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The Lander Chronicle

Fall Semester 2006

Israel and the Recent War: A Political Perspective

Interview by: Julian Tawil

An Interview with Professor Luchins,
Dean of Political Science, Touro College

Q: What was your experience like this particular summer during the war?

A: The weird part was being in Jerusalem where everything was business as normal. It was a very unusual thing. In the North, Haifa, the port was empty; the streets were empty. Three quarters of a million Israelis had fled South and another half million were living in air raid shelters. We met Ethiopian youngsters who had been



bussed out of Tzfat where the orphan center was hit on Shabbat and two of them were killed by a ketusha. On the other hand, if you stayed in Yerushalayim and just did the tourist route, went around down south, there was no sign of panic and no sign of war. I visit Israel every summer. During the intifada, people were getting blown up every few

hours, there was far more fear and panic in Jerusalem.

There were also some beautiful moments. Mrs. Moynahan, the senator's widow, had a friend who wanted to give

Cont. on pg. 3

The Future of American Politics

By: Elchanan Abrams

On November 7th the face of American politics changed more in one day than it had in nearly a decade. Both houses of Congress changed control from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party. The last time both houses were controlled by the Democrats was during the early years of the Clinton presidency. Such a change constitutes a major change in American politics, and as a result the manner in which the American government will be viewed at home and through out the world.

The change in power with in the Country has created a situation that will alter the face of American politics for years to come. Foremost among issues that will affect the country will be the budget. Since the Republicans gained control of both houses the Democrats have been unhappy with the budget. The

Democrats will want to expand funding to public service projects and decrees defenses spending, but the US is in the middle of a war, and it is unlikely that the Democrats will raise taxes, fearing that they will lose their popularity. it is likely that the result of the two clashing sides will be a budget crisis. Since neither party will be willing to raise taxes, and the Democrats will want to increase spending for social programs, it is unlikely that both sides will be able to come to a compromise quickly.

The new Majority Leader and Speaker of the House feel that the congress needs to be "cleaned up" morally. In light of such scandals as the Abramoff affair and the DeLay incident many feel that politicians are feeling to secure in their offices and abusing their power. In many cases such allegations are true and those who were corrupt needed to be removed from office. But it is important to remember that corruption and moral

Inside

A Personal Perspective Concerning the Recent War in Israel

Dr. Bigel was in Israel this summer. Hear a personal perspective on the events which unfolded.

Dean Sokol on the Core

It has been on everyone's mind: whay is going to happen to the core curriculum here at Lander College. Hear Dean Sokol's perspective on the core, and what will be reexamined by the new committee.

Rabbi Bamberger on Churban

Rabbi Bamberger reflects on his visit to Israel this semester, and how Yerushalayim has changed since he was last there.

failure are not the failing of one party or group, but that any person in power is susceptible the trap of power. In recent years there have been many Republican scandals, but corruption was not limited to the Republican Party - several important Democrats were investigated as well. During the campaigns throughout the past year the Democratic Party portrayed the Republican Party as horribly corrupt and that it needed to be removed, and in some cases they were correct. But the Democrats also purposely ignored the fact that there has been corruption on the same level in their own party. It is likely that the Republicans will attempt to portray the Democrats as even more corrupt than they themselves had been.

President Bush's policy of No Child Left Behind will most probably be reviewed by the new congresses.

Cont. on pg. 7

A Message from The Dean: Seventh Year Reflections

By: Dean Moshe Sokol

This past September, LCM began its seventh year. Those of us present when we opened the muddy gates of the campus back in September, 2000 will no doubt look back with some awe at what has been accomplished over those years, even as we think about the many challenges that stand before us in the future.

The number seven bears special significance in the Jewish calendar, and surely the seventh day of the week, and shmittah and yovel, provide time and occasion for reflection about the past. We too would do well to use our seventh year for re-evaluation and reflection, on many fronts. One front I wish to highlight in this article is curriculum.

A crucial portion of the LCM curriculum is the Lander Core, which, as you know, includes year-long sequences in English composition, Jewish history, western history and western literature, as well as one course each in mathematics, the natural and social sciences. Through

our "Writing and Speaking across the Core" program, all the history and literature courses require two written papers, one of which must be re-written to reflect the instructor's comments, and a seminar-style oral presentation to the class. The Core was designed to give students the knowledge, skills and sophistication necessary for academic excellence and success at the highest levels.

Now that we've had considerable experience with the Core, it is worth stepping back and examining it afresh. What are, and should be the goals of general education at LCM? How well does the current LCM Core meet those goals? To what extent does the current Core serve the interests of our students, over the short and long term? Should it be modified in any way? How?

These are all very difficult questions, and they require careful analysis and deliberation. To that end, I have appointed a faculty committee whose members are drawn from a diversity of fields and perspectives, Professors Arthur Budick, Kenneth Danishefsky,

Zev Schneck, Rafi Waxman, Ross Zucker, and myself as chair. We have met numerous times this semester, and consulted formally with roshei yeshiva and with a delegation of students selected by the student government.

The Committee's options range from maintaining the Core as it is, to making modest, or even substantial changes. By early Spring we hope to agree upon a statement of goals for the LCM Core, and later in the semester, a set of recommendations to be made to the faculty as a whole for discussion and review and a final decision. While it is much too early to predict what the outcome will be, I feel confident that the process is a sound one, through which many different perspectives, voices and considerations will have been heard.

On another academic front, the advent of internet as a research tool has multiplied dramatically the information resources available to students, and to working professionals. To what extent is LCM preparing its students to find

Cont. on pg. 6



Engaging the Evolved Congress

By Ari Lustig

Congress, the very nerve center of our democracy, is a strange animal that increasingly has become a puppet of special interests, private interests almost every interest but the people's interest. The legislative procedure of lawmaking has been usurped by those with increasingly narrow viewpoints that pass increasingly narrow legislation. This is the new style of American government. Democracy has evolved from the times that the country's founding fathers openly debated how to bring the most accountability to the legislating bodies to our now largely opaque system which has increased the instance of scandal and corruption largely within the last few congresses.

Today's evolved government calls on every citizen to adapt as well.



While ethics reforms should be a rallying point for the next elections, it is unlikely that the procedural methods

for getting laws passed will be altered in the near future. While, as a general rule, today's voter is largely apathetic and for the most part ignorant of our government's structure, today's evolved government requires just the opposite. This evolution requires us to be more civic minded instead of more civically inactive. Not surprisingly, the author of our Declaration of Independence and America's third president, Thomas Jefferson, believed both in spreading democracy and in civic education, which he considered the lifeblood of democracy. With confidence, he wrote: "Whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government." Even as we rally others to the cause of democracy, we must not lose sight of democracy's cornerstone – having awareness and understanding of how our own government operates.

Ultimately, with the modern Congress we need to work within the confines presented. As Orthodox Jews, we approach government with wariness

in line with the dictates of Shemayah and Avtalyon who are quoted in Perkei Avos saying, "אל תתוודע לרושת", do not seek undue influence with the government. However, this in no way means that we are immune from the issues that others face. The Orthodox Jewish demographic when taken as a unit is less politically active than many

Lander Chronicle Staff

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Israel: Political Perspective

Cont. from page 1

money to help Israel. When I told Mrs. Moynahan that Jerusalem Fellowships, the program her husband set up, had cleared out their dorms and put up nine-hundred people from the North, she got a rather large gift from this friend to help these people out. So that was a nice feeling. We had done something to help people. People that barely had enough to eat themselves for shabbos were putting up families.

The chesed was unbelievable. In Bnei Brak, Kiryat Sefer, people were opening their homes. It was very nice. Someone said, sadly, it was the only time Jews from

Kiryat Sefer ever met Jews who own a television set. They put them up. It was very nice to see the chesed. They crossed all sorts of ethnic lines. And also, one third of the people who were killed were Israeli-Arabs. Now there were some Israeli-Arabs that of course were rooting

"In Bnei Brak, Kiryat Sefer, people were opening their homes...it was the only time Jews from Kiryat Sefer ever met Jews who own a television."

for Hezbollah. But one of the things I heard from a lot of people was that the vast majority of Israeli Arabs, it was fairly clear cut, were not very excited about being sitting ducks in somebody's shooting gallery. And I think this created a sense that Israel was under fire. All of them were under fire. If you're looking for the silver lining in a horrible cloud, there's a tiny silver lining.

Q: Being closer to the situation than most, is there anything about the war that you can shed light on?

A: One thing people ought to know is that while the media was playing up the devastation on Lebanon, which was heartbreaking, the human suffering and the economic devastation

that took place in Northern Israel got almost no publicity here. I found people that were not aware of the scope and the amount to which Israel was affected by this. If we hadn't gone north we wouldn't have seen it ourselves. It's hard to imagine. I'll give you an example. We

go to Mea Shearim our first Friday there and we ordered special chalah covers we like to give as wedding gifts. We went a month later to pick them up our last Friday there and the man says, I don't have them; the only factory that makes them in Israel is in the Galil and it has been closed for a month. The entire economy closed down north. People were just devastated. It cost billions of dollars to rebuild Lebanon, but no attention was paid to what happened in Israel.

Q: How do you feel the Israeli government dealt with the war?

A: I think an American Jew that wants to take sides and take pot shots at Israeli government should make aliyah. I think when I didn't make aliyah I forfeited my right to express publicly my views about Israel's policies. And I think it's very dangerous and very scary when we do this. There was a lot of "sinat chinam" two summers ago. It was a tragic time. It was a bad time. Two summers ago I was in a Beit Knesset for Shabbat Chazon in Jerusalem where they had a fist fight

Cont. on page 4

Israel and the Recent War: A Personal Perspective

Interview by: Julian Tawil

An Interview with Professor Bigel, Head of the Finance department at the Lander College for Men.

[Professor Bigel:] I have to say two things by way of preface; I'm not a political scientist. I just happened to have been in Israel over the summer. I'm pretty well read on matters having to do with Islam, politics and religion but I'm not a scholar as such.

The second thing I want to say is what occurred in Israel this summer seems like a long time ago given more recent world events.... These fanatics burned down churches in Judea and Samaria. It's outrageous... I think the Muslim world, including those moderates, need to apologize for those among them who are murderers and fanatics, and I haven't heard any of that yet. I've heard the leader of Hamas in the Gaza strip instruct Palestinians not to continue with this rampage of burning down Palestin-

ian churches. That's all I've heard.

Q: What was your experience like this particular summer during the war?

A: We got there about two or three days before the war started and obviously we were concerned when it started. Of course the thought always passes through your mind that we should load up on an airplane and go home to a safe

place. I felt that way particularly, momentarily, because my children were with me. If it were myself alone I probably wouldn't have given it a thought. But on the other hand my

children are all Israeli citizens and we were visiting family in Israel and leaving is not something that we would do. We would stay with our family.

Being closer to the situation than most, is there anything about the war that you can shed light on?

All my neighbors and friends here who are not Israeli were concerned

about our safety. I don't know what they saw on television but they might have imagined that the whole country was unsafe.

I can only shed light on it by sharing some anecdotes with you:

There was one day where there was rumored to have been some katyushas that fell south of Haifa, as far south as Zichron Yaakov, which is already getting close to where we were, [in Herzlia].

That was a little scary but it turned out to be just an unfounded rumor. It was also scary when Nasrallah threatened Tel-Aviv, and obviously he didn't follow through and then we figured that he didn't have the capability. After we

returned home we learned that they do have rockets that could reach Tel-Aviv but they probably didn't want to risk all out war with Israel.

My nephew is 33 yrs old and he was called up [to reserve duty].

Thank g-d he's ok.

Cont. on page 4



Political Perspective

Cont. from page 3

over the saying of the tefilah for the Israeli soldiers because two days later they were going to be pulling people out of Gaza. This year I was in the same Beit Knesset for Shabbat Chazon and the entire place stood and said tehillim betzibur for the safety of Israeli soldiers and peace in the country. I said it's a shame it takes a war for people to appreciate each other.

I'm not taking shots and anybody. I mean, I understand where the Israeli governments coming from. I understand the pressures on them. I understand that had Israel done anything about Hezbollah building up in the last five years the US would've been the first one to jump all over them and the UN would've jumped all over them. I understand that the Israeli government's options were...

Saudi Arabia and Iran are competing. Saudi Arabia sponsors a group called Hamas, Iran sponsors a group called Hezbollah. Saudi Arabia is an ally of the US. The US forced Israel to let

Hamas be in that election. They won that election. Hamas has been trying to get recognition from Israel. They couldn't get it. They then killed two soldiers, kidnap one and it builds up the pressure.

Israel is pressured by the US not to take decisive action against Hamas. A deal is about to be made were Gilad Shalit would be released to Abas who would release them to Israel. Israel would then release three thousand Palestinian prisoners. Hamas then would put on the fig leaf and say we'll have a truce and there'd be a peace conference. And instead of Israel giving up land unilaterally, which I think everyone now agrees was not the smartest idea, there would be a negotiated withdrawal of land, the creation of a Palestinian state, and the Saudi's could score tremendous points. The day it was supposed to happen, the Iranian foreign minister flies into Damascus and meets with the head of Hezbollah.

Now it may have been motivated by their trying to get the attention for

their nuclear program or a serious desire not see a peace without their getting the Golan back. But I think the primary motivation, at least what I heard from Israeli government officials,

I think the primary motivation...was [that] Iran could not allow Saudi Arabia to win this unbelievable PR victory... so Hezbollah invades Israel

was Iran could not allow Saudi Arabia to win this unbelievable PR victory—they are the architects of the Palestinian state and their boys Hamas deliver. So Hezbollah invades Israel,

kill four times as many Israeli's, capture twice as many and what do they say? They say we'll negotiate the guys we're holding for all nine-thousand Palestinian prisoners—we're the spokesman for the Palestinians not you. And here's the proof for this theory. Saudi Arabia condemned Hezbollah. They went to the Arab foreign ministers conference and condemned them. They put a religious Fatwa against them. The Saudi foreign minister flew to Moscow to condemn them. Why? Has Saudi Arabia ever condemned any act of Palestinian violence against Jews? No. Saudi

Cont. on next page

Personal Perspective

Cont. from page 3

One of our neighbors down the street was one of the twelve soldiers who were killed one day. I didn't know him or the family but my wife's family knew them. So one day I was walking in the neighborhood with my little son on my shoulders and I passed by the house. This was a Yemenite family. They were all sitting outside the house on the sidewalk because there must have been seventy people visiting them when they were sitting Shiva. And I had just come at the moment when the rabbi walked up and the father just stood up and said "ashrei yoshvei beitecha" and then started davening mincha, just like that. I was really touched by that. There were signs all

I think there's no question that Hezbollah at least publicly feels that they can stand up to the Israelis.

over the neighborhood announcing they were sitting Shiva. You don't see that kind of thing as much in New York. It was just stupid and wasteful

that a young person should die like that.

Q: How do you feel the Israeli government dealt with the war?

A: We'll never know. The arguments are that Olmert didn't have any military experience and that the Ramat Kal, the chief of staff, was an air-force guy and perhaps they took the lessons of Kosovo and the success that America had there with an air-force campaign. Maybe they thought that could do the trick. I kind of think they should've sent in foot soldiers in the second week but the estimates I've heard is that if they had put Israeli

soldiers on the ground they probably would've lost a few hundred, maybe five-hundred. And on one occasion I was told that Hezbollah were so well entrenched that some of the guns they were shoot-

ing were remotely operated by joysticks and computers underground. So that's a pretty hard thing to fight against.

Whenever anything goes badly, heads roll. I don't think Olmert's head is going to roll. I don't think he'll be

replaced. We'll really never know if he did the right thing or not. Right now we've got an international force that presumably is going to prevent Hezbollah from rearming. We decimated their infrastructure. We killed around 500 Hezbollah soldiers. I think it'll be a long time before Hezbollah is going to dare attack Israel again knowing what their retaliation could be. But you never know. These are not rational people. If there is another attack it would probably be within the next year or two. It could be a real "doozy".

Q: Do you think that as a consequence of the war, Israel lost, while its enemies gained, confidence?

A: I don't know if Israel lost confidence because if you recall, after 1973, it was a similar atmosphere. Israel felt it was defeated, and that was the end of Golda Meier's service to the country thereafter. But the Israeli soldiers are probably the best in the world. And I think there's no question that Hezbollah at least publicly feels that they can stand up to

Cont. on next page

Political Perspective

Cont. From prev. Page

Arabia condemned this because Saudi Arabia doesn't want Hezbollah forming in on Palestine. That's their issue, their baby, their ticket. What happened? The final resolution of the UN—the only good thing about that resolution was it doesn't mention Palestine, Palestinians, Palestinian refugees or Palestinian prisoners at all. It only deals with Lebanon and Israel. Why? Because of Saudi Arabia and the US. Saudi Arabia would not allow a resolution that would mention Palestine and then Iran would be a player. Ok? So Israel is not the central player of what I just told you. Iran, Saudi Arabia and America are. So before we're critical of Israel let's be critical of our own government. I think in the course of the war America's support of Israel was terrific, fantastic, lifesaving. But I think that the events that led up to the war were partially America's fault.

America's support of Israel was terrific, fantastic, lifesaving. But I think that the events that led up to the war were partially America's fault.

Q: So your stance is more in support of the decisions that the Israeli government made?

A: I think that as an American Jew who lives in this country, I do not want to take pot shots at Israel at a time when Israel is bleeding and hurting. Again, I do not feel it is helpful for American Jews to second guess any Israeli government decision, especially at a time when Israel is bleeding and hurting. What's gained by it? What's the advantage of it? So we feel good? So we feel morally superior?

My personal red line is as follows: I've always believed, my Rebbi, Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, taught me, that American Jews should not publicly criticize any policy of the state of Israel and I continue to do that. You should pray and pay for the side you agree with said Rav Soloveitchik. And I try very hard not to publicly criticize any decision of the state of Israel.

Q: What do you think about Israel's future with regards to peace with its

enemies?

A: The Zohar tells us that Ishmael comes before the divine throne and says, master of the universe, what's my reward for having voluntarily undergone brit-milah at the age of thirteen? My little "wussy" half brother Yitzchak was eight days old, no one asked him. So G-d says "what would you like?" Ishmael says, "I want Eretz Yisrael." G-d says, "I already promised that all to Jacob and his kids...but I'll tell you what Ishmael, when Jacob and his children fill the land with torah and mitzvot, then you're in the desert, your toast. But when they fail to do that, when they create a chilul hashem, hate each other...when they mistreat my creations, then, says G-d, the more chilul hashem they make, the more the land will be yours."

It [was] Elul, almost Rosh Hashana, it's a factor of our torah and mitzvot. And I honestly believe that. I honestly believe that b'derech teva Israel would not be here. B'derech teva there would be no state of Israel today. It's not rational that the Jewish people exist and that Israel exists. So if you believe that there is a G-d that allows it to exist then you believe that G-d also expects something of Israel and the Jews. To the degree they fall short, that G-d reminds us that were not in the messianic era yet, boy are we not.

Q: What course of action should Israel take at the present time?

A: President Bush, who is a friend of Israel, has strongly committed himself to creating a Palestinian state. President Bush, who is a friend of Israel, has strongly committed himself to further Israeli withdrawals in the West Bank as

B'derech teva there would be no state of Israel today. It's not rational that the Jewish people exist and that Israel exists

they withdrew in Gaza. The US has made that commitment as part of America's effort to get Muslim support in the war against terror.

There's no war against terror; there's a civil war between Muslim terrorists. One side, Saudi Arabia, is our side, America's side. The other side is not America's side. So for our side to score points, our side's

proxies, like Hamas', have to be built up. I think the US has made it very clear that they would like to see Hamas go through some verbal language, some summer-saults, that would allow the US to declare that Hamas has met the requirements for American aid.

I think the US is deeply committed, George Bush has said so and the UN, shortly after 9/11 said, it was committed to a Palestinian State. And Bush has said by the end of the term he's going to have one. So I think Israel's options are very limited. The US is deeply committed to Israel continuing the peace process. I think America will do every thing it can to ensure that happens. Israel has one big card to play and that's that America desperately needs a Palestinian state. So Israel should get the best possible deal it can for any concessions it makes.

Personal Perspective

Cont. from prev. page

the Israelis. But this has been true of the Arab and now Iranian world for decades. Part of the reason the Arabs lost in 1967 was their own innate stupidity which has to do with their claiming victory when they were really defeated and as a result, tactically they made terrible mistakes, thinking that they could beat the Israelis while the Israelis wiped them up. Of course the greatest danger that Israel and the world now face is Iran's Nuclear power. So we'll see. Everyone has to be real wary. And I don't know how the UN forces are in Lebanon.

Q: How do you feel that countries outside of the US, such as France and England, dealt with the war?

A: The BBC, for instance, is totally anti Israel. It's never an issue that Hezbollah initiated the war and the means of attack were aimed at purely civilian targets. That's never an issue for them. The issue is why Israel was using cluster bombs in civilian areas. It's not even an issue for them that Hezbollah were using civilians as targets in Shiite neighborhoods. So clearly the media in England is anti-Israel. I'm not a fan of Chirac so I don't have much good to say about him. I think the French in general are learning who's living among them.



Engaging Congress

Cont. from page 2

other sociopolitical groups. Consider the following for a moment: What if your employer will not let you take off for shabbos and yom tov or holds back your promotion on account of your religious beliefs. Which yeshivas and day schools should be entitled to federal funding? What about taxes? Should you need to pay taxes to fund a public education system? For the students out there that took out federal loans for school or will be doing so for graduate education; don't you wish that you could have a better federal interest rate? All of those and so many more issues fall within the legislative realm. Legislation such as the Workplace Religious Freedom Act is being crafted and refined to allow for greater sensitivity for the beliefs of religious workers. Education tax credits and vouchers are being explored to alleviate the crushing financial burden on Jewish middle class families. All of this is happening in our nation's Congress with groups pushing hard on both sides of every issue.

Awareness is key here followed

by activism. Political decisions now are not formed within a vacuum and it is our responsibility to do what we can for our communities. If we want to participate in a meaningful way, we must first understand and then act. This is our task and responsibility, not only to ourselves but to all the members of our community. The Jewish community is reaching a point. The crushing financial burdens that most families face as a result of the cost of living a religious lifestyle along with yeshiva tuition requires us to collectively seek out methods and solutions. Our task as Congress changes is to adapt as well and engage the new societal issues from an educated and informed vantage.

Seventh Year Reflections

Cont. from page 2

the information they need and to assess its quality? We all know that all sorts of sources pile up in a Google search. But is that the most efficient way to identify the really important resources? Indeed, by what measure do we determine which are the high-quality sources, and which of lesser quality? It is imperative that graduates of LCM know how to answer

these questions in order to succeed in their professional lives.

Many professors do indeed take the time to help their students with these issues. However, not all do so in equal measure. In order to standardize and upgrade our curriculum in this area, the faculty has developed a College-wide plan to cultivate information literacy amongst LCM students. Starting soon every LCM student will be required to complete a 45-minute tutorial introducing students to the basics of information literacy and research techniques, and every introductory-level course in each major will eventually include instruction in discipline-specific resources available on the web. While this will involve only a modest effort on the part of our students, the program should go a long way to insuring that LCM students are adequately prepared not only for completing the research necessary for their coursework at the College, but for successful careers beyond.

Also, special thanks are due to Dr. Deborah Cohen and Dr. Gary Kleinman for their leadership in this important endeavor.



The Orthodox Union's Legislative Fellowship is an exciting one year post-college program for select, motivated college graduates with leadership potential and an interest in serving the Jewish people while gaining hands on, high level political and policymaking experience.

Fellows serve for one year in Washington, DC on the staff of the OU's Institute for Public Affairs, learning political advocacy, issues management and communications skills while helping advance the policies and priorities of Orthodox Judaism in the public square.

Fellows will work side by side with senior OU leadership, Jewish communal leaders, Congressional and Executive Branch staffers and be mentored by OU/IPA professionals.



2007-08 Fellowship applications and stipend details are now available at: www.ou.org/public_affairs
Application Deadline: March 6, 2007

Future of American Politics

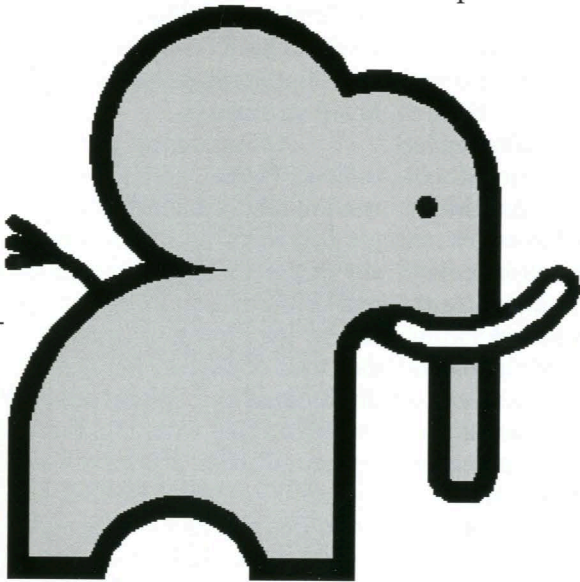
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Everyone agrees that the ideas which the program espouses are, in theory, a good idea that would increase the effectiveness of the American educational system. In reality the program had for the most part been a resounding failure. Instead of pushing the education systems in poor cities to do better, the schools have lost their funding, when in many cases they needed more funding and better teachers in order to fulfill their missions to educate the disadvantaged children. The ideas behind the program was that the American public school education system needs to be reformed and that education needs to be improved. These points are true, but the application of the program has been horrendous. Instead of giving schools that need improvement more money and intelligent oversight and staff review. No Child Left Behind instead cuts funding, and it is unlikely that the democrats will let it stand as it is currently formulated.

The new congress will, without a doubt, want to review military and foreign relations policies that have not been significantly changed for six years. President Bush has realized that policies which the

Republican congress allowed to pass will no longer be tolerated. An excellent example is that the President has announced a major change in his Iraq policy, something which he repeatedly claimed he would never do. The

only reason for Bush to announce such a dramatic change and to dismiss the secretary of defense is that the new congress, and consequently the people, will no longer stand for an ill managed war.



Going in hand with the war in Iraq are the issues surrounding the rights given to enemy combatants and others detained on terror charges. There have been hearings and debates for years over the extent of the rights of people who were detained thusly, and recently the issue has been moved to the top of the Senate agenda for the spring. The rights of foreign nationals captured in a combat zone are clearly spelled out in the Geneva Convention, but the rights of American citizens who are suspect, and those detained on terror charges outside of combat, are a current gray area in law that the next congress will seek to define.

The new congress has already begun to affect policies even though it has not yet officially been sworn in. Nancy Pelosi, the new speaker of the house, has made it clear that she wants to change and review all policies put in place by the Republican house. High up on the

agenda are the minimum wage and workers rights issues. The minimum wage in the United States has not been raised for more than ten years, and it is clear that \$5.15 an hour is no longer a living wage. In general the Republicans did not want to deal with the issues surrounding the minimum wage for both practical and philosophical reasons, and so it was put off. Bush made it clear he was not in favor of an

increase, but with a Democratic congress the minimum wage will be raised significantly within two years.

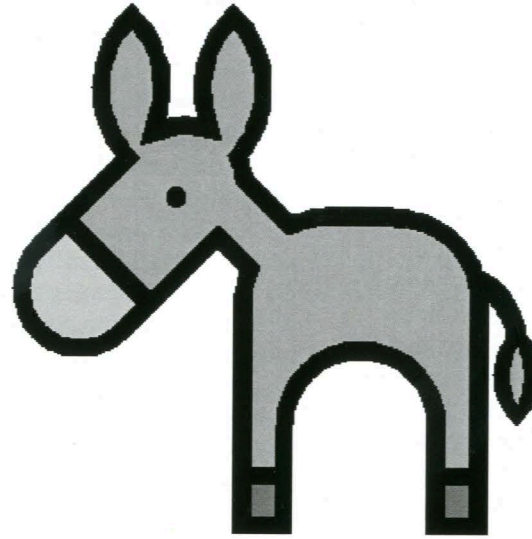
With in the next several months the contenders for the 2008 elections for president will begin to differentiate themselves. At this point there are a

large number of candidates for each party, with the primaries beginning this coming summer. How the people feel about the new congress will most definitely affect the next elections. Sen. Clinton had said she plans to run, as have a number of other Democrats including ex-Sen. Edwards, but should the Democrats overreach, the American people will become upset with the Democratic Party, and the chances of

a Democrat president will be greatly lowered. The actions of the new speaker of the house and other leaders in the Democrat party will determine how the people view the party. The party leaders typically feel that their election shows that

the citizens are interested in many of the extremist ideals of the Democratic Party – exactly the mistake that it could be argued lost the election for the republicans. Clearly the people were angry at how the Republicans were managing the country, and that congress was not accomplishing what it should have accomplished. As a result, if the congressional leaders continue to appoint radical Democrats to leadership positions they will lose the upcoming presidential election.

The elections on November 7th changed the face of American politics. Many important analysts and commentators have compared the current situation in the world, and in American politics, to the situation in the 1930s, when an isolationist policy in the states led to a withdrawal from the international stage. The world is in a very precarious state at this point and the decisions made in American politics over the next two years may have a lasting affect on the state of both internal American politics and the balance of power throughout the world for decades to come.



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Onegim

By: Zev Kilstein

After two years in Eretz Yisrael, I knew college would be a real change like many of the other Students here at Lander College, I was not sure if I should continue to pursue learning on a full time basis, or if I should pursue a college degree. In the end, I decided to give Lander College a try. I had heard good things about the place from my rebbeim and I knew that some of my old OJ chevra would also be there. When I arrived, it turned out that the learning in the morning here was similar to in my yeshiva. I felt I could get used to it here.

That is what I thought, at least, until I attended my first afternoon class. All of a sudden it was assignments, note taking, and the dread of upcoming midterms. (If anyone has good notes for Introduction to Psychology, let me know.) It was a rude awakening to reality. I felt that I was on a yeridah – I was learning less, and learning in general for me was getting harder to do. I felt like I needed something to break the pattern I was stuck in, something like a vaca-

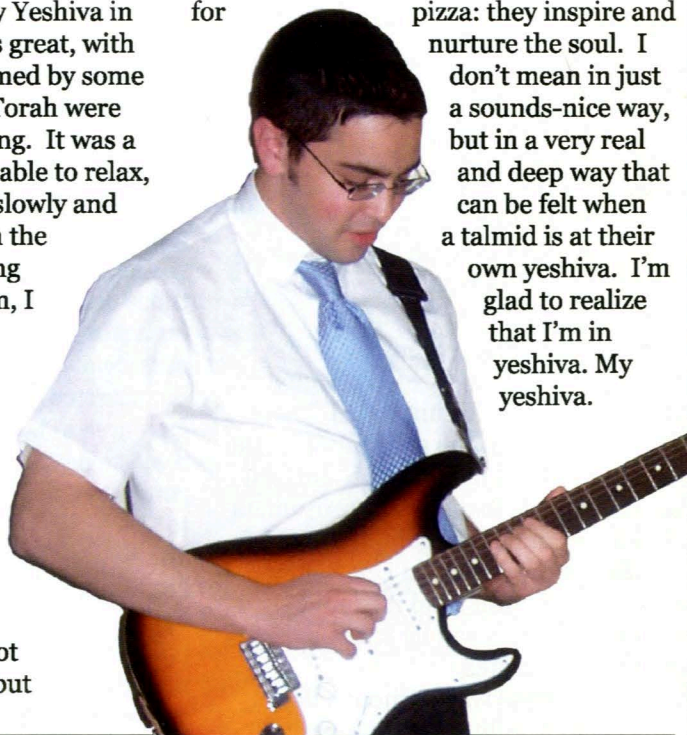
tion. Waiting until the next break was too long. I needed an immediate break to allow me to regroup. Unlooked for, it came as an eruv Yom Kippur oneg.

Finally, it was a chance for me to let go of my tensions and experience one of those motzei shabbos onegim that I thought I left behind at my Yeshiva in Israel. The atmosphere was great, with pizza and live music performed by some of the students. The divrei Torah were both inspiring and interesting. It was a perfect combination. I was able to relax, concentrate, and sing both slowly and with fervor. As I focused on the words of each song after song about dedication to HaShem, I felt comforted.

Only now, sitting down to write this article, do I finally understand what that emotion really meant. My sense of responsibility was telling me that it is OK for me to be in college. This break helped me to understand that serving HaShem was not only through limud Torah, but

also through obtaining a parnasa and fulfilling kibud av v'eim, which I am doing right now in college. This idea may sound simple, but it was a difficult one for me to grasp. Onegim are not just about singing in the dark and trying to think of ways to get out of washing for

pizza: they inspire and nurture the soul. I don't mean in just a sounds-nice way, but in a very real and deep way that can be felt when a talmid is at their own yeshiva. I'm glad to realize that I'm in yeshiva. My yeshiva.



The Destruction of a Landmark

By: Rabbi Moshe Bamberger



I was shocked and saddened to read in a Jewish newspaper that the house of my revered Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, had been demolished, to be replaced by a luxury mansion.

The Rosh Yeshiva's humble, holy abode was situated in the Sharei Chessed neighborhood of Yerushalayim. I recall the steep, uneven steps leading into the house, and how the Rosh Yeshiva, in his old age, would slowly and laboriously climb them. The unassuming outward appearance of the residence spoke of its utter simplicity. But it was a home of fantastic importance to the world of Torah. This was the destination of thousands of complex halachic questions

from all across the globe, seeking the Posek Hador's brilliance and erudition.

It was at his door where widows and orphans knew they could knock and find

a receptive ear and sensitive soul; it was at this address where myriad Jews in need of sage advice or a soothing word felt welcome.

Within the walls of 11 Rechov Porush an idyllic marriage existed. So perfect was the state of their union that at his wife's eulogy R' Shlomo Zalman was able to declare with confidence that although it is customary to ask the deceased for forgiveness, in this case it was unnecessary for he never wronged his wife nor did she ever wrong him. And this in a marriage of over 50 years!

The Chofetz Chaim once commented that in Heaven, there is a map of earth which looks entirely different from ours down here. On our map, major metropolises such as New York City, Paris, London and Moscow appear in large, bold type, with stars indicating their importance. In Heaven, however, those great cities are not nearly as prominently displayed as the Torah capitols of Vilna, Brisk, and Radin. If the same may be said of homes, the White House and Buckingham Palace would be mere huts in comparison to R' Shlomo Zalman's mansion of Torah and avodah.

Had I known about the house being up for sale prior to it being purchased, I would have attempted to raise the funds needed to buy this landmark. It would have been enshrined, preserving it for future generations to behold a Mishkan Hashem.

On my recent trip this December to Eretz Yisrael, I felt a deep emotional need to see for myself what the newspaper had reported. Upon arriving at the site of the Auerbach home, I asked the taxi driver to wait for me as I got out of the car for a few moments. Through the darkness of the cool Jerusalem night, illuminated by a distant streetlight, I confirmed that what I had read had regrettably been accurate: The site where the miniature Bais Hamikdash once stood was now but a huge crater in the ground, with only a few stones remaining from the demolition. I bent down and picked up a radiant amber rock from the hallowed ground, grasping tightly the last physical remains of what stood no longer.

Speeding away in the vehicle, I realized that the City of Gold had irretrievably lost a great deal of her luster.

