

## YEMAY IYUN THEMES

(What follows was drawn from the Yemay Iyun Shiurim of Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik at the 1971 R.C.A. Convention in Miami Beach, Fla. Our presentation is in the form of journalistic reportage, rather than literal reproduction. Defects and weakness should be ascribed solely to our faulty transmission.) Reprinted from the June 1971 Mah Nishmah Supplement of the R.C.A. Record.

### Familiarity Decreases Reverence

The Paroches in the Temple separated the holy from the Kadosh Kadoshim. Kedusha is always concealed. *V'al Yovo b'chol Ace El Hakodesh*. The Sefer Torah, too, is dressed and put away when not in actual use; the *luchos* were never on display but, rather, always in the Aron. That which is holy loses its special standing in our eyes through casualness, ready access and over-familiarity.

Yahadus, therefore, regards bodily display as abhorrent; it views the human body as sacred because it is the depository of the *Tzelem Elokim* (the *neshamah*) just as the *aron* houses the Sefer Torah and the *luchos*. The Jew is also regarded in the Halacha as a Sefer Torah and one must perform *keriyah* at the expiration of any person, even a stranger, as one would do for a Sefer Torah. Rashi says that he is so regarded because every Jew, has *brochos* in his head and harbors sanctity within him. The body is, thus, the residence of G-d's image, certainly as much as the *klof* of a Sefer Torah. If this sanctity is to be preserved, it must be covered as the *Paroches* does the *aron*.

We have here a judgment on the cult of nudity rampant in our age. It is basically pagan in motivation for the Greeks, too, felt that the body beautiful should be exposed and displayed in gymnastics which particularly irritated Jewish sensibilities. To them the body had no particular sanctity, and, as is the case with all things beautiful, is meant to be displayed and beheld.

On Tisha b'Av, the *Paroches* is removed from the *Aron* to suggest that there was *hester panim*, that G-d had abandoned the physical Temple, a theme recurrent in *Aycha*. Thus, G-d allowed its destruction because only a building remained; there was nothing to be covered. *Va-yetze me-bas tziyon kol hadorah*. Thus, the *Paroches* is removed.