmud well, his strategy was with Mussar. He would very often chastise students for being not "up to par", what were his standards. He would call on you by name and talk about you in front of everybody else. That's old-style education. He was the only one in the yeshivah that used to have this characteristic, that I know about. He was also very demanding. He attracted students, people who were just looking for something off the beat and track. He had an unusual way of looking at things. He walked with a great degree of confidence in himself. He was not conventional in many ways. He lived conventionally. He looked like the old style *rosh yeshivah*, but he was very innovative in his own way. He was not predictable. Everybody throughout the year got blasted at one time or another from him. But that was part of the experience.

The year after that I walked into a *shiur* by Rav Volk. He was also old time European rabbi, only a white goatee, not a whole long beard. He wore a modern suit. He spoke only Yiddish also. But he was a great scholar, he wrote many books, he would give them out as gifts. He was a very congenial rebbe. He wanted to teach the Talmud and the *halachah* in a masterful way. He knew a tremendous amount. He was also a very warm human being. It wasn't that you could go home with him, that you were his buddy. No. He was an older man; you were a young student. There was no personal relationship after class. But in class, he was very warm, very concerned with the student's progress. I would up studying with him for three years, I liked him that much.

In the fourth year, the third year of the smicha program, was Rav Weiss. He was an interesting character. He was born in the United States. He went to Yeshivah College, and then he went to study in one of the *yeshivot* in Europe, and then he came back. He loved to speak in Yiddish. Or he spoke English with a Yiddish accent, even though he was American. He was like an old country rabbi, even though he was a product of he United States. Also, he was Hungarian, and all the stringency's in *halachah* he took. He was very, very rigorous in his interpretation of *halachah*. As a human being, he was really very nice. He treated each student as his emissary. He took a personal interest in you in order to succeed, in order to do well. He knew everything from top to bottom, he had been teaching it for so many years. He didn't like questions outside of the field. He didn't want to be asked "why". He was there to teach you what. And he did it very effectively. So that is my general career in yeshivah.

Debbie: Was it different when you came back and got your Ph.D.?

Rabbi Angel: The Ph.D. is different. In yeshivah, I was describing the Talmud classes. We also took classes in bible, in Jewish philosophy, but that is at an academic level like anyone would study in college or graduate school. The thing that is really unique about yeshivah is the Talmud and *halachah* program.

The Ph.D. is graduate school. If you went elsewhere, it probably wouldn't be that much different. The teachers, yes, but not the style. What gives flavor to the yeshivah is the rebbes, but more than that is the system. In the morning, from nine until twelve, there is no class. From nine until twelve you are supposed to go to the *beit midrash*, a big hall, a couple hundred people. Everyone is assigned to a table, and you have a *chevruta*, another individual. You get there about 9:00am, if you are lazy 9:10. Usually there would be just two people, sometimes three, but no more. So what happens is you get there, and you know what you are going to be studying in the Talmud that day. So you are supposed to prepare it in advance. So you sit down and go through all the Rashi and the *tosefot*, the Rambam... What the rebbe wants you to know. You do the best you can. Sometimes you understand it, sometimes you don't. You work on it.

Then you go to the *shiur*, and they want to see that you are prepared. When the rebbe does the *shiur*, he brings in the old stuff and he brings in the new stuff. And usually what happens is one of the students reads. The rebbe doesn't read. Then he'll ask questions, and from the questions he will try to see what is in the text. A way to see all of the different processes that are going on. When you look at this text, and you see that the questions are not what you thought of, but someone else thought of them before you. And then the rebbe will show you who discusses these questions. And then you start to see how it all comes together. Then very often the rebbe would add his own "two cents worth"; he wouldn't just review what others have said. He would throw in his theories and his excavations.

Afterwards, at night, not everyone did it, now they do it much more than in my day, you would try to meet one or two hours every night back in the *beit midrash*, though you are not forced to do that., to review what was covered during that day, and to look up the sources and make sure you understand them and to quote the texts. There were two very important things. One, to get proficiency in the text. If you can't read them and understand them, you're never going to be able to learn on your own. If there was a text where we would read them and we couldn't understand them, then we would have to go back to the rebbe, usually the next morning in the *beit midrash*, very often the rebbes would come, or if not some other *rosh yeshivah* would be there, and you would learn how this reads, how do you read the text. He would explain to us what it was all about.

The other important thing is to learn how to ask questions. You can't just look at a text. You have to know what was bothering them. Why is this question in the text. Why does Rashi explain it this way? Why do *tosefot* understand it this way? How is this similar to another tract ate? See, you always had to keep in mind the whole picture. It can be very complicated, especially if you are not

trained in that kind of thing. Its very exhilarating, but the beginning is very tedious, very hard. If you get into it, there is a certain exhilaration that comes with it, an excitedness. Also, if you are not patient, you can't do it. If you are studying, sometimes this happens, you reach a certain level in your studies, and a new person comes into class who has very little background. You get grouped with this person, and you find that he is really dragging you down because you are working at this level, and this person is working at a much lower level, but you started at that level too, and someone helped you up. It is very much oriented toward students working with other students, helping each other. The rabbis were the mentors rather than the teacher. Most of the week that we were in yeshivah, most of the hours were with students, not with the teachers.

So the *chevruta* experience is probably the most important experience for anyone studying in yeshivah. Just think about it. You go into a room. Hundreds of people are studying Talmud, generally around the same tractate, chapters, more or less the same material. Lots of noise, tremendous amounts of noise. This one is reading the text orally. This one is pounding the table. This one is walking up and down. This one is shaking his hand, he can't figure out what it means. You see all this IQ, all this intellectual energy pushing itself to its limit, at the same time. It is very powerful incentive for you to push yourself to your limits. The beautiful thing about the *beit midrash* setting is the students all need each other. You argue with each other, your best friend. But you are saying. why are you saying that? Couldn't it mean something else? There is this tremendous dialectic that is taking place. You can't go into a *beit midrash* without feeling this dynamism. It's a phenomenal experience.

In graduate school, when you are doing research you go to the library, and in the library you have to be quiet. In the *beit midrash*, you are supposed to talk, you are supposed to make noise. Somehow or other, you don't lose your concentration. You concentrate better with all the noise in the background. And there is also a lot of give and take. There is also a lot of *kibitzing*. It's not all serious. You can't sit for three hours of studying time. People joking around, and you might take a break. It's not that serious. There is a high level of interchange among people. You have different relationships with people. You are studying in a *chevruta* with somebody, that person may or may not be your friend; it doesn't matter. You know that person's way of thinking more than anyone else. Five hours a day with the same person, you really understand the way that person thinks and they understand the way you think. You really develop a very profound relationship with the other person.

So if you want to talk about the yeshivah education system, I think it is true of any yeshivah, the most important issue is the *beit midrash*. Other than that, the rebbes are important, but the beit midrash is the central experience.

In our yeshivah Rev Soloveitchik was the great Talmud teacher of those days, but I never studied with him. He was too popular. I became a follower of Rev Soloveitchik later.... He would have about seventy or eighty students in the *shiur*. He might know a few of their names, especially if they sat in the front and he got to know them. His goal was to make the students know how to think. He was very challenging, very rigorous in his demands. He would come and give

shiur maybe two or three times a week. The rest of the time the students had to learn on their own, to try to catch up with what he was saying, to try to understand what he was teaching. He had top students of his, who when he wasn't there, they would give *shiur*.

This was a place of very high intellectual vision. I miss it. Anyone who has been in the yeshivah setting, and then is out of the yeshivah setting, misses it. I'm grateful for the time I had there.

Debbie: Did it make a difference that you came from a Sephardic background and most of the people were from an Ashkenazic background?

Rabbi Angel: It effected me because a) if there was a Yiddish speaking *shiur*, which is a practical disadvantage, but I overcame more or less, and the overall student body had no concept of who *sephardim* were or are. There were small things which I always found offensive or troublesome, but it didn't effect my education in terms of overall. There was no discrimination per se.

Debbie: How do you think it effects you now in terms of relationships to your congregants, or as a teacher and your relationships with students now? Do you think about what your experience was in the yeshivah and apply it today to your congregation?

Rabbi Angel: I don't think it's such an obvious connection. You study in graduate school, you get a Ph.D., so everything you learned is always going to come out in your sermon, because that is who you are. But you are not going to say this course in the Ph.D. program effected this class... Its a foundation of how you think, how you study, how you preach texts, how you interpret the texts and try to apply them to a modern situation. You look back with a certain amount of nostalgia.

Debbie: When you are teaching, do you think of one particular rebbe that you would like to be emulating?

Rabbi Angel: Each rebbe has his virtues and lack there of, and I don't think I had any rebbe in the talmudic department that I would like to be like one hundred percent, no, not at all. There are aspects of them that are valuable, but not all. I think I had some graduate teachers who I thought were wonderful.

In my days, the rebbe was just the teacher of Talmud, to turn on a generation of students to talmud. That was their job. Everything else was peripheral. Today, the *rosh yeshivah* has a different position. They are supposed to do all that, but then they somehow become role models for the students. Or *poskim* for the students: if you have questions you go to the rebbe. The rebbe has a whole new authority, and much more sway now, among the students, than in our day. In our day it wasn't so. All the rebbes were a rebbe. You studied with them. You got what you could get out of them. You liked them or you didn't like them. But no one ever saw the rebbe as a role model or saint model, or even one you

would come to with question of *halachah*. The whole last twenty-five years there has been an evolution in the role of the rebbe.

Debbie: Do you think your son would be interested in talking with me since he is a more recent graduate of Yeshivah University?...

[Rabbi Angel explains to his son what it was like when he was in the yeshivah as compared to what he understands it to be like now.]

Rabbi Chaim: My experience was that if you wanted to pursue a relationship with them, they were open to it. But other than that, you go to the *shiur* and that is it. I don't know that there is such a close bond between students and teachers. I did have a close relationship with them. Some went to them with personal questions, etc. I didn't.

Now eighty or ninety percent of the students go to Israel before coming to YU. They are trying to recreate that feeling that they had when they were in Israel....

Debbie: Do you have any more thoughts?

Rabbi Angel: What are you trying to learn from this study?

Debbie: I think that there is something to learn from the yeshivah model, the good and the bad. In the Reform Movement, we are so quick to go away from the traditional model that we aren't able to look to it for the good. I think there is something we can learn from it.

Rabbi Angel: The students who are studying Talmud have a belief in God, that God wrote all the texts. The religious component of it is great. It is very different if you believe it was written by human beings.... Even though everyone is struggling with the text, there is no question as to the correct answer.

Appendix B: Interview with Dr. Michael Chernick

Debbie: Tell me about your general experience.

Dr. Chernick: The RIETS is not typical of the yeshivah world, but I think it has become more typical. I was ordained in 1968, so the whole way of the yeshivah operated then is different. I am related by marriage to the *rosh yeshivah* at Telz Yeshivah in Cleveland. So that's a whole other picture.

My experience was that there was a continuous complaint about the relationship between the *talmidim* and their *rabbeim*. The students said that the relationship was not close. We came in; they came in. They gave a *shiur*; that was the end of it. We studied in the *beit midrash* in *chevrutot*. They were not necessarily there during that time. There was no expectation of being invited to *shabbas*, being invited to *seder*. Frankly, many of the students were close enough to go home, so they did. That was another piece of the issue.

Shabbat at YU then was no special event. Actually, the majority of the population would disappear for the weekend. The dorm people who had no other place to be would stay in the dorm. Now that dorm group did get some invitations from Jewish families, some of whom were very closely connected to YU. Some of them who were teaching Judaic subjects, though not many of them were *rabbeim*. Some of them were teaching in the graduate school. They may have had these students in their class.... That was interesting. Sometimes you would get more from the secular parts of the staff than from the *rabbeim*.

I think that part of the issue was the people who were teaching at that time. They were mostly European, it was amazing that anybody got any public education. For the most part these people gave the *shiurim* in Yiddish, though there was hardly a person in front of them that came with that language available to them. I had a desire to know Yiddish because I have Yiddish speaking grandparents and I wanted to access things from them. I took German in high school and German in college, so it was no problem. But that really put a barrier between us and them.

Along with the linguistic barrier, there was a cultural barrier. We were second, some of us were third generation Americans, Jews. They were Holocaust survivors, or people who had left and went to Shanghai. They remembered their experiences in Eastern European culture was completely different from what we were doing. They were sometimes extremely critical of the institution that they were teaching in, almost hostile to it. Here we had chosen to go to YU. There was a nostalgia for what was loss.

With the exception of a few parties, who in fact had gotten a secular education before hand. Including Joseph Soloveitchik, who had a Ph.D. in

philosophy; Rabbi Tiperstein, who had been a major leader in the Mizrachi. After that, there wasn't too much to talk about. One person, because he didn't quite fit the image, never got to be anything more. He was my thesis advisor. He got to teach in the graduate school, but never Talmud to he rabbinical students. I think he had a very good relationship with students; he had a very good relationship with me. He was generally very warm, nurturing. He was a Holocaust survivor, but he was only fifteen years old. His yeshivah experience was not the same either. He was more what is typical of what was.

Now at YU, you have a much more "yeshivasha" world, for better or for worse. I support them even though I'm not there anymore. If there were the same type of people as when I was there,... if they had taken over, you would see the same kinds of relationships between students and their teachers. What you do have is people who are studying in *chevrutot*, you have the *rabbeim* in front. You have the helpers; they are there. Soloveitchik was different. They were speaking each others language better, literally and figuratively. But that was an elite circle. You couldn't push your way in to that circle. You had to push yourself intellectually to be considered for his world.

What you see now is more and more students at YU not seeing their task as somehow finding a combination of Judaism and something else. What they are really here for is the Torah, and truth be told, if we wanted extra studies, you would go to Brooklyn College at night. And why would you go to Brooklyn College at night? To become accountants... They wouldn't take any extra stuff. Just what was necessary to complete a degree.

But more people are studying more hours in the *beit midrash* now than in my day. If you saw fifty to one hundred people studying in the *beit midrash* in my day, it would have been a miracle. People didn't study in the *beit midrash*. In the morning, you would start. Now, it is typical. You go in the morning, come back in the night. New Torah talks might be given.

The relationship now between the *rabbeim* and the *talmidim* is much, much closer. They are *mashpia*, have an influence. They are very much involved, hoping that this will cause a spiritual formation of the parties who are involved. To their credit, they are highly motivated by their ideology and that motivation is taken to the best educational and personal level possible. Not everybody is a good educator. Some people gave very mediocre *shiurim* from my perspective. They have a personal charisma with their students.... It's very nurturing, very sweet. And they are very serious about the proliferation of Torah.

There is a local synagogue, by my house, and he has a yeshivah style *beit midrash* every night. There are probably sixty or seventy people there every night. It has to do with the person here, who really cares. He cares about people, cares about the relationship. There are people who he has pulled in from other synagogues in town. Now when you bring in guest lecturers, you bring in famous people like.... (Flatbush?)

My uncle is the *rosh mechinah*. That means that he is the one who prepares the high school students for the day that they become rabbinical students. He deals with his students too intimately, in the sense that he is involved in every aspect of their lives. Telz doesn't want you to go home. At one time they made it

almost impossible for you to go home. When I say he is too intimately involved. He's there to study with them. He wants to know if there are any personal problems that you have. If he sees something that doesn't look right, he gets involved. You could say its caring, but you could also say its totalitarian.

You see this also at YU, is it totalitarian. To give an example, there were a group of YU students who were teaching in a particular program in Englewood, NJ, and all of a sudden, some of the funding came from...(liberal place), the *rosh yeshivah* told them that they had to pull out. There were a lot of questions. Some of the students who were supporting themselves, thought they were doing a good job teaching and disseminating Torah. All of a sudden they had to speak to authorities who could turn them away.

My uncle, as I said, is a "tough cookie". He sees his role as a role model, and *mashgiach*, an overseer. They tell their students exactly what they want from them. Either you like that model and you become that model, or you rebel and you leave it all together....

Debbie: What is your personal background? How did you get to the yeshivah? How did you wind up here?

Dr. Chernick: That's a short story. I don't come from an orthodox background. Neither do I consider myself *ba-al t'shevuah*. I think that's terrible terminology.... I was already well on the path to a traditional, modern Orthodox lifestyle, so I can't say that I suddenly discovered something. My family wasn't Orthodox. They were completely non-observant. My mother didn't light *shabbas* candles, etc. My father came from a much more traditional background than my mother did. My mother was an Odessa Jew.... My father was Lithuanian, and more traditional.

I was *bar mitzvahed* in a conservative synagogue, and pretty much an Orthodox staff, and there was a connection. There were a lot of people from this synagogue who wound up at YU. People wanted certain things, and the rabbi moved them toward that.

I wished that I could go to yeshivah in high school, my parents never bought that. They were committed to the public school. They thought I wouldn't know how to interact with non-Jews. Had something to do with that generation. It was a problem.

I did go to YU. That is what I really wanted to do. I went to the J.S.P., the Jewish Studies Program, for people with less of a background. I was at the higher end of that program, one year in J.S.P. I eventually graduated from the college. I debated whether to pursue English Literature or to continue with Jewish studies. I said, look, this is what I really came here to do. There are many people in English Literature, but how many people really care about *yahadut*. So I went to ordination. I choose not to take the M.H.L. You had to have something with your ordination. That was true until they formed the Kollel. So you had to get an M.H.L, but you couldn't turn that into a Ph.D. An M.A, could be turned into the Ph.D..... So I took the M.A.

I wasn't quite sure whether I liked the idea if the rabbinate. I married someone who didn't want to live in a "fishbowl". I was a very good teacher, having worked in day schools and in Yeshivah High School, and I liked what I was doing in terms of Jewish studies. Then of course came another question. Do you focus on Talmud, or Jewish thought. That was a very hard choice. So I finally said look. The center of rabbinic Judaism has been the *Talmudim*, not Jewish thought, so take it that way.

So like all graduate students, I was in debt. So I was working two jobs. Finally I got to the end of my core courses. I went to the Dean's office and said, I'm done. Now, if I have to keep all these jobs, I'll never get my thesis done. I need something where I'm not running from here to there, etc. There were no fellowships.... Either you want me to get the doctorate or you don't. About two months later I get a call from the registrar. She says the Dean wants to speak to me. I was worried that something was wrong. I walked into his office. He said I have a proposition, but you may have to think about it. The professor of Talmud and other halachic literature at HUC had retired, and they needed somebody. So I think, what is there to think about.

I was worried what the relationship would be with my in-laws.... There are all kinds of Jews. My parents..... So I came here (HUC), and there were two other people from my institution who came here. At some level, at least the graduate school faculty, had discussed whether they ought to be recommending anybody to non-Orthodox institutions.... All I know is you don't get in anywhere without your academy supporting you. I interviewed a couple months later.

Debbie: Do you think that you have a different relationship with your students here (HUC) because you come from this yeshivah background?

Dr. Chernick: I think I try to deliver to the students here what I see as an ideal in the yeshivah world. The students who cared had a picture of what it would be like to have a relationship with the teachers.

Debbie: You are certainly in a different situation than most of our professors.

Dr. Chernick: Students will tell you, to the extent that it is possible. I try to invite students for shabbat. Not for all students, because it's not for all students. If they don't have a framework.... I like to make it available for people.

I know what I wanted. I know what most people didn't get.

Appendix C: Interview with Dr. Michael Klein

Debbie: I just wondered if you could tell me briefly what your background is in terms of the Yeshiva world.

Dean Klein: Well, you know I come from an Orthodox background, strictly Orthodox, and I had been studying in the yeshivah setting from the very beginning, from kindergarten and first grade. I learned to read Hebrew and Yiddish. The language of instruction was Yiddish and the language we were learning was Hebrew. I knew a little bit of Yiddish from home as well. That made it all easier. I stayed through elementary school, high school, and four years of yeshivah after high school, five years actually. So it was a long stretch. Where in those days atleast, starting with the mid 1940's and going up to the mid 1960's, we're talking about generally half day, the morning being devoted to the religious studies and the afternoons being devoted to the secular studies, as required by the state of New York. So it was a combination. So it isn't quite as extreme as the *charedim* are today, who may devote an hour or two to English and mathematics in the States and here in Israel it would be mathematics and maybe some English.

It wasn't about program in those days. In fact on Sundays we only had religious studies because the teachers of the secular studies who came from public schools did morning jobs elsewhere. That meant we were getting regular instruction in the secular subjects, only in the afternoon hours. Nowadays I think the yeshivah system is different where you have Orthodox people teaching the secular subjects as well, and they have more control. If I think of a biology class today in a yeshivah high school, it will be different than it was then.

The high school studies were also balanced with some half day secular studies. The secular studies were all pretty high level. I remember in our graduating class that there must have been about ten students who won New York state scholarships. College wasn't totally discouraged in those days, and there were certain subjects that were considered to be kosher/parve. If you studied math or engineering or accounting, things of that sort that didn't challenge your religious beliefs, that was fine. Any of the people who had to take basic liberal arts courses, like a philosophy course or a literature course, generally the yeshivah "poo-pooed" those courses. You studied it because that is what the *goyim* required. Or the college you went to required. But you didn't take them seriously because you had the Torah and the Torah had all the truth in it. There was no need to suffer and there was no way to challenge it either. There were only a few sensitive students who took it a little more seriously, who may have had their minds opened or their minds were opened before or whatever, or were influenced by some of these questions.

I can remember in a Literature 101 course, freshman English, a woman who taught at Brooklyn College, who was Jewish, and was apparently from a family of Holocaust survivors. She wasn't in any way observant. The first subject we had to write on was the "Ultimate Concern". And of course as a *yeshivah bocher* I knew what the ultimate concern was, I just had to paraphrase Moshe Chaim ... And that this world was only a corridor leading to the next world, and there is the great light and there is the great special light preserved for the *tzaddikim*, who will sit around the table with their *tallitot* on their heads and enjoy the emanations derived. I remember after writing this up, thinking what is this light. I was shaken a bit. We were using words without really knowing what their content is and I tried to explain that it was knowledge of truth and revelation and all the things that we say we will understand when Mashiach comes. When *Eliyahu haNavi* comes and reveals the truth of the Torah. Those problems that go unresolved until the disputes, but deep down I wasn't satisfied with that.

I got some exposure to the fine arts, and some of the Greek and Roman literature, and as it turned out, there was something outside of the Torah itself and beyond Orthodox interpretation, and this whole saying about :"turn it and everything can be found in it" wasn't quite accurate. There was something outside of Torah.... I think that was an opening to the outside. I took a year off from college and went to the Hebrew University in 1962. I decided that even though I was a mathematics major, I had taken a lot of liberal arts along the side, ... I decided to devote the year in Israel to Jewish studies. Here I was really exposed to a critical reading of those classical texts that I had studied from traditionally, nearly fundamental points of view, and that was the second revelation. Then I went on to graduate school and studied ancient near eastern civilizations, and the comparative work, the Egyptian writings..., and the legends that are very similar to our own. That had a great influence. I think that basically ... I came to HUC as an archeological fellow - not as a rabbinic student. I came back to Israel in 1976 for HUC and I've been here ever since. Coming by chance to HUC, helped me find that balance between the two. Reform Judaism recognizes free inquiry and recognizes comparative studies, not only recognized but encourages, and though they are not complete with the moral and ethical teachings, but they are in support of them. That's basically how I got here.

Debbie: You have an interesting perspective because you are involved in a worlJ which is completely different than the world in which you grew up. There are a lot of people who have left the yeshivah world but don't necessarily become active in another world. Are there things that when you reflect on that were positive experiences from the yeshivah world?

Dean Klein: Yes, I think the basic knowledge of the classical texts, even if I studied them from a different point of view, even an innocent and naive point of view, but because I was a good student, I really studied lots and lots of texts, even more than what was required. I can remember going during the summer months to a private tutor in Talmud. So I think that all of that background puts me in good standing to this very day. I'm involved in the translations of the Bible in my

own field of research. I enjoy it, but it is from a different point of view. Not that every word is obligatory and applicable to daily life, but certainly part of the general background, to be considered seriously. Some of it needs to be rejected, like the value of life of a non-Jew, or the value of life of a woman, vis a vis that of a Jewish man. Those are things in the Mishnah that we can't accept today. But it doesn't mean that we don't study them. And it doesn't mean that I have to apologize for them either.

Debbie: When you think back, since my topic is specifically the relationship between teacher and student in the yeshivah, do you recall any relationships that you had in the yeshivah which had a positive impact on you?

Dean Klein: I think that I had a little advantage, I can't say what the overall experience was, but certainly having been an outstanding student in Jewish studies, and also in the secular studies, I think the *rabbanim*, the *rabbeim*, the *roshei yeshivah* were all very encouraging. I don't think that many young students - I was the youngest student in 1957 in Lakewood, NJ at the yeshivah, and I don't know how many had the personal interest he took in me. He would call me over after the *shiur* and say (in Yiddish).. things that were very encouraging. And even before that I was lucky enough to have a lot of Holocaust survivors from the old European Mir Yeshivah, who had gone through Shanghai. They fled to Shanghai and stayed there during the war years. Half were brought by Rabbi Finkel to Israel and half were brought by Rabbi Kalnetowitz to the states, and others. These rabbis came just about when, I was born in 1940, and in 1947 I think I started studying with these people, a year or two after W.W.II.

I think they had a profound influence and they took a personal interest, also. They were always talking to our parents abut our progress and if came to writing about *mitzvah*, a sermon or something like that, it was with one of these rabbis. A classroom teacher who you were studying with during the summer extra Talmud. They were very devoted, and they saw it as a mission, as how it survived, and knowing that so many of the *yeshivot* were totally destroyed, the Mir Yeshivah did survive, it was their mission to propagate Torah and give it a boost in this new country, and I think they did very well.

Debbie: Were they involved in your lives or you in theirs outside of the studies, but in a general way, in terms of leading a life of Torah?

Dean Klein: Well, you know these summer studies that I referred to were in their house, in Rabbi Moshe Rider's house, and ... was the son of the *mashgiach*, but I don't know that we had that much real personal contact. We knew relatives of theirs who were in the same Agudat Yisroel circle, so that maybe brought us together a little bit. I think the disadvantage was that they were still immigrants. My father came to the US in 1920, so by 1945, we were all born in the States, but I think as immigrants they were still struggling to get established. They had other agendas as well. So some of them had children our ages. Their lives were interrupted by the war. I think their personal contact was a little more limited.

And maybe they also stuck among themselves to a certain extent. In other words, these rabbis from the Mir yeshivah who had been through four or five difficult years of going from Poland through the far east and then coming back to the States, they had their own click so to speak, in terms of social life. Now, in one case I know where Rabbi Rider's wife was related to a family who were friends of ours, so that was initial contact.

Debbie: If you have any suggestions, I would love any suggestions.

Dean Klein: The one thing that I come in contact with by being over here, at H.U.C., is they think that if they are going to be studying the ... then it will be authentic, and I don't think they really understand what goes into it. In this particular case, the *chevruta* business, I think that without knowing it, they do study in *chevruta*. You know, some people like to study alone, and some people like to study in pairs, and some people like to study in groups, and when you prepare a text for class, people very often do study in the library in groups of two or three anyway. *Chevruta* was that we all sat in a large study hall, maybe one hundred or one hundred fifty *yeshivah bochurs*, and we are sitting in pairs and studying. there was a *mashgiach* in the corner, and we could be there for an hour and a half or two hours, reading the Talmud passage in advance. Then we would break up into groups of twenty or twenty-five and go into a classroom. The *rosh yeshivah* would read the passage and explain and maybe bring some of the *mifarshim*, and then we would go back in the afternoon and review. So there was preparation, lecture and review. And maybe during the lecture he might call on someone to read a passage, so it might even be a recitation. So it is basically the same as what we are doing now.

So if people really want to have it organized, I finally come around. So this coming year, there is a resource person, who is really the equivalent of the *mashgiach*. Now this resource person is going to be available in the library maybe two hours every afternoon. He is really the resource person while people are preparing. Whether they are preparing individually, whether they are preparing in *chevruta*, they can come to him if they have a difficulty in a passage or even if they have difficulty in the grammatical issue for modern Hebrew rather than in the text course. I think that maybe this will give people a little more feeling of authenticity and fulfillment of another study method, a study technique. So here is maybe borrowing a method from the old system.

Also maybe one of the psychology's is that when you grow up with one thing you look for something new and when you reveal it you are sometimes swept off your feet. So I come from a very broad exposure to Jewish classical studies, and yet I have been exposed to a critical approach, and apply that. On the other hand, I see a lot of students who come in who are Jewishly deprived, even though they have their "camp experience". They still haven't really studied classical Jewish sources in any great quantity, and when they are exposed to them, they can be overwhelmed, they want to get to the truth, and they are very resistant to criticism of the text. And sometimes they are overwhelmed by some of the observances and just the outside observances, and some of them go overboard and

wear *tzitzit* and *kipot* and *tallitot,* which don't have all that much significance, though they could have personal meaning for a particular person. That's fine, and I don't in any way interfere with people's personal observances. We don't require any observances here, except for the few rules that the college has: what goes on the *bimah*.... Issue of men wearing a *kipah* on the *bimah* at the Jerusalem school... However, in class, when studying the texts, I don't want them to take an apologetic approach to the texts, which is what a traditional approach would do. If there is a text which has a problem of moral or ethical problem, you need to face up to it, an criticize it, and even reject it. You have to consider the other side. In one's personal life, one should be making the same kind of decision. I would differentiate between the personal observance and the classroom practice....

I guess by the time they are through with four or five years of HUC, they have been exposed to many more texts and many professors, and the shock effect has worn off. I would like to get students to realize that rabbinic school is not Kutz Camp. Banging on the table during *Birkat Hamazon* is good to get children to learn the stuff, but one gets to rabbinic school and realizes that it is as important as *Shmonah Esray*.... Another question of perspective. It is our responsibility, the faculty's, to bring it to the attention of the student's.

Appendix D: Interview with Rabbi Asher Lopatin

Debbie: Tell me in detail about your background.

Rabbi Asher: I lived in California until I was seven or eight, Orthodox, but not fully observant home. We were traditional. We would drive to synagogue. We would have Friday night, shabbat lunch, and I went to public school through second grade. Then we went to Israel for four years and there we became *shomer shabbas* and basically observant. I went to a religious public school in Israel until sixth grade. Then we came back to the states and we moved to Boston. There I went to Maimonides, which is a modern orthodox day school, for seventh through eleventh grade. At twelfth grade I had enough credit so I didn't have to go.

I came to yeshivah in Chicago to Brisk, which is Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik's yeshivah. It was recommended to me because my principal at Maimonides had studied with Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik. It was quite a small yeshivah. The high school had fifteen or twenty kids, and the *beit midrash*, the program I went into, had maybe twenty students. I went there for a year, and my main *chevruta* was Rav Aaron's son, who was a year older than me. I was in Rev Moshe Soloveitchik's yeshivah, Rav Aaron's older son.

Then I went to Boston University, for three years, and I would come back to Chicago for summers, the summer after my first year and my second year. There I studied with Reb Aaron Soloveitchik. Then I took off a year from college, after my junior year, and studied with Rev Aaron for *smicha*. We studied *trafot* and *nidah*. He gave a *shiur* four days a week, and his second oldest son gave a *shiur* twice a week. Since I still studied with Chaim (his son) not as my main *chevruta*, but as my *chevruta*, we used to go to his house once a month or so. He lived with his parents.

Then after that I went back to Boston University, graduate, and another summer in Brisk. Then I went to England to do graduate work in Islamic studies. Then I decided that I wanted to be a rabbi. I went to Yeshivah University for *smicha*, but Rav Aaron taught there also, so I was in his *shiur* for two years. The first year, the most important thing I did was I was his *mishamesh*, or *misharesh*, his helper. He would come in from Chicago on Tuesdays afternoons and leave Thursday evenings, and he would be in New York for three days, and I was with him. He had an apartment and I stayed in the next room. I got him his meals and really was with him a lot. When he went to speak I went with him. At night, if he woke up at night and needed anything, I spent a lot of time, and you see a different side, a human side. How he copes with different things in life and his attitude in life.

Then I went to Israel for my third year of Yeshivah University to the Brisk Kollel, and he is still in Chicago, and I still keep in touch with him. I call him with *sh'-a-lot* a lot. He is one of my *poskim* that I consult, one of my authorities. I also have a close relationship with Danny Landis, (used to be the assist of a museum, then rabbi in Los Angeles.) who is at Pardes now. That's because I know him from the Wexner Graduate Fellowship.

Debbie: When you first came here to study at Brisk, what was it like in terms of the relationship with Rev Aaron?

Rabbi Lopatin: I was close with Moshe Soloveitchik so I would go to his home a lot as a kid, with his family, with his wife then (he got divorced), really asking for a lot of guidance. I was very religious then, but on a lot of issues, really asking him, attitudes toward death penalty, attitude toward college, or television, the outside world. You know, I wasn't as close that year, but also to the whole Soloveitchik family. Not just interested in learning the Gemara, but really developing an attitude toward life and mitzvot. They wanted me to stay a second year, but I didn't. It wasn't like I just took everything they said, but I was definitely interested in more than just the learning.

When I was in my second full year at Yeshivah University, when I was in Rav Aaron's class, there is really a desire to find the favor of the teacher, to get eye contact. I was in a competitive environment in Boston. It was really a desire to have a relationship, a special relationship with the teacher, with the Rebbe. It's hard. The Soloveitchik's are kind of difficult. In some ways there are very warm, but they are very close with their family and its hard to break in. I didn't have any allusions that I was his closest *talmid*, but one time I had a question and he gave some quick answer, and then he called me back and gave a better answer. That kind of thing is sort of exciting, that you feel you have some impact or relationship with the rebbe. I guess you really feel that you have some impact on his thinking. But it was still, taking his attitude toward the frum world was very important. These people are so externally religious and they are not internally. That attitude meant a lot, it would get us all excited when he talked about that. I was modern Orthodox, though not everyone in the yeshivah was. Whenever he showed this idea that resonated with my thinking, it was great. There was a bond there. Since it was a mixture of getting his way of thinking, being influenced by him, but it was important to be resonated the way I was thinking. I guess that's the idea of *asey l'cha rav*....

And then the year that I spent with him when I was his *mishamesh* at Yeshivah University, that's really, you know its frustrating to deal with a rav as a human being, but in the tradition you are supposed to do *shimush*, discussed in the Gemarah, you know really seeing him in different situations, dealing with people in different ways, and how he dealt with pain, because he had a stoke in 1983, so how he dealt with pain. And he would open up some as to his relationship with different rebbes that he had, and that was fascinating. I guess it was a real desire to see him as a human being, and to understand. Those things were very exciting. When you see that he has real human emotions. That was very exciting. It was

frustrating at times when you see that someone is not perfect, but then there are times when they are super men, how they deal with difficult situations, with pain. It was very interesting to see his relationship with his wife. You didn't see very much in yeshivah, but you see it more when his wife wants him to wear a coat, and this, all sorts of things in how he deals with that. That had a big influence on me and both in understanding him and doing some of that in the way I live my life.

Debbie: It sounds like when he would come to NY, you had a unique relationship with him. Did other students have a relationship with him?

Rabbi Lopatin: Yes, there were students with whom he had a close relationship like when I was studying here (in Chicago). There were students he was even closer to, who had learned with him for many more years than I had, and gave all of their time, and there was always a relationship with people who go way back. Chaim Soloveitchik, when he is in Boston, is very different than when he is at Yeshivah University as a professor. There are other students that had a closer relationship. I was probably one of the students who was more modern, involved in the outside world, I was one of the closer ones. Clearly, I knew people who would drive him then..., the difference for me is that I was coming so much from the outside, college, living on campus, to the yeshivah, I don't know if it was just my perception, but I felt unique in that sense. Because the other people were in Chicago or around, and they had an ongoing relationship. I was lucky and special to come right from the outside into a close relationship, somewhat unique. Rev Aaron's perception, was that there was something that they liked about me, almost a guest in that sense. I don't want to say honored guest, but something like that.

Debbie: You have a somewhat unique perspective because you went to public school and regular college, so when you think of the relationship you had in the yeshivah with Reb Soloveitchik or other teachers you had in the yeshivah, and then you compare it to your experience in Boston University or public school, do you see a big difference?

Rabbi Lopatin: I guess the constancy, that you are every day with that rebbe. I did develop mentor relationships with professors in college. Its much more tense seeing him every day, the rebbe. There is a loyalty that develops. There is more of a desire to have a closeness with a rebbe. With a professor its great if you have that. Now I know at Yeshivah University that the rabbeim don't have time for the students, and they don't develop that close relationship, so a lot of students don't really have rabbeim they can call when they have questions of advice. I don't know that I would ask Rev Aaron advice about things, though some students would. There are some students who would, I guess who had a closer relationship, and they would ask about marriage and *sh'duchim,* and I wouldn't. See that's something, maybe they were closer and could open up. A lot of the students at Yeshivah University can't go to their *rabbeim* with that.

Debbie: Was it his decision to have only twenty students in the yeshivah?

Rabbi Lopatin: No. It's much smaller now. They just didn't know how to be administrators. I don't know if it was the dynamics of Chicago, where he is politically, middle of the road, not super frum and not total modern, but it wasn't his choosing. In some ways he gives a shiur to two people in an auditorium for fifty people. Sometimes you have to look hard, dig under the surface, to find the warmth, to feel that there is some relationship.

I guess the most exciting thing, how I know what he thinks of me, is once he was talking to another rabbi, and the rabbi was chatting about women's *minyanim* and whether I supported them, and Rev Aaron said: no Asher, he's okay. A lot of is real perception. He didn't choose to have a small yeshivah, though there are many *roshei yeshivot* who choose that. It was just my luck.

And I think that Boston University and Oxford was the type of place where you could develop a real close relationship to a professor, and even though it was a big place, they seemed really interested, and would follow it up, the relationship, and talking about the subject. There was one professor who I was close with, who taught Arabic, and he really got me in to Islamic studies at Boston University. It doesn't work when everyone wants this attention.

Debbie: Do you think it occurred because you had the role model at Yeshivah, and it was your desire when you went to Boston University and Oxford to have these relationships with your professors?

Rabbi Lopatin: It's true. I think at Maimonides I felt starved. Now maybe its just my character. The perception was that the only way to get closer to a teacher was to get good grades, and I was always trying other ways of arguing, but ultimately that was the ones who got A's. But that was something that was so different with Rav Soloveitchik. He would spend hours talking. And there was also a point where they didn't want to shape me, they didn't want to mold me into something. They were very open to talking and discussing. I was starved for that, because at Maimonides that just wasn't there. They didn't see it as wonderful that they wanted to talk - they got frustrated. It was very different.

Yeshivah was very different, first with Moshe Soloveitchik, and with Reb Aaron, maybe it was that time think again, just being able to spend, whether its in class, spending hours and hours every day, and then maybe that really carried over to other places, for I saw that that was possible.

Debbie: Certainly not everyone goes to Boston University or to Oxford and takes advantage of that.

Rabbi Lopatin: Right. That definitely might have been a model. I saw that it worked., that it was a satisfying experience, because at Maimonides it wasn't. I would spend so much time after class and then I would do terribly on the exams, and he would say you should have just been studying instead of wasting your

time - it was very different. I guess the ideal is finding a rebbe that allows you to be yourself, and that is what I found very much in Reb Aaron, and in Reb Moshe. That is why it really resonated. Not trying to change me, but really letting me to be myself.

Debbie: Do you think that your experiences with Reb Aaron and your other teachers have impacted you as a teacher? in your congregation?

Rabbi Lopatin: Yes. That is what I love most about being a rabbi is spending time with people. To some extent, I think you are right, when I give a class. I think that I value relationships, spending time with people and shmoozing. You know, parts of the rabbinate like the kiddush, really being able to interact with people as a human being. Really emphasizing human contact. I don't know what came first. I don't know whether this system resonated with me, rebbe-students , and that's what I liked doing, but, coincidentally or whatever, it is what I like most about my job, that is the way I see teaching, spending time with people, meeting with people, almost emphasizing the shimush part rather than just teaching a class and that is it, or just giving a sermon. I have more confidence when you meet with people one on one and in groups. So it probably did have that influence.

Yeshivah worked for me. I think if it hadn't worked for me, than things would have been different.

Debbie: Do you have any last minute thoughts?

Rabbi Lopatin: I think I got very lucky. A lot of it, I feel bad for people at Yeshivah University, anywhere else where people are floating around a big place and can't find someone to really guide them, and some people do. I do feel very fortunate that that happened. It all seems to work when you choose a rav that you follow, and I don't follow him one hundred percent, there are some issues, like attitude toward reform Jews. I feel that if Reb Aaron was sensitized to the issues, he would change. It's important that I don't feel that I'm abandoning his ways. I've seen in different decisions that he has made, in other areas that he would come around. That is what I see a lot his talmidim do. Each one has a different perception of who Rev Aaron is. Sometimes I feel vindicated. But I know other people see him as this frum guy. And others view him as the one who is fighting peace, Israel, who is a Jew. It's very interesting that this same rebbe, who is such an important part of many people's lives, who really is a guide for many people, is very different. I recognize that. That doesn't bother me, because I know who he really is, but I understand that other people have a different perspective of him. Some people who have studied with him for many years have a different perspective.

That seems to be part of *aseh l'cha rav*, the rebbe-*talmid* relationship, just affirming what the *talmid* wants to get out of the rebbe.

Appendix E: Interview with Rabbi Sol Roth

Debbie: Tell me your general background

Rabbi Roth: I have studied in the yeshivah all my life. I started in the Rabbi Solomon Kuger Yeshivah, which was located down the road, and from there, at a young age, probably ten or eleven, I went over to Yeshivah ..., and I studied there through high school Then I went to RIETS, which is Yeshivah University, and I spent about 6 or 7 years there. I have a good background in yeshivah studies

Debbie: I'm particularly interested in the relationships between teachers and students within the environment. I don't know if you have anything specific in this area. I'm looking specifically at the differences between what we see in the yeshivah versus what we see in the secular world.

Rabbi Roth: Well, I would say that the biggest difference between the relationship between teachers and students in the yeshivah. Let me explain more. I also got a masters degree in mathematics from Columbia, and I have a Ph.D. from Columbia. So I have a background in secular studies as well. The crucial difference between the yeshivah and the secular is that there really was no relationship in the secular world....

The fact that in the yeshivah the teacher or the rebbe was so outstanding made a great contribution. Of course the staff was present as well. I was a student of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, who was a philosophic genius.... The teacher was the connection with the Almighty. The teacher was someone who communicated God's word.

Going to Columbia, going to a secular school is an intellectual experience. Going to Yeshivah is both intellectual and also religious.

Debbie: Can you tell me a little bit about your experience with Rabbi Soloveitchik.

Rabbi Roth: I wasn't close with him like students were. They in effect became his assistants, not so much by way of grading or preparation of lectures. Some people provided for his physical needs. He traveled and he needed to get to and from the airport. Helping him in the apartment.

My relationship with him was first of all one as a student and later on we would discuss halachic matters, issues related to the Jewish community. A lot of people wanted to study with him, to hear his lectures. His lectures were in many ways a dialogue. He would ask questions. He would ask the students to repeat, to

clarify on the commentator's perspectives, what they had to say on the subject. Then he would begin to comment by way of analyzing the different positions. And he would make sure that there was some level of understanding of the material. This was his great strength. A magician par excellence. He had an imaginative mind.

He performed the act of both rabbi and talmudist, of both analysis and synthesis. He was able to analyze the shiur and he was able to link back the issue to other issues, including the structure. Generally speaking, there would be dialogue. Every lecture was about two hours. In my day, he would lecture on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, because he would come from Boston. I remember very often that we would have to spend long hours on Tuesday nights in order to prepare for the Wednesday lecture, and then we would have the rest of the week to prepare for the Tuesday lecture.

Debbie: Do you see your yeshivah experience as having had a positive effect on things that you did later in life?

Rabbi Roth: Well, obviously the yeshivah experience had an impact on my life. I found the experience in yeshivah very gratifying. Of course, the attitude that I learned there I have generally retained. I hold those attitudes in some of my relationships now.

It was also significant so that when I did do my Ph.D., I did not attend all the lectures. I applied the process of analysis that I had learned in the talmudic studies from Rabbi Soloveitchik.

Debbie: Do you see any not so positive aspects of the yeshivah world?

Rabbi Roth: Its interesting. I have to think about it. The positive aspects absolutely outweigh the negative aspects. I enjoyed my experience with the yeshivah. I can't think of a single negative aspect....

Debbie: Did you teach in the Yeshivah University?

Rabbi Roth: Yes. When I had just graduated from college I was advised to teach mathematics. After I got a Ph.D., I came back to teach there, and I have been teaching ever since. I am still on the faculty of Yeshivah University.

Debbie: When you were teaching in Yeshivah University and other places, did you feel you went back to thinking about how your teachers taught you?

Rabbi Roth: Whatever I absorbed during my days at the yeshivah became part of my personality. No, I would not say that I focused on the actual event. I tried to replicate the material which I had learned. It was something that was acquired. It was without thinking.

Debbie: Do you think similar in your life as a pulpit rabbi?

Rabbi Roth: Sure. Sure. Perhaps a little too much so. I tend to be more scholarly than popular.

Debbie: Do you have any other thoughts on this topic?

Rabbi Roth: Not really, except for the fact that I would like to see this relationship growing. Students developing more respect for teachers.

How do we get more spirit? By cleaving to the *chachamim*.

He is very hopeful about Reform, the future, etc. The framework needs to be understood.

When a parent says that there is democracy in the home, and a child gets an equal vote, there is something wrong.

Debbie: Some of the people said they felt a difference between the talmud classes and the rest of the classes. Did you feel such a difference?

Rabbi Roth: I would agree. I think that that has been my experience as well. The teachers of Talmud presented with more respect. It had to do with the subject matter. Jewish history is not the same as the study of the Talmud. The Bible was different. It wasn't the code of Jewish law.

Appendix F: Interview with Rabbi Dovid Spettner

Debbie: We can simply begin by you telling me a little bit about your general background.

Rabbi Spettner: I left my home at an early age, at thirteen, and I had a very different experience. I was at a yeshivah called Ner Yisroel, which had a college campus setting. My sister and brother-in-law were living there at the time. My sister is ten years my senior and she had always been like a second mother to me. They made the adjustment a little easier.

Very quickly there was the development of the role by the rebbe, particularly in the high school setting. Certainly it depended greatly on your own personality. I became very close to the first two teachers that I had. The way it functions there is that for your Torah studies, you are primarily with one rebbe. There is one primary rebbe atleast. So you develop quite a relationship with him, which was good....

My first rebbe I was very close to. I still always think about him. I was so close to him that about a month and a half after I had arrived at the yeshivah, my sister was expecting. My brother-in-law came and woke me up in the middle of the night, and I was so in awe with my rebbe that I thought it was him, not my own family. Why that image would come to my mind. I even recall a weekend I spent at home the following summer. I had just gotten a letter from that rebbe. I remember being impressed that our first summer away he was sending us letters. He said he was taking a trip into the midwest, and the closest he was going to get to St. Louis, where I grew up, was Columbus, Ohio. I remember thinking that, for the first time in my life, I was eating Friday night alone. I remember thinking that just maybe this rebbe was going to surprise me and come a little bit further.

I have to say that the rebbes in ninth grade and tenth grade it really set the tone for me up until my adult years. I wound up staying in the yeshivah for eighteen years....

Debbie: What did you do for those eighteen years?

Rabbi Spettner: I was four years in high school and four years post high school. At that point, I began to start to study with the Kollel. Perhaps in my fifth year after high school. The Kollel there was a lot more practical rabbinics. More of what we would call honing the mind in Talmudic reasoning, per se. There was

more of a focus on applying the information learned. You are working at a whole other level of scholarship.

I did that for some years, actually I took off a year to work in New York. All during this time I was looking for my wife, who luckily I found and we got married. We remained there for a number of more years. Eventually I became a pulpit rabbi. But being in the yeshivah for eighteen years, I got to know a lot of people. That was really the basics for my networking skills. It helped me to find people for the Kollel here. I was able to call all over the world. I knew a lot of people from that experience.

Debbie: This yeshivah is one of the larger yeshivot, right?

Rabbi Spettner: Yes. I don't know exactly where it is right now. One of the rabbis from there was just out here. He and I were talking about where the yeshivah is now. It had about one-hundred fifty students in the high school and about 200 at the college level and maybe another fifty or sixty at the Kollel level. Now today the Kollel is probably one-hundred fifty. However, they try to keep the teacher-student ratio very low.

Back to the story. The next two years in high school I didn't have the same type of relationships as I did the first two years. I didn't have the same needs and they weren't the same people. I still felt very close to the previous rebbes. In post high school, many went to study in Israel. I didn't.

There were different types of students in the yeshivah who enjoyed different aspects of yeshivah learning. I was never a student interested so much in the lecture. That was not my thing. The lecture was an adjunct for me. I liked the group study. Some of the rebbes emphasized their lectures. Others didn't.

There was an extra evening class that a number of us took in the Kollel. The rebbe would come in cold, perhaps not having seen the material for eight years, and we would all prepare.

You know that there is a rebbe in Jerusalem who speaks to approximately one thousand students each week. He is at the Mir Yeshivah. He teaches on radio. He has different levels of his *shiurim*. He allows people to speak and interrupt him. He doesn't like to see himself as a regular yeshivah teacher.

Debbie: Did all the rebbes at your yeshivah speak English?

Rabbi Spettner: Oh yes. They were all American born. They were from all over the United States: New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, California. Many of them did speak Yiddish, but most didn't speak it in the classroom.

Debbie: What was your schedule like in the yeshivah?

Rabbi Spettner: It would change in the different periods of being in the yeshivah. In the high school it was different than the college or the Kollel. They gave us a lot of freedom to work with the texts. I actually spent one day at a yeshivah in Philadelphia when I was in high school, but I was struck by the differences

between the two yeshivot. The preparation was very different. You the preparation differently and the expectations were very different.

Debbie: Do you think that the relationships you developed in the yeshivah helped to develop who you are as a teacher?

Rabbi Spettner: Certainly it had an impact. I grew up with that. I think most definitely.

Debbie: Is every one who is working in the Kollel here from your yeshivah?

Rabbi Spettner: All but one. But that was just the way things happened. I didn't plan it that way.

Actually, we have a conference call with our *rosh yeshivah* every week, all of us here at he Cincinnati Kollel. I also call and talk to people at the yeshivah al of the time. There is no reason for us to reinvent the wheel when they have already done this. They have all the people who started the building there available to us, so why not take advantage of it?

Debbie: Do a lot of people study with the *rosh yeshivah* long distance?

Rabbi Spettner: I don't think a lot of people do? But before we started the yeshivah here we said we wanted to remain students of Torah. I don't know if we study it because we like what we are studying or because it is a way to study with this particular person.

One interesting thing that I realized is the issue of time management. I realize how important it is.

Appendix G: Interview with Rabbi Bernard Zlotowitz

Debbie: If you can just tell me a little bit about your background.

Rabbi Zlotowitz: I haven't been in the yeshivah in over fifty years. I came from an orthodox background. I went to public school. Then I went to the yeshivah. I went on to RIETS, that is Yeshivah University. I went to college at night, since I was in the yeshivah during the day. I went to Brooklyn College. Then I came to Columbia to get a masters degree, then to HUC t to get a doctorate.

Debbie: Can you reflect at all about your experience in the yeshivah?

Rabbi Zlotowitz: I wasn't one of he best behaved students. We studied all day, nine to three we had Hebrew studies, and until six we studied English, Monday through Thursday and then Sunday. Friday was a half day. I would come home on weekends if I came home.

The relationship with teachers and students was impersonal, that I remember. The model of the yeshivah that I came from was the one in Chaim Grades's The Yeshivah. Rabbi Yaffe was his name. They were very concerned about you. If you didn't do well, they were worried. There were very few students. In the afternoon the whole yeshivah would listen to the rosh yeshivah giving mussar. That was the whole foundation of the yeshivah. Rabbi Yaffe would expand upon the many topics of mussar. The student teacher relationship did vary.

Debbie: You went out and got other education in the secular world.... Did you find there were differences between your secular education and your more positive memories of the yeshivah experience?

Rabbi Zlotowitz: Secular education, most of it was different. Brooklyn College I went at night, so it was different. At night you are only allowed to take six credits, so I got out of college in five years....

Debbie: Did you establish relationships with teachers in Brooklyn College or your other institutions?

Rabbi Zlotowitz: I really didn't have a relationship with any of the teachers in person. If you were serious, they took you seriously. I did have a relationship with a German refugee professor. She wasn't Jewish. She and I developed a very close relationship. Another teacher...

I was going to work on a Ph.D. with a ... but he got sick, and that is why I came to HUC to get a DHL. He and I were very close.

Debbie: You had an interesting experience because you went to yeshivah and then you also went to HUC. Were they very different experiences?

Rabbi Zlotowitz: Very. At HUC, we were the class who resisted being transferred to Cincinnati, and we were ordained in NY. Now, this was a totally different style. Students were different. The whole faculty was available to us. We always called them properly. They always cared for us.

I was married at the time, holding down many jobs. What I remember we were very, very close with the faculty.... But we always used the title.

The yeshivah experience was still very different. One of the great things I leaned at HUC was how to have respect for the talmud. In the yeshivah, there was no concept on historical perspective. That's what I leaned from HUC.

Debbie: When you teach now, do you ever use what you learned in the yeshivah?

Rabbi Zlotowitz: Without a question. When I teach talmud, I teach it the way we learned in yeshivah. We go in order through the sederim. When I leaned it at the college (HUC), we learned it by theme, but that's not how talmud is supposed to be taught. When I taught talmud at the college, we studied the argumentation, the methodology.... Actually, it is a combination of HUC and the yeshivah, because I did teach it critically.

NOTE: This tape was very hard to understand for some reason. However, this interview, though interesting, had the least pertinent information for my thesis. Also, his perspective of HUC was very different from the perspective now.

Glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish Terms

aggadah: legend
amora, amoraim: the rabbis during the Talmudic Period
Ashkenaz, Ashkenazic: designation of those Jews coming from Germany or Eastern Europe in general
av beit din: vice president of the Sanhedrin
baal t'shuvah: a person who "returns" to find Jewish tradition
bachur, bachurim: older yeshivah students
Beit ha-Mikdash: the Temple which existed in Jerusalem
Beit Hillel: House of Hillel
beit k'nesset: house of prayer, house of assembly
beit midrash: a house of study
beit Mussar: Mussar house, the *beit midrash* in which Mussar is studied
Beit Shammai: House of Shammai
binah: understanding
bitachon: security
chanich, chanichim: camper
charedim: the ultra Orthodox Jews
chasid, chasidim: those individuals who were members of the Chasidic Movement
chasidei Ashkenaz: group of Ashkenazic scholars
Chasidut: Hebrew for Chasidism, the movement
chavurot: groups of families who gather for holidays, shabbat, and other various occassions in order to celebrate Judaism together.
cheder: Hebrew elementary school
chevruta, chevrutot: a group of two or three students who would study Talmud texts together on a daily basis
chochma: wisdom
chugim: activities
chukei ha-Torah: laws of the Torah
dei-ah: knowledge
d'vekut: an attachment to God, used in Kabbalah
eidah, eidot: a unit, as in camp units
gaon, geonim: those heads of academies in the sixth through eleventh centuries
Gemara: part of the genre of rabbinic literature; the rabbi's explanation of that which is written in the Mishnah
Haftara: the additional section of scripture read on shabbat mornings
halachah, halachot: the laws in the Talmud, specifically Jewish Law
Haskalah: Jewish Enlightenment Movement

havdalah: the ceremony which separates shabbat from the rest of the week
hit-la-ha-vut: a burning enthusiasm, in which the soul is a flame with ardor for God
hit-pa-a-lut: in a state of emotional excitement
hora-ah: teaching
Kabbalah: Jewish Mysticism
kavod: respect, honor
k'dushah: holiness
kesher: connection
kipah, kipot: head coverings
kloiz: a small building set aside for the purpose of Torah study
Kollel: a place of learning for young scholars who are commited to Talmud study; even after they are to be wed
l'dor vador: from one generation to the next
limud, limudim: educational learning sessions
lomed, lomdim: the students in the *yeshivot*
madrich, madrichim: couselor, guide
mashgiach, mashgichim: supervisor in the yeshivah
mashpia: influence
maskil, maskilim: those who followed Haskalah, Jewish Enlightenment
mesivtah, mesivtot: Torah Academy, generally refers to a yeshivah for high school boys
Midrash, Midrashim: exegesis on biblical texts
melamed, melamdim: one who teaches, specifically referring to teachers in the yeshivah
mishamesh: a helper, particularly related to one who helps a rebbe in a yeshivah
Mishnah: a six-section piece of rabbinic literature
mitnaged, mitnagdim: those who were in opposition to Chasidism
mitzvah, mitzvot: literally means commandments; understood to mean acts performed in observance of the commandments
moomchim: specialists
Mussar: ethics, specifically the ethical component of yeshivah learning
nasi: president of the Sanhedrin
neshama: the soul
nizozot: holy sparks
noar, noarim: younger yeshivah students
oneg shabbat: literally means the celebration of shabbat, and it refers to the extended dessert following a shabbat service
ozrim: helpers, specifically within a classroom setting
peshat: the most basic understanding of a word, phrase or verse
pilpul: discussion or debate
rav, rabbanim: the Hebrew for rabbi
rebbe, rebbeim: commonly used term for rabbi n the Chasidic Movement
rosh eidah, roshei eidot: unit head
rosh mechinah: the one who prepares the high school students for the day they become rabbinical students

rosh yeshivah, roshei yeshivot: the head of the yeshivah
Sanhedrin G'dolah: the famous court of seventy-one ordained scholars who acted as a supreme court and legislative body
Sanhedrin K'tanah: a smaller version of the *Sanhedrein G'dolah*
Sephardic: Jews originating in Spain
sh'a-lot: questions
shabbas: the Yiddish word for shabbat or the sabbath
shirah: song session
shiur, shiurim: a lesson, usually refering to a lesson of Talmud in the yeshivah model
shiur pashut: simple lesson
shiur iyyun: an in-depth learning session
shul: Yiddish for synagogue
shomer shabbas: observing the shabbat
simcha: a joyous or happy celebration
smicha: rabbinic ordination
tallit, tallitot: prayer shawls
talmid, talmidim: student
talmidei chachamim: students of the wise ones
talmidei Torah: students of Torah
Talmud, Talmudim: the books of Jewish law; composed of the Mishnah and the Gemara
talmud torah: the study of Torah and all that surrounds it
Tanach: the Hebrew Bible, including Torah, Prophets and Writings
tanna, tannaim: the scholars of the Mishnah
tikkun: repair
t'fillot: services
Torah: either means the five books of Moses or Jewish learning in a very generic sense
Torah lishma: the rabbinic notion which implies that the study of Torah is simply for the sake of study
Torah she-b'al peh: the Oral Torah. It implies all that was given to Moses at Mount Sinai but was not written down in the Torah per se
Tosefta, Tosefot: compilation of additional sayings organized around the Mishnah as citation
tzaddik, tzaddikim: righteous individuals
va-ad, va-adot: the committee created to help with the running of a community or yeshivah
yahadut: Judaism
yedidut: in Chasidism; a spiritual treatment whereby a rebbe listens to a disciple's problems and advises him
yeshivah, yeshivot: a Talmudic college; traditionally, a place where younger Jews come to study Talmud
yetzer ha-tov: a person's inclination to do good
yetzer ra: a person's inclination to do evil

yirah: literally means fear; in Mussar teachings, it refers to the emphasis placed on the necessity of fearing God

zakein, z'keinim: elders of Israel

z'man perush: the time when students studied the Talmud with Rashi commentary

z'man tosefot: the time when students studied the *Tosefot* and other commentaries

zugot: pairs; refers to the teachers of Torah before and during the Tannaitic Period

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