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NEO-ORTHODOXY

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

I noticed in the Summer 1968 issue of *TRADITION* the 'correction' and apology by Rabbi O. Fasman. I think, however, that he owes another apology.

The late Lubliner Rav, Rabbi Meir Shapiro was also a member of the Polish Sejm (Parliament) and he too was a gifted orator in Polish.

I have a vivid recollection of the press notice about his famous speech in the Sejm, outlining a detailed recovery plan for the Polish economy, at which time he was applauded and congratulated even by the members of the anti-Semitic Polish National Democrats.

There should also be an apology by Rabbi Macy Gordon for his remark — Hirschian's Neo-Orthodoxy — a phrase which I have noticed and deplored repeatedly in *TRADITION*.

"Neo-Orthodoxy" sounds like lukewarm Judaism, and to brand S. R. Hirsch of this has no foundation whatsoever, for he was certainly one of the most uncompro-

mising Orthodox Jewish thinkers and leaders.

Not to accept this fact, means either, not to understand Hirsch, or trying to use him as a cover and to justify the present Neo-Orthodox movement.

(Rabbi) Daniel Lowy
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MEDICAL ETHICS AND ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

The article by Rabbi Moses Tendler in the Spring 1968 issue of *TRADITION*, "Medical Ethics and Torah Morality," is so replete with innuendoes, inconsistencies and misstatements of fact that though they were partially refuted in the subsequent article of Dr. Elihu Schimmel, I, as a physician and practicing urologist, feel compelled to comment.

Blakiston's Medical Dictionary defines *iatrogenic* as "referring to the effects of a physician's words or actions upon the patient." The etymologist will quickly discern the origin of this term as *iatros*: physician, and *genesthai*: to be pro-

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duced. Rabbi Tendler, in his startling comments on the word *iatrogenesis*, appears to have embarked on a rather unique (and to my knowledge, heretofore unknown) offshoot of etymology: the "science" of word motivation. Thus, not content with the generic derivation of the term, Rabbi Tendler feels compelled to probe the motivation leading to its coinage. The statement that it was coined by physicians so that they may compartmentalize "their ethical concern in a new medical specialty so that it will not interfere with the practice of the healing arts" though obviously based on Rabbi Tendler's glaring disdain for medical practice, is based on nothing else.

Unlike the test tube, where the interaction of compounds A and B always yields compound C, the interaction of patient and therapy has far more variables and is therefore less predictable. Though a physician may be well aware of the specific and desired action of a drug, it is oftentimes virtually impossible for him to predict whether this will be superseded by one of the drug's side effects or whether that individual patient will react to the drug in an unforeseen manner (e.g., allergic reaction in a patient giving no allergic history). The result of either possibility is an iatrogenic disease. To indict the physician generally for its occurrence betrays a lack of understanding of the nature of the healing arts.

Rabbi Tendler states that hemodialysis (artificial kidney) is to be

preferred to transplantation surgery. Having been personally involved in the dialysis (artificial kidney) and renal transplantation program at Yale-New Haven Medical Center, I would like to make the readers unequivocally aware of the absolute absurdity of Rabbi Tendler's contention.

The aim of kidney transplantation is to provide a patient who has no effective kidney function, with a normally functioning kidney. Because of the phenomenon of organ rejection, (the patient receiving the kidney rejecting what to his body is foreign protoplasm—an iatrogenic disease, by the way) this aim is achieved in a variable percentage of patients¹ depending on how closely related in the makeup of their protoplasm the donor and recipient are. In identical twins, this figure approaches 100 percent and in unrelated cadaver transplants is in the 25 percent range. Nevertheless, there are a significant number of patients alive today leading *normal* lives with *normally functioning* transplanted kidneys.

It is a safe conjecture, that, as a non-practicing, non-physician, Rabbi Tendler has never personally followed these patients (as I have) through a period of dialysis and subsequent transplantation. Had he done so, even he would have marvelled at these patients experiencing a *techiat hametim*. Under dialysis, they were subjected to the following:

1. Restricted fluid, mineral, and protein intake severely limiting their diet even to the type

¹ Hume, D. M. et al: *Annals of Surgery* 164:352, Sept. 1966.

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of flour used in their daily bread.

2. Chronic anemia (blood deficiency) requiring regular transfusions.
3. Chronic malaise, i.e., not feeling well, resulting in severe limitation of normal daily activity.
4. Spending up to six hours, two to three times a week respectively, hooked up to the artificial kidney machine.
5. Five to ten percent one year mortality rate because the artificial kidney cannot physiologically replace *all* kidney functions.

Rabbi Tendler does at least acknowledge the fourth point, as a rather vague "increased geographic mobility provided by the grafted kidney." One would be interested to know how many readers, besides Rabbi Tendler, of course, would prefer the above existence to that of having a normally functioning transplanted kidney. Since the latter, function-wise is equivalent to a human being with normal kidneys, the logical corollary to Rabbi Tendler's contention is that were it not for the decreased geographic mobility and increased surgical risk, we would all be better off without our kidneys and on the machine. This is a rather remarkable thesis for a self-professed "knowledgeable layman in the field of medical science."

Rabbi Tendler avows distrust in a medical community that proposes an independent group of consulting physicians to determine a proper selection of patients for transplantation. Exactly two paragraphs on,

Dr. Barnard is then criticized for *not* having made prior consultations before embarking on the first heart transplant. Presumably, had he done so, he would then have fallen conveniently into the trap of Rabbi Tendler's original indictment. The implications of the latter are rather fascinating. The individual physician, heretofore criticized for not having an independent review board, is now to be deemed untrustworthy because he proposes one. One might ask Rabbi Tendler if the existence of an independent Rabbinical Beth Din implies basic distrust in him as an individual rabbi.

I do not pride myself as a medical scientist knowledgeable in rabbinical matters, and therefore will not attempt to discuss the halakhic aspects of Rabbi Tendler's dissertation. I trust that they can be discussed competently by true experts in the field. Nor will I attempt to paraphrase Rabbi Tendler's remarkable challenge to Dr. Barnard, and boast that he owes it to *me* to explain his entire thought process, his knowledge and lack thereof. Suffice it to say that the reader may draw his own logical conclusions.

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Since Dr. Tendler feels that it is unnecessary for him to reply to these charges, the Editors wish to point out that Dr. Tendler's high professional reputation rests not only upon his important research,

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but also upon the many positions of eminence he occupies in the scientific community.

AN OUTSIDER'S REACTION TO ORTHODOX THINKING

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

As a non-Orthodox Jew I should like to comment on the Summer 1968 issue.

If I can take the views expressed in the Symposium as representative I can only draw one conclusion: if Judaism has a future it will be in the Diaspora. When an Orthodox Israeli rabbi believes that the days of the Messiah are coming and attributes it to the present events resulting from economic and political involvements then the political atmosphere of Israel seems to have the power to transform even an Orthodox rabbi into a secularist.

I do not understand A. Kasher's view that the 13 *Ikkarim* of Maimonides are not intelligible? That is clearly what the author means although he says "directly intelligible." For he immediately points out that they could acquire *any* meaning only through the construction of "correspondence rules" and that such have never been presented. True, he makes one exception for the *Ikkar* which says that the Torah shall never be changed. The author is very inconsistent. If the other *Ikkarim* are meaningless the Torah is meaningless, too. And it is certainly meaningless to say that something that is meaningless will never be changed. The author starts

from ideas of linguistic philosophy which imply the meaninglessness of all non-scientific statements and, in consequence, the meaninglessness of religion. Apparently the editors of *TRADITION* have let themselves be deceived by the statement: "The whole problem of conflicts between religion and science is a pseudo-problem." Religion, according to Kasher, is either meaningless or identical with some scientific statements into which it can be translated. In either case religion is nothing.

In M. Goldman's essay on "Man's Place in Nature" the secular view described cannot be justified. I doubt that there is any secular humanist who would subscribe to such a secular view. It is always assumed by the humanist that man is not a piece of blind nature but above nature because of his mental faculties. We may recall Kant, for whom reason was that which distinguished man and made ethics and morals possible. The author dismisses consideration of all Western ethics because Jewish and Christian thinking is based on revelation, and revelation must be rejected as a source of knowledge in the secularist framework. Assuming that it is correct that all Western ethical systems can be traced back to Jewish and Christian thinking (which is most debatable in view of the influence of Greek philosophy) it is still absurd to infer that all Western ethics is based on revelation. The result is that instead of discussing secular humanism as it is he discusses a naturalistic philosophy constructed by him for the purpose of refuting

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it.

Rabbi Greenberg's article on "Jewish Values and the Changing American Ethic," is by far the best article on the present condition of Orthodoxy I have ever read. It not only describes succinctly the present situation but points out a way which could lead Orthodoxy out of its present isolation, stagnation and barrenness. It is an article which can awaken some hope where there is little hope. I wonder whether Rabbi Greenberg's article will remain a voice in the desert or be a beginning of a new hopeful development.

Felix Eckstein
Toronto

RELEVANCE OF JEWISH VALUES

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

Dr. Irving Greenberg's article ("Jewish Values and the Changing American Ethic," Summer 1968) was an excellent critique of the present American value system. However, it would be most revealing if a study were made of the American Orthodox intellectual woman. She faces so many problems that her male counterpart fails to comprehend. She must satisfy both aspects of her self—her devotion to tradition and her own intellectual drives. Her creative pursuits while easily fulfilled as a student is so radically challenged after marriage. This dichotomy of needs—religious expression and intellectual success—is similar to the perplexities faced by a sensitive Orthodox layman as described by Dr.

Greenberg; but an Orthodox woman's role as seen by Halakhah removes her from secularist, creative desires. We must distinguish between traditional requirements that might be harmonized with our current culture and those traditions which are not necessary nor desirable.

It is too simplistic to speak of producing children as being more important a life function than any other without considering how she might be an excellent mother as well as contributing to society, both Jewish and secular. Certainly it is foolish to judge her by the *ta'am* of her gefilte fish, when she would prefer to be judged in other creative tasks. Why do so many girls major in education, and then teach biology, when at least a few of them might have gone into medicine and performed, through that service, a great *kiddush ha-shem*?

Mrs. Susan Sachs
Oak Park, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF *TRADITION*:

Dr. Irving Greenberg's article, "Jewish Values and the Changing American Ethics," in the Summer 1968 issue of *TRADITION* invaded sacrosanct grounds where many educators have feared to tread: the relevance of contemporary Jewish education. Certainly much of his critical and even caustic comments, especially in the area of yeshiva education, demand an earnest reply other than panegyric *apologetica* in defense of the *status quo*.

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But alas, the vast majority of our youth are not afforded the luxury of multiple exposure to Jewish tradition that is possible in the world of the day school and yeshiva — where the *lacunae* of the curriculum, physical environment, and modern pedagogical methods and equipment are most times miraculously overcome by the exposure to so many hours of a warm, controlled Jewish environment. Most of our Jewish youth receive the pittance of a “supplementary” Jewish education where the more predictable laws of probability claim their unsuspecting victims. Given the dearth of class time, creative teachers and challenging texts, Jewish education has become a hit-or-miss proposition, predominantly “miss.”

Dr. Greenberg yearns for a “pedagogy that constantly strives for relevance.” Certainly, any Jewish educator earning more than \$10,000 *per annum* must agree with this, or fear losing his job. Although I strongly agree with many of Dr. Greenberg’s suggestions, I must disagree with the above — at least as far as the conventional understanding of “relevance.” I will limit my remarks to high school students. Certainly, kids are interested in what Judaism has to say about sex, LSD, Vietnam, black power, and contraception. But even assuming that Judaism has a clear-cut position on each of the above vital issues, we would be abrogating our responsibilities as educators if all we did was to present the above “relevant conclusions” to our students without forcing them to grapple with

the primary issues and texts and then “guiding” them to draw their own conclusions. Let us learn from that dismal gigantic hoax of “relevance” on the American-Jewish scene, the Adult education syndrome, that manages to connect not only the Jewish Problem to the Elephant but to tax evasion, hippism, baseball, and athlete’s foot. No, what is needed is not a “relevant” Jewish education, but a *significant* one, which in the end will be even more relevant than the swiftly changing kaleidoscope of the American scene.

Why can’t the same tenth-grade high school student who stands in awe of the sweeping Darwinian hypothesis that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny equally marvel at the principle of *imitatio dei* in Judaism! Why can’t the student who worships Newton’s third law of thermodynamics wonder at the depth and breadth of Judaism’s concept of practical holiness as expressed by the Ramban in his comment to *Vayikra* 19:1!

Perhaps the most irrelevant subject (to non-science and non-math majors) in high school is geometry, and yet because our teachers literally forced us to spend one month on syllogisms, which were not on the New York State Regents exam, geometry is ever relevant to us. When students want to know what Judaism has to say about civil rights, hand out copies of the Mishnah in *Sanhedrin* (IV:5), together with a translation, if necessary. They will learn much more than civil rights; they will learn what Judaism has to say about man’s potential, his equality but non-identi-

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ty and uniqueness, and the creation of man as a reflection of the greatness of God. When we glibly say in class "Judaism is a religion of this-world," let's back it up with the relevant sources, so these students can understand what Dr. Irving Greenberg means, when he writes in passing, "After all, the Nazirite was a sinner in Jewish tradition!"

And let's be even more practical. If we cannot accomplish all this during the limited hours of supplementary Hebrew High School, why not encourage capable students to do research on their own on Jewish topics for term papers in their secular public school classes. This would certainly prepare the way for our high school students to take college courses in the rapidly expanding Jewish Studies Departments that have been established in many universities. (It would be interesting to know the percentage of Jews and non-Jews currently enrolled in these courses.)

We must strive for a pedagogy that is significant, creative, challenging, and elemental. Then we will not have to join the cult of relevance; they will have to join us.

(Rabbi) Jay Braverman
Detroit, Michigan

RABBI GREENBERG REPLIES:

I agree with Rabbi Braverman that *lacunae* of the curriculum, environment and methods are sometimes miraculously overcome by "the exposure to so many hours

of a warm controlled Jewish environment" in the Day Schools. I must say, however, that it is my feeling that we are less successful in the Day Schools than we imagine. The basic drawbacks which the article discussed are a major factor in this failure. Rather than confront the problems of self understanding and religious philosophy and values, our Orthodox community would rather continue to add Day Schools without regard to improving the effectiveness of those that exist. The Day School movement is waved as a kind of talisman which will banish the forces of assimilation. With all due respect to the extraordinary contribution of the Yeshivot, without major upgrading and confrontation with reality they will fall short. To use an analogy: If a Democratic candidate in New York State wins New York City by 55 percent, he knows he has lost the election because he must get a much higher percentage in his home territory to win on an overall basis. The percentage successes of the Day School, I suspect, is not high enough considering how low the percentage is elsewhere.

As to Rabbi Braverman's comments on the cult of relevance: we have a semantic rather than a substantial issue between us. Relevance, to me, is simply a synonym for significance: significance for life, for personal meaning and identity as well as social concerns. This principle must guide our teaching much more radically and consistently than it now does. Naturally, this significance is best achieved when the student is motivated to

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use the primary source and discover the message for himself. We also need to work up more extensive source materials than the better known ones cited by Rabbi Braverman to enrich that instant relevance pre-digested from current liberal sources. But the shallowness of the cult of relevance should not be used as a cover for the systematic and ruthless insensitivity to major reality factors that characterizes much of Jewish education, Day School and Talmud Torah alike.

I certainly welcome his constructive suggestions and subscribe to them.

To Mrs. Sachs, I can only say: Amen. We have been so busy with apologetics denying the inferiority of women in Orthodox Judaism that we have not evaluated what new opportunities for religion and personal expression should be provided for them. One of the great things about modern culture is the extraordinary opportunities it has given to women. Orthodox Jewish culture might be uniquely capable of striking a balance between traditional and family role and the new self-expressions. We have not thought or worked seriously enough in this area.