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General Jewish Thought

This magazine contains words of Torah.  
Please treat it with proper respect.

# The Year in Syria: What Happens When Our Mohammedan Cousins ‘Flip Out’?

BY: Omar ibn Fara’ al-Wuroud

*The year in Syria – once the privilege of a select few, this ‘religious gap year’ has become all but ubiquitous among high school graduates in America’s Modern Islamic communities. The article which you are about to read is an investigation of the phenomenon originally published in Al-Mu’alliq, the fictional student newspaper of the nonfictional al-Yamamah University.’ It is reprinted here for the edification of those unfamiliar with the Year in Syria – and perhaps those unfamiliar with American Islamic culture in general. Throughout the material which follows technical jargon and specialized vocabulary will be explained by way of bracketed elucidations, wherever such explication appears appropriate.*

You may have noticed them in your local Mosque - young brothers [bochurim], standing out like a sore thumb, the ones who take forever to finish every *raka’ah*, and do all that extra *du’a* after *□alaat*. The outfit is familiar: *thaub* and *kufiyya* for the boys, *niqaab* or *□ijaab* for the girls. The kids you saw two years ago drinking ‘*Araq* [schnaps] and jamming to *Oum Kulthoum* [The Beatles], now drink Turkish coffee and listen to Sufi *dhikr* [niggunim], because music and alcohol are *haraam* [assur].

“The Year in Syria is an opportunity for students to reconnect with Islam, grow spiritually and study Qur’an and *fiqh* [halakhah] in a traditional atmosphere,” explains Sheikh Mahmoud Yassin, head Imam [Rosh Yeshivoh] of the *Madrasah* [Yeshivoh] Naar al-Quds [Light of Jerusalem], located near Damascus. Like many *Shuyūkh* [Rashei Yeshivoh] of the *Madaaris* [Yeshivos] which cater to young American Muslims, Sheikh Yassin himself hails from a Modern background. “We can relate to our *□ullāb* [talmidim], because we know what it’s like to come from an environment that’s far from traditional Islam. And we can relate to this incredible experience of learning *al-‘uluum al-‘islaamiyyah* [limmudei kodesh] for the first time in a brother’s life – really learning without any distractions [be-hasmadah]. That’s when you first come to the realization that we are all children of Allah [Hashem], *sub□ānahu wata□āla* [yisborach], and you see the beauty of His wisdom in the Message He sent to Prophet Mu□ammed, *salla allahu ‘alayhu wasallam* [olav hashalom].”

True, many students come back from Syria inspired and filled with newfound dedication and *Eman* [Emunah]. All-too-often, however, this transformation leads to friction with the friends and family left behind in the *□ummah*

[kehilloh] in the United States. Some, surprised at these radical ‘conversions,’ will dismiss the newly-returned as shallow and insincere, others will see the changes as too much, too soon. Ahmed Baklava, a brother who, like most of his classmates, spent a gap year in Syria, feels that the spiritual growth of some brothers [bochurim] and sisters [girls] is poorly managed and in some cases even dangerous. He related to me a recent encounter with one such sister. “Last week I went on a date with this girl I knew back in high school who just got back from a year at Turuq Hikmah [Ways of Understanding],” Ahmed told me, “and when I saw her, she was in a *burqa* – head to toe. Talk about a blind date! Anyway, after about an hour of awkwardly sitting in the lobby of the Sheraton making small talk, I realized that it wasn’t her at all, it was actually her sister. Imagine that – *her sister*. Well you see, I couldn’t tell, through all that fabric! I thought this kind of thing only happened in Jewish stories.”

Similar stories are told by family members of the newly-returned. “He won’t go to mixed beaches, and he spends every Friday at *Masjid* with his study group [chevrah], or at the shooting range doing target practice,” said one father, who asked not to be named, of his 21 year old son just back after two years in Syria. “The other day he says he’s going to start

an al-Qaeda sleeper cell – well! I put my foot down right there, I can tell you.”

Dealing with skeptical family members is particularly difficult for those students that come from less religious backgrounds. Manhattan-based outreach institution Naar at-Ta’allum [Fire of the Learning] has begun sponsoring events for newly religious college students and their families to help bridge this gap. I spoke to several irreligious parents at one of these events. “Our family isn’t what you’d call the most religious [frum],” says Aida Obrafirdei, a professor of Oriental studies at New York University and mother of four. “I mean, we sent the kids to Islamic schools, we celebrate *Eid* [Pesach], sometimes I go to *Masjid* [shul] on Friday...that’s about it. Well, halfway through his first semester at NYU, my oldest. Yousef, decides he wants to go to Syria for a year. And we gave in, finally, after a lot of begging on his part! Now he’s back home and he won’t listen to music, he prays five times a day and he wears these bandanas that say *al-Mawt l’Amrika*. I think that we, as parents, have a right to be worried about what is happening to our kids!” Another concerned parent I spoke to at the event, businessman Haleeb al-Baqara of South Paterson, New Jersey, told me how difficult it has been for his family to accept his daughter Soorat al-Baqara’s newfound religiosity. Soorat spent

six months in Damascus studying Arabic, where she became involved with a number of Islamist youth organizations. “When my daughter got back from Syria, she was doing all these rituals, reading this political stuff. All she talks about is how she wants to be like Wafa Idris [Baruch Goldstein]. Okay, she wants to pray [daven] more. Okay, she wants to wipe the Zionist Entity off the face of the earth and become a *shaheedah* [martyr] while she’s at it. *Kuwayyis* [Okay]. But what will it be next? That’s what worries me. What if she decides to become Sufi [hassidish], *allah ma□ak* [chas ve-shalom]? And then I’ll end up with some Persian *majnoun* [meshuggene], a *□ojjat ul-islaam* [Rebbe] for a son in law!” Many of the other parents at the gathering were similarly distressed. Clearly, it is high time for some qualified organization like Naar at-Ta’allum to step in and help these parents understand the decisions that their children are making.

Among the students who ‘flip out’ is another group – those who choose not to return to the United States at all. They stay in Syria to learn, or go elsewhere in the Middle East. This has understandably led to even greater friction with some parents – parents who had a specific vision, now shattered, for their children’s future. Some feel that such radical changes in lifestyle are unnatural and perhaps even coerced. “Abdullah had a scholarship to Harvard,” grumbled one such mother, Lateefa Malkatun, of Jersey City. “Now he wants to throw everything away, and go study Islamic jurisprudence at Al-Azhar. He says his Imam told him he would become a *kaafir* [kofer] if he went to a secular university! Brainwashing, that’s what this

is!”

In other cases, I discovered, staying in Madrasah works out *better*, for both students and parents. Rather than living close to home, living a life that others may see as an attack on the existing community’s interpretation of Islam, students can live their own lives and still remain connected with their families, long-distance. Each encounter becomes a rare and joyous reunion, rather than an incessant and harrowing war-of-cultures. One student who has taken this path is Haroun Ibn Bundikiyya, a brother from Kansas City currently residing in Yemen. Haroun spent a year at a ‘Modern’ Madrasah in Aleppo, Tariq ‘Asad

**“The kids you saw two years ago drinking ‘Araq [schnaps] and jamming to Oum Kulthoum [The Beatles], now drink Turkish coffee and listen to Sufi dhikr [niggunim], because music and alcohol are haraam [assur].”**

[Path of a Lion], before moving to the more hard-line Madrasat Bint al-‘Ein [Yeshivoh of Daughter of the Eye] in Northern Yemen. Haroun has a healthy relationship with his parents, Bustaan and Warda, whom he visits regularly at their home in Brooklyn. I spoke with him during his most recent visit to the U.S. “When did you leave the Madrasah?” I asked Haroun as we sipped mint tea in Mr. and Mrs. Bundikiyya’s living room. “Well,” he replied, “of course the Madrasah was destroyed last April by a U.S. drone strike. So obviously I left. Since then I’ve been mostly in Iraq, fighting the *ihtilaal* [occupation]. I went back to Yemen a couple months ago to

study with the noble Sheikh Anwar al-Awlaki, and I’m very happy there.” When I asked Haroun if he plans to spend the rest of his life in the *Salafi* world [yeshivishe velt], his answer was emphatic: “Certainly! It is impossible to truly be a good Muslim in America – a country founded on greed and selfishness, a country ruled by *ash-Shaytaan ar-rajeem* [ha-soton hagadol]. Being *Salafi* [yeshivish] is the only way to be true to myself, to Allah *sub□ānahu wata□āla*, and to my Muslim brothers and sisters.” When I asked about his plans for the future, Haroun told me that he would like to settle down and raise a family [build a bayis ne’eman] someday, or alternatively die gloriously in the name of Allah,

**“The kids you saw two years ago drinking ‘Araq [schnaps] and jamming to Oum Kulthoum [The Beatles], now drink Turkish coffee and listen to Sufi dhikr [niggunim], because music and alcohol are haraam [assur].”**

*subhaanahu wa ta’aala.*

Haroun’s story notwithstanding, the Year in Syria has created deep rifts within our communities. A growing number of parents are afraid of the ‘radicalization’ effect of the Syrian *Madaaris*. Many demand that the *Madaaris* be placed under the direct control of community leaders in the United States, or even that the ‘Year in Syria’ be discontinued altogether. If, and I repeat ‘if’, such ‘radicalization’ is taking place, it is not universal, but depends to a great degree on character of the individual student. In fact, as student Halim Ibn Qunnib Hindi suggested to me, the ‘radicalization’ effect may be confined to only a

handful of institutions. “I don’t know what everyone is complaining about,” said Halim, an alumnus of Madrasat Dau’ Sa’eed [Yeshivoh of Happy Light]. “When I was in Syria, all we did was go to bars and pick up chicks on Ibn Yehuda Street. I guess it depends on what place you go to. Like, those guys at Tareeq ad-Diraasah [The Way of Learning], I guess they’re pretty weird.”

As we have seen, there is no one way that the Syria Experience affects an individual. Some will go, come home, and settle comfortably into the American Islamic lifestyle; some will be changed forever. Whatever they choose, what they do with their lives is ultimately up to them. It is our responsibility to make sure that they are welcomed as members of our community – and of our families. For as it says somewhere, “if you accept people for what they are, they will come to accept you” [made-up possuk].

*The author of this article, ibn Fara’ al-Wuroud, is a nice guy. He has many friends, who are members of all sorts of odd religions. He bears no malice towards Jews or Muslims, he wishes to promote mutual understanding and love throughout (wo)mankind, and he would prefer not to receive any death threats or letter bombs, if it’s all the same to you. A Freilichin Purim to all, and to all a masaa’ ul-kheir/gutte nakht!*

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.yu.edu.sa>.

## From the Kol Hamevaser Archives: April 19, 371 BCE

BY: Ye Olde Chesky Kopel

In light of King Artaxerxes II's recent decree of annihilation against the Jewish people, we at *Kol Hamevaser* have decided to bring hope to our readership by encouraging participation in a special endeavor. We the students can help each other through this crisis and spark discussion of Jewish issues on campus by taking creative action. *Kol Hamevaser* has therefore issued numerous, repeated messages to YU students, for each social network in its own tongue,<sup>2</sup> requesting submissions of student responses to Haman's plot to kill us all. The submissions have been many and varied,<sup>3</sup> and deciding which to print has been a difficult process. The following poem has been chosen following a close vote of our staff members.

It is also our hope that this interactive process will increase student interest in *Kol Hamevaser*, which steadily decreased over the Fall 371 BCE academic semester, and that the magazine's readership will extend beyond its writing staff at some point within the next two thousand years or so.<sup>4</sup>

### You are Really Dumb. For Real.

BY: [Akkadian indecipherable], feat. The Maccabeats

[Tempo: Andante Grazioso]

[CHORUS]: He's climbin' in your windows  
He's snatchin' your people up  
Try'na slay 'em so y'all need to  
Hide your kids, hide your wife  
Hide your kids, hide your wife  
Hide your kids, hide your wife

And hide your husband cuz they're slayin'  
everybody out there  
You don't have to come and confess  
We're lookin' for you  
We gon' find you we gon' gragger you<sup>5</sup>  
So you can run and tell that,  
Run and tell that

Run and tell that, Haman  
Ham, Ham, Haman

We got your edict  
You done left princely stamp and all  
You are so dumb  
You are really dumb--for real  
You are really, really, really, really so dumb

[CHORUS]

We were attacked by some idiot advisor  
So dumb, so dumb, so dumb, so

Bout 5'9", 5'10", Amaleki complexion<sup>6</sup>  
Low cut like a *krum* with some little waves in  
his head

Clean cut, very smooth face<sup>7</sup>  
Seein' our people like this  
He has his hands around our neck  
First thing is to pull him off of us  
And that's what we gonna do

[BRIDGE (Maccabeats)]: I'll tell a tale tale tale  
tale,<sup>8</sup> yeah

Specially in *Kol Hamevaser ser ser ser*,<sup>9</sup> yeah

When Haman tried to assail sail sail sail, yeah

But it will be to no avail vail vail vail, yeah yeah

Because it's on, it's on, it's on!

We'll duel Haman until he's gone, yeah!

I flip my sackcloth in the air sometimes

Sayin' ayy ohh, lots of prayer

We'll say *Al Hanissim*,

And get very intoxicated,

If we win this war,

There'll be a special night<sup>10</sup>

[VERSE]: Well, obviously we have a *rasha* in  
Shushan

Are you serious, my boy?

We got your toga  
We got your scent<sup>11</sup>  
We know what shoe size you wear, my boy<sup>12</sup>  
So you can run and hide  
But we're gonna find you, find you  
[CHORUS]

[Editor's Note: This notorious issue understandably marked the demise of the publication and the beginning of the first *Kol Hamevaser* Diaspora, which proceeded until its revival in the transitional form of *Hamevaser*. This, too, did not last. God restored its captivity in 2007 with the re-launching of *Kol Hamevaser*, bigger and better than ever.]

1 Unclear if this is the real name of our present king; some scholars swear by the notion that it is actually Xerxes I.

2 Thank God for Google Translate, right?

3 Meaning of Akkadian uncertain; alternative translation reads "few and similar."

4 Archives Editor's Note: It has not.

5 Oh, how I love to brag.

6 Archives Editor's Note: They had no idea what this meant back then, too.

7 *The Artscroll Children's Megillah*, Shmuel Blitz, trans. (New York: Mesorah Publications, 2003) actually renders Haman's image as pale and sinister, with a pointy nose and a hideous mustache.

8 No, Microsoft Word, I do not want to delete the repeated word.

9 Now this is just absurd, and doesn't even rhyme.

10 Archives Editor's Note: Scholars have no idea what the in the world happened here.

11 Haman prefers Brut™.

12 Approximately 11.5. It remains unclear how this helps us at all.

BY: Grizz Ber

Following ten months of wild speculation, Rabbi Hershel Schachter, Nathan and Vivian Fink Distinguished Professor of Talmud at RIETS, has been selected as The Mazer Yeshiva Program's Valedictorian for the 2009-2010 academic year. This case has raised a lot of questions, and Kol Hamevaser has decided to get to the bottom of the issue.

According to R. Yonah Reiss, Dean of RIETS, "Rabbi Schachter is a big *talmid hakham* (according to the RIETS website, he is a "noted Torah scholar") and we decided to give the award to him this year." This text appeared in a deposition that he and R. [as in Richard, not Rabbi] Joel put out, notably on RIETS stationary.) Much confusion has ensued from this announcement; as some readers may know, R. Schachter looks somewhat older than the typical YC graduate. In fact, records have it that he graduated Yeshiva College in the 1960s.

In responding to queries of this type, R. Reiss gave the following explanation: "We checked the records, and it turns out that R. Schachter had never taken the course in art, which was mandatory until the 1980s, and as such he had not qualified for graduation. Since RIETS had a rule in place until 2008 (when it was abolished for someone else, coincidentally also named Schachter) that only college graduates could finish *semikhah*, this meant that R. Schachter was not a graduate of RIETS, which

## R. Hershel Schachter Wins MYP Valedictorian

created major problems in terms of what type of ID card to issue him. He finished the art course last year and finally graduated YC."

Kol Hamevaser has further investigated this claim, and has uncovered that the original reason that R. Schachter did not take the course in art was because he felt there were halakhic issues with doing so. How, then, did he take the course last year? Did he possibly change his opinion? A tip from someone who refers to himself only as "sugadaddy" has informed us that R. Schachter took the art course as an independent study course with Dr. Fred Sugarman, Associate Dean at Yeshiva College.

**"When asked to comment on how he felt upon his receiving the valedictory prize, R. Schachter said "Okay! Very good!" When asked to clarify what that meant, he said simply, "I don't know!"**

However, it is unclear what qualifications Dr. Sugarman has to teach art, as it is not his field. When asked to respond to the claim that he would be unfit to teach art since his main area of training was airport management, Sugarman responded with a guffaw and said: "Exactly. You should have seen the art collection I had at my desk. It was amazing!" "sugadaddy" has further tipped us off that the independent study was not a course in art as much as a joke-telling soiree, where R. Schachter would tell Sugarman all the jokes that Sugarman had told him but later forgot. But we digress...

Another claim raised is that R. Schachter is somewhat older than the average college student, and one might expect there should be some rule that the MYP valedictorian should ideally be within a decade or two of the student population. R. Reiss explained that "The choice of R. Schachter is actually an expected continuation of a trend we have been following in past years, a *minhag* of the *yeshivah*. The standard MYP valedictorian has become someone who is married (check!), significantly older than most graduates (check!) and someone who only took one course in his last semester (check!)." When asked to justify this position, R. Reiss presented his case: "Look,

it makes a lot of sense. We want to take as valedictorian the person has been learning for the longest, and who has spent the highest percentage of his past year learning. If it happens to be that it's someone who has purposely pushed off his last course until he's 37 so that he can be valedictorian, then so be it!" Following that explanation, R. Reiss was heard murmuring under his breath something about invalidating his gym requirement retroactively so that he could qualify for valedictorian for this year (i.e. for the 2010-2011 academic year, where the results will be announced in March 2012).

Finally, as has become *de rigueur* in Semikhah Honors, Kollel Elyon, and now MYP valedictorian circles, people raised cries of nepotism. One displeased faculty member said, "It's so unfair that R. Schachter gets the award! His father, R. Melech Schachter *a"h*, served on faculty for 50 years and knew everyone on faculty! The name recognition itself was enough to give R. Schachter the award, even if he was an am *ha-arets*! Now, let me be clear- I'm not *chas ve-shalom* attacking his Torah knowledge; I am just attacking a corrupt RIETS system of giving all the awards to Rosh Yeshiva's relatives!" When asked to comment, R. Reiss explained very simply "There is no bias of nepotism; let me explain. We want to be sure that the MYP Valedictorian, like the Semikhah Honors and Kollel Elyon recipients, is a serious learner. The best way to do that, in this case, just like in the case of *shidduchim*, is to know the candidate's family. And it happens to be that I know most of the Rashei Yeshiva here (except for R. Yankelowitz), and I don't know that many other people. If that means that most awardees are related to Rashei Yeshiva, then so be it." A student in the RIETS traveler's kollel took a different approach: "It's very simple. R. Reiss insisted that the Rashei Yeshiva not be involved in giving these awards when their relatives were candidates, so he made a deal - recuse yourself from the process and I'll make sure things work out in a way that you and your son are happy with." We leave it to the reader to determine which possibility is more likely. **cont. on pg. 22**

HEAR YE, HEAR YE!!!

*Mazal Tov to Associate Editor Ilana Gadish  
on her engagement to Copy Editor MoPete!!!*

*Mazal Tov to Associate Editor Jonathan  
Zirling on his engagement to Ora Shoreling  
of GPATS!!!*

## IN UNRELATED NEWS...

*Kol Hamevasser is currently accepting applications for  
Associate Editors on each campus for the 2011-2012  
Intellectual Year.*

*Associate Editor applicants for Beren Campus must be ostensibly female.*

*Associate Editor applicants for Wilf Campus must be ostensibly male.*

*Responsibilities: All forms of slave labor*

*Perks: We GUARANTEE (!!!) our Associate Editors  
engagement sometime in the middle of the second  
semester of the year.*

*Chances are that prospective engagee will be a devoted Kol  
Hamevasser reader.*

*Most likely, these two guarantees we are making to our two incoming Associate Editors will take care of  
themselves, vi-ha-mevin yavin.*

## Hamentaschen: The Strength Our Community Needs

BY: The Traitorous Maccabeat Who Did Not Support His Own Group's Purim Song But Has Since Repented

In the epic Battle of Ethnic Foods on Wednesday evening between the Mushy Gushy Maccabeats and the Commentating Feminists, it became clear to all witnesses that if only we ate more hamantaschen, we might be able to avoid such political tension between different spiritual groups on campus. The triangular shape of hamantaschen suggest that even if we deviate from Orthodoxy (unless you count Greek Orthodoxy) on certain issues and extend ourselves into a defined corner of our tri-partite community, we can still be included with the savory center of our community with every bite that we take together. Furthermore, the scrumptious dessert offers a range of possible varieties, such as new tuna fish or *hummus* flavors (for those foreigners out there), helping all strains of Centrist and Censored Orthodoxy find their niche in the community-wide eating activity. Finally, many female fighters could not believe how much the triangular delicacy helped them study for their Biology of Women's Health midterm.

One caveat, however, is that the *rami*"m at Yeshivat Har Etzion seem to support the more complex latke for its socially awkward shape. They also argue that it stimulates thought on important issues within our community. As a result, Hamantaschen Thought magazines worldwide worry that if their content is not gushy and oily like a latke, readership will plummet.

Yet, the sweet hamentasch is clearly the best solution that we have in order to repair our fractured community. I would like to conclude by echoing the slogan of some pacifists who demonstrated at the debate by stuffing their faces with the delicious pastry, understanding that the battle lacked any real substance anyways: "Why can't we all just be friends?"

## B.S.: Confessions of A Forbidden Love

BY: Yaelle "Righteous Heretic?"  
Frohlich  
"May you lose your faith and marry  
a pious woman."  
-Yiddish curse

If only it were 1656  
And you and I just needed one  
quick fix  
Of *apikorsish* loving  
Prior to your public shunning  
By the running waxy light of  
candle wicks.

**B**enedict, I know you're  
somewhat older  
I know that of the two of us you're  
bolder;  
You violate religion  
With your scientific vision  
But somehow, when you look at  
me, I smolder.

Yes, my interest stems from  
reading pages;  
Cannot true love transcend a  
hundred ages?  
When I whisper for ambrosia,  
To my mind's eye pops Spinoza--  
I'm drawn to you, yet also to our  
Sages.

Fine, it's true I haven't seen your  
face.  
And sure, the *kahal* deems you a  
disgrace.  
But history records  
Your swarthy face, dark locks and  
words--  
At which my girlish heart picks up  
its pace.

*Yaelle Frohlich is a poet,  
though she didn't even realize, and  
she is a M.A. student in BRGS.*



## Rewritten Megillat Esther Fragments Found in Cave

BY: [Ilana] Gadish Peters

Last year's *Kol Hamishtakker* featured an article on a recently discovered ancient sect written by Sheketah Akh Katlanit.<sup>1</sup> Katlanit, a prominent scholar of history and archeology, and a real shayna meidl, expounded upon the sociological implications of the archeological findings that reveal the history of this sect, and discussed the various fragments and writings that were dug up. Katlanit writes about the scrolls of this sect:

"Amazing discoveries were recently found in caves along the East River in the Heights of Washington containing a wealth of information on an obscure culture. This exciting cache of treasures resembles earlier finds in the Judean hills near the Dead Sea from the Second Temple period, and reveals that the people who lived there were a unique sect of Jews. These sectarians seemed to have withdrawn from general society to their new location after the Maccabean revolt, an event colloquially referred to as 'the Festival of Lights.' Apparently, they were unimpressed with the Maccabean rendition of 'Ma'oz Tsur' and disillusioned by the priestly band's efforts to dominate the political arena as YU's poster children. ... Beyond the biblical works found, many fragments were excavated that seem to resemble the Masoretic Bible, yet were somewhat rewritten."<sup>2</sup>

This year, scholars are proud to announce that they have unearthed more of these

fragments, particularly an entire set of rewritten Biblical scrolls similar to the ones described by Katlanit. Archeologists, while cleaning out one of the caves with the inscription above the entrance heralding the name of the cave, "Weissberg Commons," found fragments of texts containing a rewritten and contemporized version of the Biblical Scroll of Esther. It seems, based on many paleographic tests, that this scroll was indeed written by the sect that lived in the Heights of Washington (Ma'alot Washington, in the Yeshivish dialect) after the Maccabean revolt, and that this large cave must have been a large hall of the sect in which many public events were held.

Below is a copy of the fragments found: one full chapter, intact, and a second chapter, of which only the beginning fragments were unearthed.

### Chapter 1

Now it came to pass in the days of President Joel- he is President Joel, who rules from Cardozo to Einstein, a bevy of campuses in between. In those days, when President Joel sat on the throne of his kingdom, that was in Washington Heights *ha-birah*.<sup>3</sup> In the eighth year of his reign, there was a grand convocational dinner, for all his princes and servants; Teaneck and the Five Towns, the nobles and some students. And when these days were finished, there was a great sale, for all the people of his kingdom – both great and small – in Weissberg Commons for several weeks. There were hangings of white (*hur*), fine cotton (*karpas*),

and blue (*tekhelet*), embroidered with a Y and a U, on silver rods with pillars of cement and upon a floor of dark brownish reddish tiles. And they didn't drink out of gold vessels, since they were Made Off with a few years before.<sup>4</sup> Also Hillel Davis made a feast for Student Affairs in the royal house, the Presidential Suite in Belfer Hall. On the seventh day, when the President's heart was ennobled and enabled, he commanded Josh Joseph, Rosengarten, Lowengrub, Millstein, Forman, Pollak, Dobrinsky, Gower, Lauer and Spiegel, the eleven Vice Presidents of the Kingdom, to bring Hillel Davis the grand Vice President before the President, wearing academic regalia of gown and mantle, to sit beside him as University BFF<sup>5</sup> for all eternity, and to show the benefactors and donors his amiable smile, for he was a very merry fellow. And Vice President Davis refused to come

### “Now it came to pass in the days of President Joel- he is President Joel, who rules from Cardozo to Einstein, a bevy of campuses in between.”

upon the word of the President, and informed him he was returning to Eretz Yisroel instead. The President became very saddened and distraught from this piece of news. The President consulted Vic Schwartz, the knower of all things, for so was the President's manner toward all the Deans. And the next unto him was Mrs. Esther, Penny, Avery, Ariella, Noam, Nachum<sup>6</sup> and Kira Joel,<sup>7</sup> the seven princes and princesses of Washington Heights & Midtown, who saw the President's

face, and sat first in the Kingdom. "What shall we do unto the VP Hillel Davis, forasmuch as he did not do the bidding of the President Joel through the command of the other Vice Presidents?" And Rabbi Kenneth Brander answered before the President and the VP's: "Hillel Davis the VP hath not done wrong to the President only, but also to all the VP's, and to the princes and princesses, and to all the administrators that are in the University of President Joel. For this deed of VP Davis will be known to all the students, to make *aliyah* and leave YU, when it will be said: 'President Joel commanded VP Davis to sit next to him forever and be his BFF, but he sat not, and made *aliyah* instead.' And this day will the students of Washington Heights and Midtown who have heard of the deed of the VP say the same thing to all their friends in secular colleges, and their will

be much uproar and outrage. If the President is wise, let it be written in the student handbook of Washington Heights & Midtown, that it not be altered, that VP Davis come no more before President Joel, and the President will give his office and royal estate unto another that is a better BFF than he. And when the King's decree will be published throughout all the University, great it will be, so that all the students will give YU tuition, whether big or small (but preferably big)." And

the advice pleased the President and the princes and princesses; and the President did according to the word of Rabbi Brander, for he sent letters to all the dorms and IHP apartments, according to the writing thereof, and to every student in their own language; that every YU student should stay in YU, and send their kids their, too.

### Chapter 2

It was after these things, when the wrath of President Joel was assuaged, he remembered Hillel Davis, and how he had made *aliyah* to the Promised Land instead of remaining in YU forever and ever, and what was decreed against him. Then the President's [cab]inet said to him "Let there be sought for the President young *bochur*[*im*] who are wise in Torah knowledge and sing in a *capella* groups, and let

the President appoint Vice Provosts for all the university, that they may gather all the young [*bochurim*/a capella singers] to the Glueck building, to the beis medrash, under the custody of [Rav] Herschel the President's chamberlain, Keeper of the Bochurim, and feed them well. Let the *bochur* that sings the prettiest and learns the shtarkest be BFF de-Richard Joel instead of Vice President Davis. And the idea pleased the President, and he did so ...[ ... missing fragments ... ]

[Now when the t]urn of every *bochur* to appear before President Joel after he had gone through the process of all *bochurim*, six months eating the oil[y food] of Golan, and six months eating the oil[y food] of Lake Como [...][End of fragments]

Archaeologists hope to dig up more of these fragments, in order to get a greater sense of how the sect contemporized Biblical texts in order to make them more relevant to the people of their time. As Katlanit eloquently says, "I mean, I just want to know who the new BFF is! That's the worst part of this job. I never get to finish the end of the story... its always on some other fragment, buried in another cave. Also, I am so excited for stuffed cabbage tonight in the caf! I hope they give me two of them, and if I'm lucky, I'll get a piece of chicken, too!"

- 1 She is also known as Saris Bendavid in the yeshivish velt.
- 2 Sheketah Akh Katlanit, "New Dead Sea Sect Found," *Kol Hamishtakker* 3,5 (2010).
- 3 Never light. If it is light, you aren't *yotse* the *hiyyuv* of *ad delo yada*.
- 4 Some manuscripts read "Madoff."
- 5 BFF – noun. "Best Friend

Forever." *Otsar Rashei Teivot he-Hadash*, (Miami, FL: Weitzentraeger Publishers, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Believed to be one of the infamous inciters of the Maccabean Rebellion, which is what drove the sect to break off from mainstream Judaism, a theory developed by Katlanit.

<sup>7</sup> S. (B.D.) Akh Katlanit's full bio is available at [www.kolhamevasser.com](http://www.kolhamevasser.com), but she is commonly known as the well-dressed, single, female archaeologist/talmida extraordinaire of the masmidos ha-Rama"k mi-Teaneck, and send your resumes to the author of this article if you are interested.

From here we derive the famous ancient Purim song, fragments of which were originally found in a cave near Beit Fajar:

"Her first name is Kira,  
Her last name is Joel,  
Kiiira Joel.

Her first name is Kira,  
Her last name is Joel,  
Kiiira Joel-

!!Aiyaiyai!!  
Kira Joel, Kira Joel!

Her name is Kira Joel!  
First name is Kiiira,  
Last name is Jo-o-o-oe!!!!

Kira Joel, Kira Joel!  
Her name is Kira Joel!

First name is Kira,  
Last name is Joel."

(Repeat 36 times).  
(The tune is the same of "Mar'eh Kohen," and is in the spirit of Yom ha-ke-Purim.)



the Center for the  
Persian Future

## Presidential Fellowship Opportunities

for the Next academic year 2011-2012, the 9th year of the reign of King Richard Joel I

The CPF will be opening a new Presidential Fellowship position:

### Beis ha-Nashim Coordinator Fellow

- Will assist the University Keeper of the Women in the newly built Glueck Beis (ha-Nashim)
- The Beis will be open for 12 months and be split up into two sections:
  - Six months myrrh immersion program.
  - Six months perfume immersion program.
- Looking for Chemistry major or minor, familiar with Merukeihenology.
- Must be YC graduate. Preferably unmarried.

# Interview with Associate Editor, Jonathan Shore-Ziring

BY: Ilana Peters-Gadish

*This interview was conducted over G-Chat. Everything in this interview is true, whatever truth actually means.*

Me: So, Jonathan--

Ziring: Please dont call me Jonathan.

Ziring: It's strange.

me: OK. So, Zirling. What is your plan for tonight?

Ziring: Oh, I don't know, maybe go get drunk in preparation for Purim (assuming one holds that way.) Maybe some skydiving while I'm at it (my sister would be proud). Or maybe I'll just stay in my room and do some work and submit myself to this absurd interview. So many possibilities. I spend most of my time reading *tshuvos* and raid *sefarim* on the elliptical machine. Let me tell you, that R. Moshe is wild. (Of course, he's not nearly as crazy as the Chachmas Shlomo. There are some things in there... *ve-hameivin yavin*. Or to be PC should I say *ve-ha-meivinah tavin*.)

Me: Well, I suppose the best thing now is just to finish up this interview. Afterwards, we can try and catch the Belfer Hall sky-diving special. We should bring our fiancés. YUConnects is offering an engaged couples' special. Seems counterintuitive- they should probably offer the singles the special, no?

Ziring: Oh, no, what they are doing is brilliant. This way they can

pretend they've actually set people up... Little do they realize that the best way to set people up is through *chavrusas*. Always knew *talmud* Torah was important. (It might help if the YU Beis was co-ed.)

Me: Scandalous!

Ziring: Oh, did I say that on record. I guess I should get the people at YUTorah to edit that out.

Me: Ah, too bad. For some reason, the YUTorah editors aren't awake at 3am, when the Kol Hamevasser editorial office is open. We close at about 8am, which is when the YUTorah office begins its day.

Ziring: So what about the YU Censorship committee- isn't this their job? Or the annoying new YStud moderators who won't let me send out *Kol Hamevasser* emails?

Me: Oh, I heard there is no censorship committee. You must have made that up.

Ziring: You're right, I must have seen it in the YUBeacon.

Me: Interesting they chose that name over the other name they were initially thinking of, the YUEnquirer. The National Enquirer is a tabloid. Just filling in the lacunae of your yeshivish education.

Ziring: I'm aware. Contrary to popular belief I'm not totally naive. Actually, take that back - I am. Whatever. You miss a lot of things at 5 foot 1. All interesting conversations happen a few inches higher. I spent my entire first year in YU looking for the *Yachin Boaz Mishnayot*. Turns out they were on the top shelf. That was

embarrassing.

Me: Yikes, that is embarassing. I guess that is why you learn night seder with the tallest guy in Rav Rosenzweig's shiur. I've heard he is also the cutest, but that's just *al pi ha-shmuah*.

Ziring: I'm not sure I should respond to that one.

Me: That's fine. We only need one cringe-worthy moment per interview. Moving on, I heard you just finished the movie adaptation of the second novel of your fantasy fiction trilogy, *Zir of the Rings!* Your fans are eagerly awaiting the third part of the trilogy to come out in June. Do you have anything to say about the progress of your third novel?

Ziring: All the actors are eagerly awaiting it, though the main work is being done by the directors. The main actors have little to do with the preparations. Parenthetically, I would like to thank to Ari Clark for his role in ensuring that this trilogy was possible.

me: Is it true that this is one of the first movies you have acted in, in which the directors are both women?

Ziring: Yes, completely true.

Me: Do you feel this will have any impact on the future of women's movie directing?

Ziring: I think that this type of movie has long been directed by women. Though, to be fair, my parents acted in a similar movie (25 years ago - the anniversary is approaching), and my father almost entirely self directed it.

Me: Wow, that's pretty impressive. So you come from a line of directors and actors who have produced trilogies such as *Zir of the Rings*?

Ziring: Yes. My father actually called his movie the *Zir of the Rings* as well. Mine is actually called the *Nivin-Zir of the Rings*, but the name is too long, so I just copied my father's title for convenience. But personally I like my trilogy better. And it was produced in much less time.

Me: On that note, I have a halakhic question about time.

Ziring: Yeah? I would like to point out that I am only willing to answer this question because all the *poskim* in YU are now asleep, so there is no problem of me making halakhic decisions. Otherwise, I would be liable to the death penalty. Oh well.

Me: In the third *perek* of *Bava Batra, Chezkat Ha-batim*, we learn that a *chazakah* is established after three years based on the three *negichot* (gorings) of the *Shore Mu'ad*. There is also a later statement in the Gemara that the *chazakah* (a la Shore) can be established in three units. Are you of the halakhic opinion that such a *Shore-chazakah* could be established, lets say, in three full months?

Ziring: I do think so, in fact. If I am not mistaken, that position was quoted in the *Tosfos Rosh* in *Ketubot*. I actually mentioned that on the opening night of the second part of the trilogy, for those of you who were there. The Gemara brings positions that indicate that if one acts repetitively in a short time, it is possible to create a *chazakah*

quicker. The *chazakah* can also be created quicker if the *chazakah* is established in several countries, as each part of the *chazakah* is then qualitatively different, giving each unit a different status. If, therefore, one were to be *machzik* in NY, Israel, and Canada, it could be accomplished sooner.

Me: There are those who hold that a *chazakah* can be established in three consecutive dates. How do you feel about this position? Is this amount of time substantial enough to create such a *chazakah*? Would you make a *mecha'ah* about such a position?

Ziring: Although I have heard such rumors, that people in Brooklyn and Monsey have done this, I don't understand it. I have heard that prominent *poskim* in Brooklyn rule that one cannot create a *chazakah* in less than 8, or at least it is forbidden to do so. I would suggest that there can be exceptions, but that would require connecting the consecutive dates with other actions that relate to the *chazakah*, perhaps over the phone.

Me: Wow, that's so interesting. Would you say that your *psak* generally...“...the censors are sleeping. Where is YU-public relations when you need them? Isn't it their job to make sure nothing dumb goes public?”

Me: Um, excuse me. I believe I am interviewing you, not the other way around. Also, its generally the effect that my Confuser-*Sheid* has on most people. It helps me baffle people so that they end up following me blindly. It's part of my plan to get YU Semichah.

technology, such as phones, etc? Would you say that a *chazakah* could be established via video chat, such as Shidduch Vision?

Ziring: I would say so. There has been much discussion in *psak* about the effectiveness of video chat for *Gittin*. I see no reason why

the standards should not be true across the board.

Me: Wow, very interesting. And you say R. Moshe was a rogue *posek*. Hm.

Ziring: Rogue. I don't remember saying that. I think the word we used was wild. But, I'm from Staten Island, we take R. Moshe's *derekh* very seriously. There's nothing wrong with being creative in *psak*. (Besides, who would find out anyway. You need to take a boat to get there.) Oh right, this is being published, and the censors are sleeping. Where is YU-public relations when you need them? Isn't it their job to make sure nothing dumb goes public?

Me: I think Madoff funded that branch of the University. It doesn't exist anymore. I'm pretty sure they used the chairs from those offices for the new Glueck Beis.

Ziring: Interesting. I was wondering where those comfortable chairs came from. I always thought the chairs were supposed to be

uncomfortable in the Beis. It's a Mishnah in *Pirkei Avot*. But I guess if they are leftovers from offices that would makes sense. Bureaucrats are always treated well. Wait, how do you know what chairs we have in the Glueck Beis? You're not allowed in there! You're not even allowed in the building after 9:00

Ziring: Um. I think you're right. We should get back to the interview.

Me: Right. Ahem. So, I hear you have been doing some research on R. Yosef Bekhor Shor, and that you have discovered that his writings

p.m.! How did you get past the security guards? Only the Chabad guys on Thursday night get in against the rules, and that's only because of *siyata de-shmaya!*

Me: Listen, I'm an RA, so I got connections with the security guards. And I am a woman, so

“You miss a lot of things at 5 foot 1. All interesting conversations happen a few inches higher.”  
*sheidim* pretttyyy much follow me everywhere. I have recently befriended a *sheid* that helps me become invisible. How do you think those *Mishnayot* got up on that top shelf anyway? I decided to hide them up there, since I'm taller than most of the guys in the beis anyway.

Ziring: Always knew the old Beis was haunted. What else would you expect in those creepy towers in Muss? Wait, you hang out with *sheidim*? Didn't your fiance go to Gush? You believe in *sheidim*? Wait, I also went to Gush. Do I believe in *sheidim*? I'm so confused.

Me: Um, excuse me. I believe I am interviewing you, not the other way around. Also, its generally the effect that my Confuser-*Sheid* has on most people. It helps me baffle people so that they end up following me blindly. It's part of my plan to get YU Semichah.

Ziring: Um. I think you're right. We should get back to the interview.

Me: Right. Ahem. So, I hear you have been doing some research on R. Yosef Bekhor Shor, and that you have discovered that his writings

were actually written by his wife, BekhOra Shore, but she used his name as a pseudonym so that men would respect her Torah.

Ziring: Um, yes. I actually have been doing research of that sort. It's amazing what you find. I figured it out when I realized that the first letters of the first five sentences in every paragraph spelled GPATS and had *sofei*

*teivos* Brovenders. (There was one paragraph that had *sofei teivos* Michlalah, but to be fair I didn't know what to make of that.) It had to be hiding some message. But it's not just the Bekhor Shor, it happens nowadays, as well. I have heard rumors that articles in *Beis Yitzchak* over the years were also written by women. As Editor in Chief, of course, I would never let that happen. (Cough).

Me: Need a cough drop? I found some Kosher ones that aren't dairy. Why are cough drops OU-D anyway? Figure out that *sod*.

Ziring: Not really sure why their dairy, but it doesn't really matter. I'm a vegetarian anyway. The only problem with the OU-D is that it may indicate that there is milk in it, which would of course make it *treif*. Anyway I would like a cough drop, if you don't mind.

Me: Here ya go. Okay, can you tell us a little bit about your wrestling career? “Zirling, zirling, wrestling champion?” When was that song written?

Ziring: I don't know where you get your information. The song was written in my first year at Gush, by *Kol Hamevasser* editor Shlomo Zuckier, partially inspired by R.

Charlop. What he meant was Karate Champion. My *chavrusa* at the time was the wrestler. But these songs take on lives of their own. Sort of like the songs I wrote. You know, under my initials, Jay Z. But now is not the time to talk about my music career.

Me: I always thought Jay-Z's lyrics were very inspiring. In fact, I think we should conclude with a line from one of his songs.

Ziring: My songs, you mean. Sure, that sounds good. Got any favorites? They all seem to have slipped my mind for the time being.

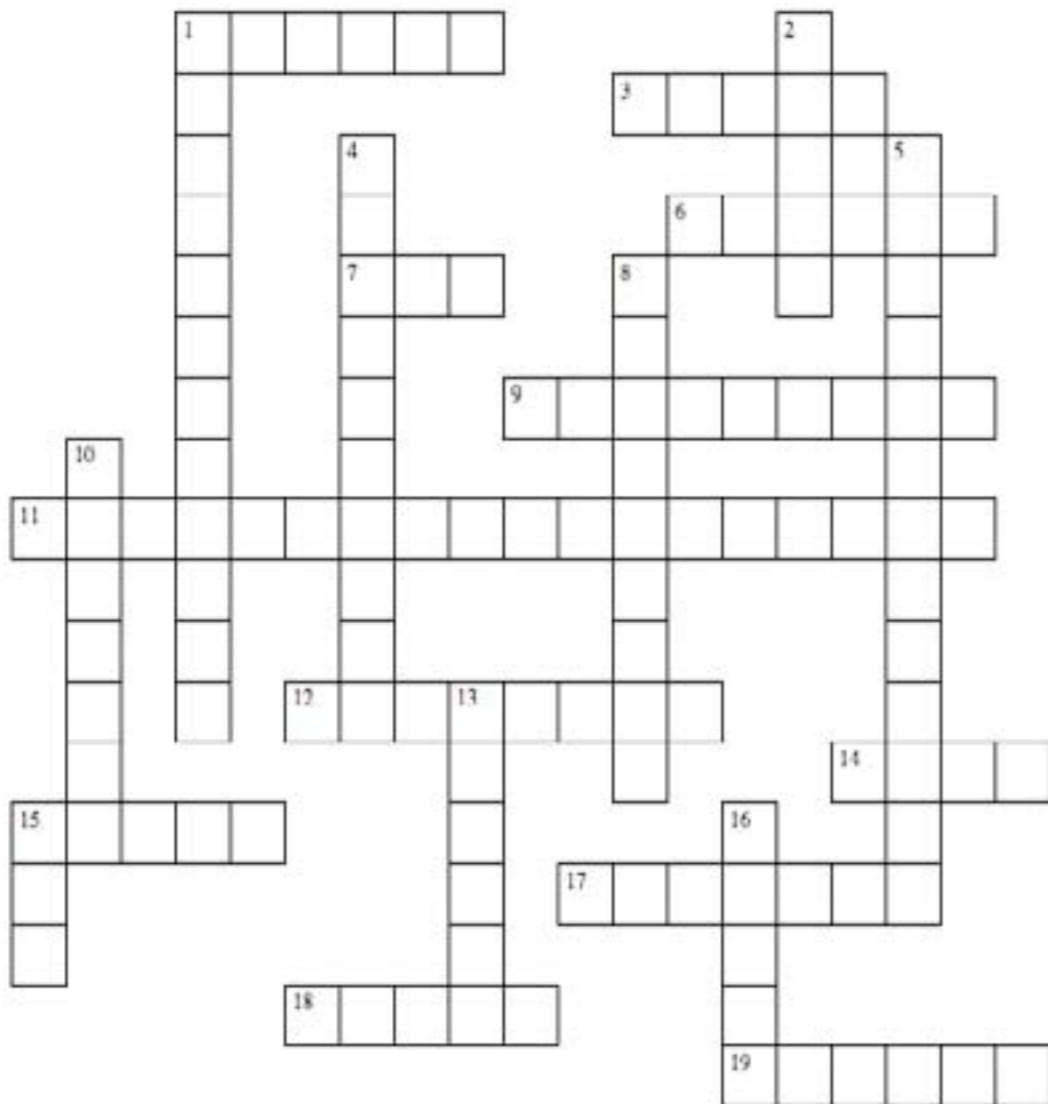
Me: How about this quote, Jay-Z, on your rapping career? "They say a midget standing on a giant's shoulders can see much further than the giant. So I got the whole rap world on my shoulders, they trying to see further than I am."

Ziring: Deep. I really knew what I was doing when I wrote those raps.

*Jonathan Ziring is Associate Editor of Kol Hamevaser, engaged, like all Associate Editors. He is also a rapper, wrestling champion, and short. He enjoys long walks on the beach (or would, if beaches weren't assur mi-deoraisa), oh wait, he's already engaged, so he doesn't need to write this. He is majoring in Kabbalah, but doesn't really believe in it due to the Confusing-Sheid (see above). He is also majoring in Philosophy, which he does believe in. He also went to Gush. The last two facts are unrelated.*

*Ilana Gadish is Associate Editor of Kol Hamevaser, and is also engaged to someone blonde with blue eyes, like all Associate Editors. She is majoring in Jewish Studies and thinks all humans should have hamantaschen. She always has an entourage of sheidim following*

Hafuch Word Puzzle



ACROSS

- 1 It is cloth or food: machloket purim vs. pesach.
- 3 Sometimes sells bagels
- 6 "there is no... committee" for this "ship"
- 7 Doesn't know God's phone number (DKGPN)
- 9 The "right" man
- 11 Longest word in tanach
- 12 Had no daughters to teach Torah to; would have been better off had he remembered "curiosity killed the cat." (chagiga 14b, yevamot 63b)
- 14 Tablet, penelope, doesn't flip his latkes' surname
- 15 He was in the chatzer (Esther 6)
- 17 The latter six months in this
- 18 Editor bendavid in ashkenazus
- 19 Bigtan's partner in crime.

DOWN

- 1 YU's actual first co-ed student publication
- 2 Muttar only on the weekends
- 4 Number of words in Esther's longest pasuk
- 5 A day "like" Purim, sans mishteh
- 8 Car like the world; supine.
- 10 A hapax reserved for men
- 13 Haman's 8th son
- 15 Fowl also included in the miracle
- 16 Don't read "bat," read "\_\_\_." (megillah 13a).

answers can be found on pg. 22

HahuwaJabbara: A Character of Talmudic Proportions

BY: Rally Capman

**R**eviewed Book: Jason Stratford, *The Amazing Adventures of HahuwaJabbara*, Possibly the Most Exciting Talmudic Character Since Sliced Bread (*New York, NY: Qefirah University Publishing House, 2011*). Price: \$28.85.

HahuwaJabbara: litigant, prophet, salesman, brawler, spiritual seeker, self-hater, vengeful romantic. Storied even in the Amoraic Period, this mysterious, multi-faceted, lovable individual is almost as familiar to students of the Talmud as Abaye and Rava, yet his back-story is far less clear than that of most other major characters. When and where did he live? Was he married? Employed? Indeed, even the pronunciation of his name is subject to some scholarly debate. While in "yeshivish" circles, his name is comfortably pronounced "ha-Hu Gavra," trained academics collapse to the ground in peals of laughter at the mere suggestion that this is possibly the correct pronunciation. After all, it is common knowledge that the letter "vav" is simply a corruption of the "waw" of old, and Semitics scholars are quick to point out that the "gimmel" beginning the second word should actually have a *dageshkal*, which would transform it into a "jimmel." Furthermore, the second word of the name is obviously related to the Akkadian word 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶, or "jabb'r," meaning "pelican," perhaps symbolizing

HahuwaJabbara's greedy nature mirrored in the pelican's spacious scooping bill.

*The Amazing Adventures of HahuwaJabbara* is an attempt by the inimitable Talmudic scholar Dr. Jason Stratford to peel back the veil keeping details of HahuwaJabbara's life in the dark. One problem which forms a running theme in the book is the dating of HahuwaJabbara's life. He seems to have lived in the late Tannaitic Amoraic age, but the clarity ends there. He is featured in stories with Rabbi Yehudah ha-Nassi<sup>1</sup> as well as with a slew of Amoraic figures, including first-generation Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha,<sup>2</sup> second-generation Rav Nahman,<sup>3</sup> third-generation Rabbi Ami,<sup>4</sup> fourth-generation Abaye,<sup>5</sup> and fifth/sixth-generation Ravina,<sup>6</sup> just to name a few. (He is also described as having lived in a long list of places, though this is less problematic, since he may have traveled extensively.) Hence, several theories have been advanced to explain the contradiction. One, which Stratford considers initially, is that the Talmud was made up by Jewish scholars hundreds of years after it was initially written. However, Stratford notes that the choppy, disjointed writing style of the Talmud indicates a more primitive form of thought, which could only have existed under Saasanian Persian influence, rather than that of European Christians or Middle Eastern Muslims in the Middle Ages, who were already reasonably enlightened. Another

theory is that HahuwaJabbara was simply blessed with an extraordinarily long life; short work is made of this by noting that no one could possibly have lived that long without some sort of futuristic medicine. A simple explanation, cited from Dr. Simon Akabe of Oxford University, instead offers the possibility that HahuwaJabbara indeed lived and died quite early, but his life story was passed on by scholars through the generations, with the intention of handing them a series of sample cases for legal analysis. Finally, halfway through *The Amazing Adventures*, Stratford offers his own interpretation, one which requires further explanation before being presented.

It is not just HahuwaJabbara's era that defies simple explication; every aspect of his life seems to be fraught with confusion, as Stratford explains over the course of the first half of the book. The same timid individual who hid in an attic for four years<sup>7</sup> was also famous enough for his word to have been respected by none other than the famed King Herod: "Herod was a slave in the house of Hashmonai, and was interested in a certain girl. One day, HahuwaJabbara heard a heavenly voice that said, 'Any slave who rebels today will be successful!' [Upon hearing this, Herod] rose and slew all his masters..."<sup>8</sup> Apparently, HahuwaJabbara was an oracle of sorts, whose words laid the groundwork for the Herodian dynasty. (Stratford also notes that in addition to his divine powers, he

is said to have been able to talk to birds as well.<sup>9</sup>)

HahuwaJabbara also seems to have been a frequent presence in court, whether insisting that his case be heard or dragging another there by the coattails. On one occasion, he landed himself in a debt of 1,000 zuz<sup>10</sup>; on another, he sold land with an insurance policy that was – to his dismay – redeemed when the land was ruined by a raging river.<sup>11</sup> He was also brought into court for building on orphans' property,<sup>12</sup> smacking another's ear,<sup>13</sup> and kicking a friend's money box into the river.<sup>14</sup> And of course, he stole a pair of oxen,<sup>15</sup> as well as a piece of silver.<sup>16</sup> However, while he seems to have maintained few financial scruples, HahuwaJabbara was quick to demand justice when he felt it was on his side. When he rented out his donkey on condition that the renter not travel in *Nehar Peqod*, and the borrower specifically traveled there, he got his money back in court.<sup>17</sup> On another occasion, HahuwaJabbara entrusted a friend with rings, and had to fight in court to retrieve the jewelry when the trustee claimed not to know where the rings were.<sup>18</sup>

How did HahuwaJabbara earn his living? Some passages will have you believe that he was a wealthy landowner who could afford to have sharecroppers do his dirty work.<sup>19</sup> Other sources suggest that he was a simple laborer, who had to perform such menial tasks

cont. on pg. 17



“HahuwaJabbara,” cont. from pg. 15

as climbing palm trees.<sup>20</sup> Stratford (though he later recants, as will be explained) attempts to swiftly resolve the contradiction by noting that HahuwaJabbara became significantly wealthier at some point in his life.<sup>21</sup> However, the brusque style of the claim cannot hide the thin ice on which Dr. Stratford stands; after all, as he himself admits, HahuwaJabbara is also seen plowing,<sup>22</sup> killing bees,<sup>23</sup> renting out donkeys<sup>24</sup> and millstones,<sup>25</sup> and selling buttons.<sup>26</sup> As unstable of a character as this would not likely have held onto his wealth long enough to set himself up with sharecroppers.

One thing, of course, is quite certain about HahuwaJabbara: he had tremendous difficulty with women. One passage discusses him overhearing his adulterous wife admitting her misdeeds:

“HahuwaJabbara heard his wife saying to her daughter, ‘Why are you not more private regarding prohibited matters [i.e., sexual impropriety]?...I have only one [son from your father out of all my sons]!’”<sup>27</sup> Despite HahuwaJabbara’s own record of sexual indiscretion (he was once publically whipped for having had relations with a non-Jewess<sup>28</sup>), his rage led to a divorce – and it was certainly a horrific proceeding. Initially, he was unwilling to give his wife a bill of divorce, and to avoid punishment in court, he would command a scribe to write the document, but would later officially retract his command.<sup>29</sup> When it came time to hand over the document, he could not bear to

give it to her directly, but instead threw it among her barrels.<sup>30</sup> (This is, of course, after he attempted to deceive his wife by giving her a Torah scroll and claiming, “This is your bill of divorce.”<sup>31</sup>) Stratford suggests that this behavior stemmed from psychological scars due to a tragedy in his early life, when his betrothed died prior to the wedding.<sup>32</sup> Also noted is that HahuwaJabbara, at two different times when he lived in two different cities (Pumbedita and Mata Mehasya), lost two brothers who each left behind a widow subject to levirate marriage,<sup>33</sup> which may have further damaged HahuwaJabbara’s psyche in the matter of marriage. Despite the emotional baggage, HahuwaJabbara seems to have remarried happily, because when he died by drowning, there was a wife who needed to receive permission to remarry.<sup>34</sup>

**“One thing, of course, is quite certain about HahuwaJabbara: he had tremendous difficulty with women.”**

Other interesting facts appear. HahuwaJabbara seems to have hated himself,<sup>35</sup> spent time in jail,<sup>36</sup> sold himself to cannibals,<sup>37</sup> and was ultimately consigned to eternity in Hell.<sup>38</sup> There was also a playful side to HahuwaJabbara: in rare moments, we see him playing with his hair,<sup>39</sup> rushing to drink wine while still in the store,<sup>40</sup> and passing bareheaded before scholars.<sup>41</sup> There is even a noble side to HahuwaJabbara, seen in his institution of morality in jails and his clever schemes to protect girls from rape.<sup>42</sup> Most oddly, HahuwaJabbara obtained celebrity status to the point where his life

was considered paradigmatic and even sacred. In one passage, Rava states unequivocally that all people’s blood – i.e., the value of their lives – must be compared to his: “What convinces you that your blood is redder? Perhaps HahuwaJabbara’s blood is redder!”<sup>43</sup> Even the general world was aware that HahuwaJabbara was special; in another passage, the Roman emperor Nero proclaims, “The Lord, blessed be He, wishes to destroy His house, and He wishes to wipe His hands upon HahuwaJabbara!”<sup>44</sup> Certainly being the Lord’s hand towel is a mark of significant stature.

So, what are we to make of all this? Dr. Stratford finally reveals the answer at the midpoint of *The Amazing Adventures*: there was more than one HahuwaJabbara. Like Avimelekh and Pharaoh, HahuwaJabbara was a title passed down from generation to generation, referring to an individual whose qualities might best be considered average, an individual representing the populace as a whole. The HahuwaJabbara may or may not have been a hereditary position, but its influence was certainly substantial. As an early example of democracy within the Jewish people, the HahuwaJabbara must have achieved a sort of celebrity as a ruler without power, a representative of the people who even in doing wrong was doing right.

How many HahuwaJabbaras were there? Stratford spends the remainder of *The Amazing Adventures* analyzing this question. Based on the evidence – mostly

linguistic distinctions between various dialects of Syriac that developed throughout the course of the Amoraic period, which are reflected in subtle syntactic and grammatical differences in the texts of the stories – Stratford argues that there were four. He styles them “J HahuwaJabbara” (J for Judean, referring to his overlap with Rabbi Judah the *nasi*), “E HahuwaJabbara” (E for Early Amoraic, reflecting his era), “P HahuwaJabbara” (P for Physically active, as he is responsible for the physical violence encountered), and “D HahuwaJabbara” (D for Death, since all the death-related stories appear regarding him). Eventually, acknowledging the existence of a good number of stories that do not neatly fit into the personalities he has described, Stratford adds on “R HahuwaJabbara,” where R stands for Random, the idea being that there were minor HahuwaJabbaras between the more famous examples; these “R HahuwaJabbaras” are responsible for the remaining passages. Stratford also suggests that certain towns had their own local HahuwaJabbaras, and these minor HahuwaJabbaras were occasionally referred to by their title in Talmudic passages rather than by name.

Unfortunately, even an executive summary of the detailed linguistic expertise that Dr. Stratford reveals in the second half of the book – the real strength of *The Amazing Adventures* – is beyond the scope of this review. This being the case, readers will have to take my word when I state that Dr. Stratford has shown himself to be an expert of the highest degree in both Talmudic study and finer details of Semitic languages. His ability to argue a point cogently and

**Who's Who?**  
Can you guess which stud this stonning piece of facial hair belongs to?

A - Rav Aharon Lichtenstein  
B - Emerald Reising (aka Jonathan Ziring)  
C - Arnel Diamond  
D - Shaul "KHM Dictator" Seidler-Feller  
E - Rav Michael "Just two more minutes" Rosenzweig  
F - Elvis Presly (who knew he was so shtark? I guess Adam Sandler forgot him in his Hannukah song)  
G - Rav Meir Golvicht (he's so frum that he won't even cut his stache)

## Being [a] Shomer

BY: Talmidas ha-Rama”k mi-Teaneck

This article will discuss a pressing and *chamur* issue in our community. This *threat is increasing in degree* every day as it endangers the *taharah* (purity) of *kelal Yisroel*. I am, of course, talking about being [a] *shomer* (safeguarder of someone else’s object)<sup>1</sup>. The distress, pain, confusion and frustration generated when being a *shomer* exceeds all other religious angst, including the crisis of faith caused by “Yeshivish Guy Tells Over a Vort,”<sup>2</sup> where members of the community were left perplexed and in anguish. While some cried over hearing that the *avos* wore Converse and not Crocs on *Tish’ah be-Av*, most were distressed about other fundamental questions: What type of creatures were they???? Funny-looking people? Aardvarks? Cats without tails? Bears? Dogs? Brown Penguins? Squirrels? Koalas? Non-descript mammals? *Rov poskim* (most halakhic decisors) *paskened* that the creatures were in fact bears, but until that point, the community was left distraught, grappling with these difficult questions. “Candlelight” caused a similar religious upheaval when children in



yeshivah day schools all over the world cried out in confusion: How could the Maccabeats blow out the *shamash*?!

But above all, the most challenging situation facing our community is that of the *shomer*. Recently, it has become public knowledge that most *shomer* members of our community struggle with this mitzvah, and that many are breaching these laws, despite protestations from their guilty consciences. We know that the laws of *shemirah* are unanimously considered *de-oraisa*, Torah-derived laws. The *halakhot* of being *shomer* are found in *Shemot* 22:6-8.

“*Ki yiten ish el re’ehu kesef o kelim lishmor, ve-gunnav mi-beit ha-ish, im yimatse ha-ganav, yeshalem shenayim* -- When a man gives money or goods to another for safekeeping, and they are stolen from the man’s house – if the thief is caught, he shall pay double. *Im lo yimatse ha-ganav ve-nikrav ba’al ha-bayit el ha-Elohim* -- if the thief is not caught, the owner of the house shall depose before God, **im lo shalakh yado bi-melech re’ehu - that he has not laid hands on his neighbor’s goods.** *Al kol devar pesha: al shor al chamor al seh al salmah, al kol avedah* – In all charges of misappropriation: pertaining to an ox, an ass, a sheep, a garment, or any other loss...”

There is no doubt that these laws, found in *Parashat Mishpatim*, are *de-oraisa* laws, and ones that must be taken very seriously. Our Sages expounded upon these verses (and those that follow) and derived four types of *shomrim*.<sup>3</sup> The first two

categories are *shomer chinnam* (a gratuitous *shomer*) and *shomer/nose sachar* (a paid *shomer*). Both of these *shomrim* are only allowed to watch the item, but are strictly forbidden to touch the safeguarded item, known as the *pikkadon*. If a *shomer chinnam* or *sakhar* use or touch the *pikkadon*, it is known as “*shelichus yad*,” extending of one’s hand (or “laying hands on the goods of one’s neighbor”). *Shelichus yad* is a very serious *issur* (prohibition), forbidden by the Torah. A *sholeach yad* is considered a *gazlan*, a thief, and according to *Mishneh Hamur Rabbi*, we slice off the hand of one who is *sholeach yad*. There are even some opinions that make a *hekeshe* (textual juxtaposition) between the use of the word “*behemah*” in verse 9 regarding *shomrim*, to the word “*behemah*” in verse 18, which reads “*kol shochev im behemah mos yumas* – whoever lies with a beast shall be put to death.” Based on the appearance of the word “*behemah*” in both verses, we can be *doresh* (derive exegetically) that one who is *sholeach yad* shall also be put to death.

The *sho’el* (borrower), and *socher* (renter), are the other two types of *shomrim*, and are both allowed to touch and use the object they are safeguarding. This article only deals with the struggles experienced by a *shomer chinnam* and *shomer sachar*, struggles which are not relevant to the *sho’el* or *socher*. Additionally, when the phrase “*shomer*” is used, it generally refers to a *shomer chinnam* or *shomer sachar*.

Someone who is [a] *shomer* must watch the goods of someone else, and resist the temptation to touch or use it. The angst generated from this temptation causes many *shomrim* to have crises of faith, and to believe that if they will be *sholeach yad*, that they will lose

**“It is common knowledge that almost everyone is sholeach yad when they are a shomer.”**

favor in the eyes of God. *Shomrim* are often told by their *rebbeim* from yeshivah that if they even have thoughts of being *sholeach yad*, they are *chayyav misah bi-yedei shamayim* (liable to death executed by the Heavens), and they should be ashamed of themselves. We know from a *sugya* in *Kiddushin* 42b that Beit Shammai rules that if one thinks of being *sholeach yad*, we hold him liable:

“As it was taught, ‘for every charge of misappropriation.’ Beit Shammai say this comes to make him liable for the thought (of *shelichut yad*) as if he had done the action (*lechayev al ha-machshavah ke-ma’aseh*). Beit Hillel says we do not hold him liable until he actually extends his hand, as it says ‘that he did not extend his hand.’ Beit Shammai said to Beit Hillel: does it not say ‘for every charge of misappropriation?’ Beit Hillel said to Beit Shammai: does it not say ‘that he did not extend his hand?’ Beit Shammai said to Beit Hillel: If so, why does it say ‘for every charge of misappropriation?’ For I might think, I know it only of himself [the bailee]; how do I know it if he instructs his slave or agent? Therefore it is said: ‘For every

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## Walk Like a Penguin, Walk With God

BY: Admor ha-Tsaddik Reb Anthony Chibbaro *Shlita*

As the Purim holiday comes upon us I feel it necessary to clarify a previous proclamation<sup>1</sup> I issued on the proper halachic manner of walking during this cold, dark winter. Some have expressed *bilbul* over my referral to that *treif* animal, the “*payngvin*,” or *be-leshonam*, the “penguin.”

Much can be learned from this *heiliga beheimah*. It is already well known that the animals have much to teach us *poshutter yiddin* in the way of *middos*. As the Gemara teaches: “Rabbi Yochanan said: Had the Torah not been given, we would have learned modesty from the cat, [aversion to] theft from the ant, chastity from the dove, and [conjugal] manners<sup>2</sup> from fowl.”<sup>3</sup> One may ask why I feel the need to learn *derech erets* from the penguin once we have the Torah. The answer is explained by a Rabbi Who Shall Not Be Named: If one is entirely and completely immersed in Torah then he should only learn from Torah. But if *le-tsa’areinu u-biglal avonenu* one is *chas ve-shalom* involved in the wider world, then he can study the ways of the Torah from nature.<sup>4</sup>

The penguin is indeed the most praiseworthy of animals. It transcends the merits of the cat who is far too comfortable in the *tamei* places of Yerushalayim. The attributes of the ant pale in comparison for it engages in *arayot* and, even more *chamur*, *serarah* by having a “queen ant.”

Even the dove, considered by many the purest of animals, engages in a radical blurring of the *kadosh* lines between men and women by lending its name, Yonah, to both. The penguin, however, is holy in all its ways and we should only be worthy to emulate its *tsidkus*.

There has been much debate over the origins of the word “penguin,” but the word can be clearly traced to *lashon ha-kodesh*. “*Pagan*” in Hebrew refers to both a “cry for help” and “commoners.”<sup>5</sup> Adam named the penguin as such because since the penguin is constantly in asking forgiveness for the world, for the common folk, he is the embodiment of these two words.

Penguins dress in the most *tsenius* of manners, wearing the blessed uniform of black and white at all times. It is known that wearing black clothing is an effective way to combat the urge to sin<sup>6</sup> and wearing white exudes purity.<sup>7</sup> The penguin is thus constantly showing its inner purity for us all to admire by combining its fear of sinning with its innate *neshamah taharah*. Yes, the penguin, unlike all the other animals can be said to have a *tahor neshamaleh* because it is *yarei Hashem* and spends its time in white, in purity. The penguin mirrors itself off of Na Nach Nachma Nachman Me’uman, of

whom it was said that from the age of six he would dip in the freezing waters of the *mikva’os* of Ukraine, looking to cleanse himself from impurities.<sup>8</sup> Penguins choose to do this from the moment of birth, embracing the Antarctic cold to rid themselves of physical desires.

It is reasonable to ask why this Creature of Blessed Feathers was never mentioned by the Rabbis of Blessed Fedoras. This really speaks, however, to the ultimate piety of the Penguin. As the elder R. Ela’i said: “If a person feels an uncontrollable urge to sin, let him go to a place where he is not known to do so.”<sup>9</sup> The Penguin is so concerned with protecting *Ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu’s* Name that he permanently relocated to a place where there is no possibility of a public desecration, a place where he is not known by the rest of the world.<sup>10</sup>

It is no wonder then why I looked to the penguin as an example of how the Yeshiva University community should walk. In the email to the undergraduate student body, I wrote to “walk consciously... avoid the temptation to run” Just like a penguin. A Jew must never run because every day should be viewed as Shabbat and it is *assur* to run on Shabbat, as it is said “If you restrain your foot because of the Shabbat...”<sup>11</sup> Additionally, I

wrote to “walk cautiously” because, at it is said, “Guard yourselves very carefully.”<sup>12</sup> The caution to “Walk ‘small.’ Avoid an erect, marching posture” was a reference to the Jewish *middah* of humility in the face of God’s awesomeness. As it is said, “R. Yehoshua ben Levi says that it is forbidden for a Jew to walk six feet in the extreme upright position since God’s glory fills the entire world.”<sup>13</sup> Jewish men are not basketball players because they have God’s Almighty presence weighing down on them, urging them to walk small. The hunched over shoulders appearance is a man’s embracement of how close to the ground he is, how unworthy he is to stand upright.

Penguins exemplify all these characteristics. They exude humility and Jewish values in their small and cautious waddle. Even at the height of their *simchah*, when they have the happiest of feet, they move only in a way worthy of a *ben Tundra*. Anyone who has ever been *zocheh* to witness a march of penguins knows how God is always at the forefront, how open they are to allow God<sup>14</sup> to narrate their lives. In a recent interview with Aish.com a member of this humble tribe acknowledged this characteristic of his clan: We are “very humble and self-effacing, the way we shuffle forward, rocking from side-to-side.”<sup>15</sup> All Jews should try to live like penguins, embrace the black and white, the cold and the bad posture.

Many have complained this year about the length and brutality of winter. My email about how to properly walk in the snow and ice was meant to inspire the

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# Yalmid the Talmid: A Completely Original Composition Unrelated to the Works of Dr. Seuss

BY: Riley Chapman

On the far-away island of Yeschi-va-Plais, Yalmid the Talmid was king of the Beis. A nice little Beis, nicely spaced, never packed. The *sefarim* were plentiful, beautifully stacked. The *lomdim* had everything *lomdim* might need. And they were all happy. Quite happy indeed. They were... until Yalmid, the sharp and the bright, Decided his brilliance must gather more light. “I master,” said Yalmid, “the learning I do. But I’m so narrow-minded, and that makes me blue! With these *sefarim* as teachers, I enter God’s mind, But I cannot appreciate man’s daily grind. This throne that I sit on is simply too high. It ought to be lower!” he said with a sigh. “If I could be worldly, so great I would be; What an *oved Hashem!* I must get a degree!” So Yalmid the Talmid his studies began, Which – alongside his learning – would make him a man. He registered late for his credits sixteen And, learning in classes, new knowledge would glean.

Each idea stood on another one’s back

And he piled them all up in a grand mental stack.

Then Yalmid climbed up and considered the pile.

What new wonderful thoughts! Oh, how it made him smile!

“All mine!” Yalmid cried. “Oh, the things I now know!

I can calculate phi! I can calculate rho!

I speak Spanish and French! And, what’s more, beyond that

I philosophize now, and dissect pig and bat!

I’m Yalmid the Talmid! Oh, marvelous me!

For serving the Lord, I’m a most useful *keli!*”

And through the semester, he gloated and swelled,

Thinking over and over, “I’m *shtark* in the *velt!*”

Until one day near noon, when he heard a faint sigh.

“What’s that?” snapped the *bachur*, and peered from on high.

And he saw, by his *makom*, a *talmid* named Jack,

Just a part of the scene. And this poor, simple quack

Looked up and he said, “Beg your pardon, dear Yalmid,

I must ask you, for you are well-known as a

*talmid*

Who loves the *yeshiva*. Could you be so kind

As to speak Friday night, share the thoughts on your mind?”

“SILENCE!” the high-thinking Yalmid barked back.

“I’ve not time for such things. Don’t you know that, plain Jack?”

“You stay far away while I learn and I grow.

Do you know what I’ve studied, the knowledge I know?

I’ve memorized wars, and the bones of a cat!

But that isn’t all. I’ll do better than that!

My knowledge shall grow!” his now loathsome voice thundered,

“Let credits pile up! I’ll do ‘bout two hundred!”

So as the years passed, Yalmid’s brain filled with stuff,

Yet for all he learned, it was never enough.

“More knowledge, so I can serve God!” he would say,

As friendships once solid now slowly gave way.

So finally Yalmid got what he desired,

The well-rounded brain to which he had aspired.

“Hooray!” shouted Yalmid. “I’m the ultimate Jew!

I know fifteen constants whose symbol is mu!

I understand music, and play it quite well!

I can pick apart artwork of Heaven and Hell!

I know the world’s history – years, months, and dates!

I speak twenty tongues! I can even lift weights!

And of course, through it all, even when I was strained,

*Sedarim* were carefully, strictly maintained!

I’m Yalmid the Talmid! Oh, marvelous me!

I’ve mastered *avodas Hashem* perfectly!”

Then again, from behind, in the bustling Beis,

Came a groan from our old friend named Jack. With his face

Twisted into a frown, he could barely express

The thoughts leaving him in apparent distress.

“Excuse me, sir, please... I don’t like to complain,

But today I’ve done something that may cause you pain.

I know that you think you are doing great work,

But unto your peers – well, you’ve been a real jerk.

It’s clear that you care about none but yourself,

And no matter the *sefarim* you take off the shelf,

Their messages never quite sunk in your head.

Your brain is alive, but your heart is quite dead!

Your friends cannot stand you. They’d give you a smack

If they could. Oh, you sad human being!” cried Jack.

“You hush up your mouth!” howled the quite learned Yalmid.

“You’ve no right to talk to the world’s greatest

*talmid*.

I rule over Torah! I rule over Madda!

I AM the ideal! Next to me, you are nada!”

But, while he was shouting, he saw with surprise

That Jack wasn’t angry. His mouth, and his eyes,

And his nose got all happy! Right then, with a wink

And a laugh, Jack exclaimed, “Oh, I know what you think!

When first I had acted, I’d filled up with fright!

But your harsh words have comforted me. I’ve done right!

Oh, Yalmid, dear Yalmid! Have you started dating?

A *maidel* with excellent *middos* is waiting!

She’s got all the qualities you’ll ever need,

And she’s been *ret* to you, if you’ll only accede!”

Replied Yalmid, “Though I missed the logical flow

In your words, I suppose that I cannot say no (Though I’m not quite there yet) without hearing you out.

What’s she like? Which most excellent traits would you tout?”

Now grinning with victory, Jack said, “But wait!

There’s one vital thing you should know ‘fore you date!

The reports of your character have spread around.

*Bavust* in the *velt* are the facts on the ground.

I thought that the *hiyyuv* of *lo sa’amod*

Required me to honestly, clearly unload

All the feelings I have ‘bout how rotten you are.

But it isn’t my fault word has traveled so far!

To be blunt, to be clear, to be brutally plain,

Your prospects for marriage are swift on the wane.”

“What’s THAT?” snorted Yalmid. “Why, Jack, how could you

Slash my prospects, my chances for *peru u-revu?*”

But, as Yalmid the Talmid began to recoil,

A people-wave spread, and it brewed to a boil,

And scores of *talmidim* arose one by one

To join in the *hock*, to partake in the fun,

And one said, “Jack’s right!” And another, “That’s true!”

And Yalmid got nervous. His discomfort grew.

But yet the assault was not finished! For while

The assent grew, and Yalmid felt ever more vile,

Jack added, “It’s odd that you think you’re the best,

With all your endeavors exquisitely blessed,

When all of your studies are just for the brain.

Do you think of others, to help? Remove pain?

Is there warmth in your manner? A spark in your heart?

Do you care about values, or just being smart?

For all of those facts you so swiftly recall,

You’ve really learned nothing! Yes, nothing at all!”

So that plain little *talmid*, with a little attack,

That plain little *talmid* whose name was just Jack,

# Humrah of the Week – Bi’ur Hamets

BY: Rabbeinu Mo’ Chumroys Dish

While most people put all their efforts into ridding their homes and cars of *hamets*, one place that is often neglected during *bedikat hamets*, and perhaps even more pressing is your very own digestive system, including tonsils, esophagus, stomach, small intestine and large intestine. Being that *issur hamets* is an *issur karet mi-de’oraita*, this is very problematic as the *hamets* is already in your system.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that some *hamets* may have permanently attached itself to the surface of a person’s tonsils at some point before *Pesah* and since *hamets* is not *batel afilu be-elef* this will pose a problem. In order to resolve this issue, rabbi-doctors are recommending that everyone have a tonsillectomy prior to *Pesah*. Since tonsillectomy is considered to be a relatively

## “Rabbi-doctors are recommending that everyone have a tonsillectomy prior to Pesah.”

safe operation and there is no known practical use for tonsils, rabbis have issued a *Pesak* that it would not be in violation of *pikuah nefesh*. However, it must be noted that this surgical operation must be scheduled enough in advance to allow one to fulfill *mitsvat akhilat matsah on leil ha-seder* (otherwise, one would be required to blend the *matsah* into baby-food).

Those who have consumed *hamets* during the 24-hour period prior to *bi’ur hamets* must spend the proper time in the restroom prior to the time that the *issur hamets* is *hal* in order to eliminate any residual *hamets* from their bodies. Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv

also requires the use of a laxative to assist in the elimination process. (Note: Some laxatives contain *hamets* and may not be used *erev Pesah*. Please consult your local rabbinical authority for which laxatives may be used.)

Thus, ingesting *hamets* throughout the year without intent may be problematic as you are setting yourself up to violate this *issur*, similar to the problem with biting your nails during the week as it will inevitably lead you to violate the *issur* of *gozez* on *Shabbat*, as explained by R. Shimshon Dovid Pincus.



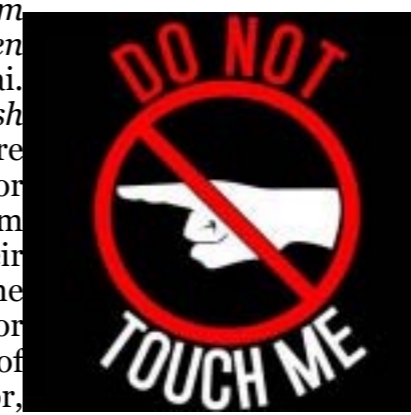
cont, from pg. 7

When asked to comment on how he felt upon his receiving the valedictory prize, R. Schachter said “Okay! Very good!” When asked to clarify what that meant, he said simply, “I don’t know!”

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charge of misappropriation.’ Now, that is well according to Beit Hillel. But according to Beit Shammai who interpret this verse as showing that intention is as deed, let us learn from it [?]”

Based on this sugya, we see that Beit Shammai would surely hold that one who even *thinks* about being *sholeach yad* will be held liable! While many go according to Beit Hillel in most matters of Halakhah, we know that Shammai was definitely the frummer guy. Since he is generally more *machmir*, and *safek de-oraisa le-chumra* (when in doubt, do without), we actually should always *pasken* like Beit Shammai. Any *ben da’as* who is a *yerei shamayim* will know to *pasken* like Beit Shammai. Thus we see that *yesh al ma lismoch* (there is what to rely on) for the yeshivah rebbeim that warn their *bochurim* that if one touches the goods of his or her neighbor, he is *chayyav*.



The magnitude of the crisis in our community stems from the fact that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people are being *shomrim* for sometimes a year, or even two. It is much harder to watch over your neighbor’s goods and not touch them, if the temptation is there before his or her eyes for an extended period of time. Thus, in the Modern Orthodox community, where most people will watch the object for longer durations than what was usually standard throughout history, this crisis is rampant.

It is common knowledge that almost everyone is *sholeach yad* when they are a *shomer*. The

temptations are way too strong to not touch the goods of one’s neighbor. Consider this quote from a fellow *bochur* in much anguish:

“I was sitting in the library next to this girl I just met. She asked me if I could watch her laptop for an hour while she went to watch the YStuds practice. I knew I was a *shomer chinnam*, and wasn’t allowed to touch her computer or use it at my pleasure. However, I had an uncontrollable urge to use the internet and download some music. Unfortunately, in the process the computer contracted a virus... so much for ‘SafeConnect’...”

We see, that when the object sits in front of the *shomer* for extended periods of time, it is almost an impossible feat to resist being *sholeach yad*. Some can hold off for a many months, or even a year, but for the most part, people who are *shomrim* usually end up breaking. Most *shomrim* are *sholeach yad be-seser*, in private, though some are even as bold (or honest) to do so in public. A *pittaron*, solution, to this raging crisis of faith, must be found immediately.

There are a few approaches that can be used to help fix this *chamur*, severe problem from plaguing our community. The first approach to this huge issue is to create a system where one is not allowed to be a *shomer* for more than a few months. After a few months, the temptation to be *sholeach yad* and touch the goods of one’s neighbor is too strong. One must cease to be a *shomer* after this period of time, lest he come to falter. Generally, this approach is very painful, as the *shomer* has developed a strong, some even say

love, connection to the *pikkadon*, and it is very difficult to part with the object.

The other approach is more helpful in easing the angst of *shemirah*. The *shomer* must be *koneh* (legally acquire) the object as soon as it is practically possible. Making a *kinyan* is the most effective way to prevent *shelichut yad* and to rid a *shomer’s* mind of the thoughts of being *sholeach yad*. Once he is *koneh* the object, he can be *sholeach yad* and not have to worry about being *chayav*. The object will be his, in sickness and in health, till death do they part. This *kinyan* can be made in a number of ways, (namely, three).

Once we acknowledge that this is a real problem, we can try to tackle it, and save the future of *Kelal Yisroel*. Until that point, we are only pretending that everything is perfect, and we will never address the true issue facing our communities today. *Chizku ve-amtzu* (be strong and brave), my friends. *Ad kan*.

1 Alternatively can be translated as: “watcher,” or “bailee” in fancy *academische lashon*.  
2 Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8MG9YtaZXg>.  
3 *Bava Metsi’a* 93a.

cont. from pg. 19

Many have complained this year about the length and brutality of winter. My email about how to properly walk in the snow and ice was meant to inspire the Yeshiva University community to embrace how with every step they can walk with Hashem, march with the penguins. All that being said, may the words of the Prophet Phil of Punxsutawney come true *im yirtseh Hashem, bi-meheirah be-yameinu*.

RebAntonioChaveiroisthe Rosh Yeshiva of Environmental Beri’ut and Shemirah at Yeshiva University. He believes that through a deep connection to spiritual environment and health, salvation will come from God.

1 Anthony Chibbaro, “Walking on Ice, Snow and Wet Surfaces.” YU-Announce. February 1, 2011. Check your Trash.

2 Edited by YUCK: Yeshiva University Censorship *Kevutsah*.

3 *Eruvin* 100b.

4 Natan Slifkin, *Nature’s Song* (New York: Lambda Publishers, 2009), p. 40.

5 Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of Targumim, Talmud and Midrashic Literature* (New York: Choneb, 1926), p. 1134.

6 *Maharsha* to *Kiddushin* 40a.

7 *Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chaim*, 581:13

8 “Breslov history—Rebbe Nachman of Breslov” [http://www.breslev-midot.com/eng/about\\_berslev\\_moharan.asp](http://www.breslev-midot.com/eng/about_berslev_moharan.asp)

9 *Kiddushin* 40a.

10 That *makom shtus*, Hollywood, has recently discovered this *kaddosh* animal but as their influence is limited they do not count as the rest of the world.

11 Isaiah 58:13.

12 Deuteronomy 4:15.

13 *Kiddushin* 31a.

14 Morgan Freeman.

15 Sarah Shapiro. “When Bad Things Happen to Good Penguins.” *Aish.com*. February 4, 2006. <http://www.aish.com/ci/a/48945266.html>.

ישיבת רבנו יצחק אלחנן

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yubatlan@gmail.com