

BUILDING TENSIONS: RELIGIOUS LIFE IN A (POST-)MODERN WORLD

By: NOAM COHEN (CC '00)

I just watched *The Jazz Singer* a few times. It's the story of a Jewish American boy, Jakie Rabinowitz, the descendant of generations of cantors, who decides to defy his father's wishes and performs on the stage as a jazz singer named Jack Robin. His internal conflict between the call of tradition and the lures of the real world is never resolved in the film. While not ignoring the complexity of the issue of assimilation, *The Jazz Singer* makes no clear choice in either direction

While watching the film over and over, studying it for a paper I was writing, I found myself thinking more about these issues than I had in a long time. Is it possible to live the life that I've chosen? Is it possible to be a part of the large American college campus community around us, and still remain committed, traditional Jews? The producers of the movie didn't know, but they knew enough to show that it wasn't simply a black and white issue. And I don't know either, but I've still got to live my life.

I consider myself an observant Jew who keeps the shabbat. It would not even occur to me to put on some music on a Friday night, or to go out on the town. Then I think about freshman year, and the first time that I went to a secular party on a Friday night. It was in February, and I had just come from a shabbat meal, so I was still dressed in a suit and tie. There I was, the guy at the party in a yarmulke and a suit. There was music playing, and someone offered me a puff of his cigarette. Some of my friends found me and they told me that they thought it was pretty cool that I was there. I was the guy at the party wearing a suit; people loved it. Nobody let me forget, really, that I was the odd man out. I knew that I didn't belong there. And I stayed. And I had a pretty great time.

It's easy to ask me the really hard questions. I know, I've asked them to myself many times over. If I knew from the beginning that the spirit of my own beliefs conflicted with attending that party, then why did I go? Why did I, in fact, continue to go to parties every once in a while on a Friday night, when my friends were particularly convincing, even though I know that my parents, my rabbi and my sense of my own religious observance so clearly disapprove? My answers are just as unsatisfying as the end of *The Jazz Singer*: Well,

"People who define their lives merely by law, and not by the struggle to follow that law, the tension between that law and their own fallibility, may fall once and lose their religious identity."

I didn't really do anything that was against the letter of *halacha*. I'm only human. Sometimes people do things that they know are wrong. Et cetera.

What suddenly began to interest me, however, was a question that I had, surprisingly, never asked myself. Namely, why, if I was doing this thing which I knew was wrong anyway, didn't I change out of my suit before I came to the party? Why didn't I put a hat over my yarmulke? Did I *want* to stand out? Was I showing off somehow? Did I enjoy my transgression perhaps a little too much?

I won't deny that there was an element of pretension in remaining in my shabbat suit. And it probably would also have been somewhat of a hassle to get back home and change my clothing. But the main reason that I never changed was that it just never occurred to me to do so. I always wore my yarmulke. It was shabbat, and I always wore a suit on shabbat. It wasn't just the force of habit, that made me continue to do these things. I believed, and still believe, in what they stood for. It looks like a contradiction: even as I did the thing that I knew was wrong, I consciously defined myself as a shabbat-observant Jew.

One of my closest friends is fond of pointing out that my life is a series of contradictions: I am a Modern Orthodox Jew who wants to study Postmodern Literature. He's more right than he knows. These word-contradictions are humorous, but they hide a whole series of important conflicts within them. Orthodox Jews, to take one example, are not encouraged to consider academia as a career choice. It is a field in which jobs are scarce and scattered enough that it may become necessary to move to a city with little or no Orthodox community. A Jewish professor may be forced

to take a job in a city in which it is impossible to get ten Jews for a minyan, or even to find kosher meat. I often hear about brilliant graduate students that end up teaching at colleges in small towns in Texas and Iowa. My career choice is a precarious one, at best, for an Orthodox Jew. Yet I cannot bring myself to give up the only thing that I've ever wanted to do with my life because it is difficult. Nor will I allow myself to give up my religious observance.

My interest in Literary Postmodernism has taught me a lot, not just about the novels that I read, but about the way modern people live their lives. One aspect of modern life with which contemporary novelists seemed to be obsessed is the idea of paradox. People in these novels seem to live within impossible choices. Their options are clear, and not so different from the choices that we make ourselves: Whether to let everything affect you, and so be weighed down by the sorrow of the world, or to let nothing through and be ignorant and happy. Whether to believe in a force that directs the actions of human beings, or to believe that people choose their own free but meaningless destinies. Whether to conform to society to gain acceptance, or to retain your individuality and become marginalized. What is amazing about many Postmodern protagonists is that, while their choices seem clearly to stand in contradiction to one another, they pointedly decline to choose. Their binary choices are between two mutually exclusive options, and yet these people determine to live in the paradoxical area that lies between them. This state of contradiction, which doesn't, theoretically exist, Postmodern novelists seem to say, is where people actually live. Beliefs and understandings are theoretical, unreal; tension, contradiction and paradox, these things are life.

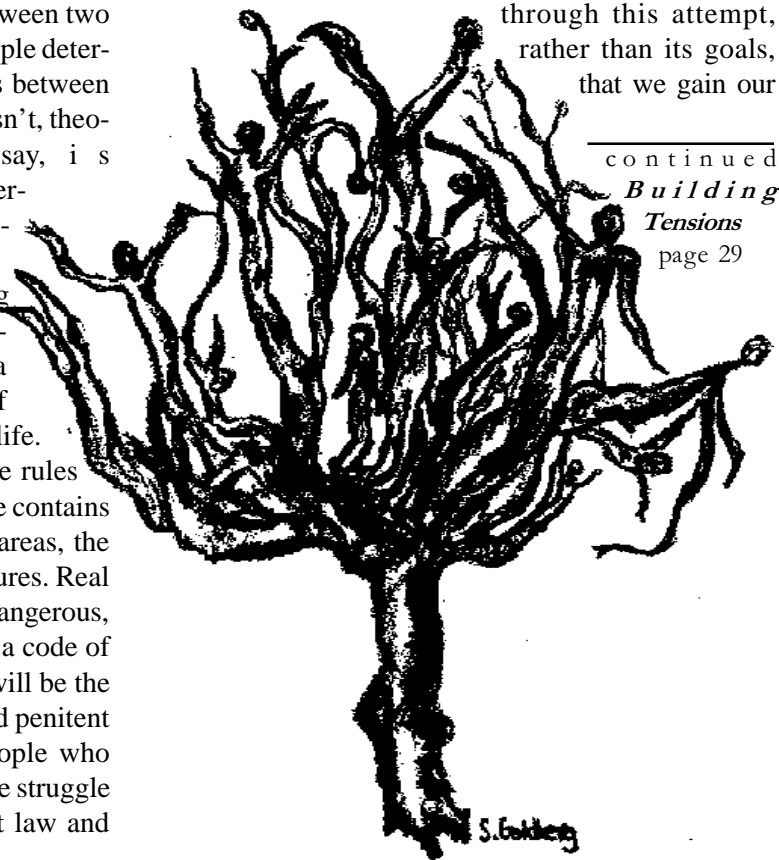
In my mind, this applies to everything in life, every aspect of the way one lives. Certainly it is important to behave according to a set of rules, such as *halacha*, but this set of rules does not constitute the story of one's life. Life is lived within the tensions between the rules and human motives, failings and desires. Life contains the rules that are obeyed, but also the grey areas, the slip-ups, the accidents and the conscious failures. Real life is contained in tension. To ignore this is dangerous, for if people believe their lives to simply be a code of law, then a single failure to follow that law will be the cause of more than simply necessary pain and penitent regret. It will be a source of despair. People who define their lives merely by law, and not by the struggle to follow that law, the tension between that law and

their own fallibility, may fall once and lose their religious identity.

When my friend pointed out that the phrase 'Modern Orthodox' is somewhat of a contradiction, he was being funny, but I think he was correct. I define myself as a Modern Orthodox Jew, and by doing so, I define, not my religious doctrine, but my own inner conflict and the way in which I live my life. There are those who will disagree with me, those who understand Modern Orthodoxy to be a religious movement, and I applaud their efforts to make living an Orthodox life within the modern world easier. These people, however, would be the first to admit that everything that they believe is strictly bound by the terms of *halacha*. I simply believe that Modern Orthodoxy is an apt description of a life, rather than of a movement. It is a phrase that I apply to myself as much as I would call myself 'American Orthodox,' or 'Politically Liberal Orthodox.' Or 'Orthodox college student.' Or 'Orthodox poet.' These phrases all describe tensions in my life, tensions between two things that I believe in, or between what I believe and what I would like to do. These are descriptions of my life.

Do not misunderstand me; I do not mean to imply that our failures are as good as our successes. Everyone should strive to live as closely as possible to the strict letter of that which they believe. I maintain, however, that it is through this attempt, rather than its goals, that we gain our

continued
*Building
Tensions*
page 29



ANSWERING THE SECOND QUESTION

By: DAVID SCHACH (SEAS '99)

"Are you Jewish?" Yes. "What kind? Are you Orthodox?" The inevitable follow up questions. How do I answer? What connotation does the word "Orthodox" have? What kind of Jew am I, exactly? To examine the questions, we have to think of where I am. Columbia University in the City of New York. With New York being the operative word. In New York, what does the word mean? Is that different from the rest of the country? How do I identify with the word Orthodox in the context of Columbia and New York?

Perhaps I should define how I perceive the right wing of New York Orthodoxy. In my experience, an Orthodox, New York Jew wears a kippah (for the males), keeps strict kashrut, is Shomer Shabbat, basically living the life of a mensch. Of course, there is a left-wing contingency, but I am talking about Modern Orthodox, right wing Jews—the kind that is most visible at Columbia University. Let us be blunt. I do not adhere to these standards.

Before we talk at all about where I am right now, we must first look at where I am from and what the word means to me. Nashville, Tennessee. The South. West enough that it has a slight Midwest flavor while keeping that Southern hospitality and friendliness.

My family belongs to an Orthodox shul, and at Columbia, I pray at Yavneh services. I am not Shomer Shabbat. I eat dairy in non-kosher restaurants. I go dancing in clubs. I do not wear a kippah. I call myself Orthodox. Yet none of this matters, for in Nashville it doesn't matter. As long as you belong to the Orthodox shul, you are an Orthodox Jew. I could eat anything in any restaurant and still call myself Orthodox. The community is small, and the word "forgiving" does not even apply, because it would not enter into anyone's head to look down upon anyone else as being any less of a Jew as that person himself or herself.

I arrived in New York, completely comfortable with my Judaism. On the first day, on my way out of Tom's, where I got breakfast, I saw more men wearing kippot, and women wearing skirts than I had ever seen outside of Israel.

I came to Columbia, a bona fide, accepted, Orthodox Jew, committed to my religion—yet in my way. I was not prepared for the requirements that being an ac-

tive Jew on campus included. The active Jews wore kippot, davened, were Shomer Shabbat, and centered their lives on the Jewish Student Union. I was on the swim team my freshman year, and tried to mix being an athlete with being an active Jew on campus. I wanted a diverse college experience, with diverse experiences. I was devoted to my religion and to my social life.

During my freshman year, I noticed that most of the people active in the JSU were the Orthodox Jews—and here I use the New York definition of the word. Many people on campus center their social lives on their activities and interests. Regarding religious Jews, the perception from my peers and me was that their lives *were* their Judaism, as Judaism was their way of life. Therefore, building their lives around the Jewish Student Union would be a natural progression because it provided culinary, prayer, and social opportunities. In this way, the Jewish community fed into its own homogeneity and exclusivity, as people with limited opportunity for social outlets held fast to one they had, excluding people who were not up to the

"It is easy to feel criticized here, in the Orthodox community."

standard.

In Columbia I wanted to go to services, to dinners Friday night, and to lunches Saturday afternoon. I wanted to be an active part of the community as a traditionally minded, Orthodox Jew. Unfortunately, I found this impossible. I could find no place for me to become involved as a leader without it being in a religious context, so I gravitated to some very observant, Orthodox Jews. I found myself increasingly drawn in. On Friday nights, I would go to services and dinner, and not go out afterwards. I attempted to become Shomer Shabbat. I found increasingly that I was becoming isolated into the Jewish community and was leaving behind the people whom I had met before.

The turning point in my search for my Jewish identity occurred in the summer after my freshman year, when I returned to Camp Ramah. After Friday night services one night, one of my friends, whom I had a crush on since high school, came up to me to give me a hug. I pulled back visibly, as I had not hugged anyone after services in a long time. The moment I did that, I felt dirty and disgusting. This was not the person I wanted to be, so I made a decision. No matter what happened to me, I would never lose myself again. I had been very happy with the

person I had been before I came to Columbia.

I entered my sophomore year sure of myself. At first, it worried me that I was living with the President of Yavneh and with both Gabbaim. However, they were very accepting of my decisions, and knowing that they were there for me made my choice easier.

To what decision do I refer? The decision to undergo possible ostracism from the Orthodox community for not toeing the line. I have a real problem with the community here at Columbia: We are treated like ants. If one of us leaves, we are not missed. I am not the only person who feels like this. The fact is that people who used to invite me for meals or who used to call me do not anymore. If I do not see someone regularly, there are no telephone calls to catch up. The community is one that, for all the electronic communication that we have, thrives on face-to-face contact. When I ask people why I don't speak to my old friends anymore, the first questions are usually concerning my lack of participation in dining at Hewitt for lunch, in praying at daily Mincha services, or in Wednesday Night Learning.

It is so easy to feel criticized here, in the Orthodox community. People are amazingly critical of others' observances and practices (although it's usually the lack thereof). It infuriates me that so many are worried about what others think of them. To any Jews reading this: How many times have you changed what you do because you are worried about what people will think or say? I say, "SHAME ON YOU." Be proud of who you are, and be whoever and whatever you want to be.

I see why the JSU has trouble attracting less-religious Jews. I see why we are perceived as Jewish nerds. Most cool Jews do not want to be a part of the stupid politics and religious programs of the Jewish Student Union. I understand this. I joined because I had some friends here. And I lost a large part of myself to the JSU until I found a good balance between the JSU and other activities.

Nevertheless, the damage has been done. I missed out on forming close friendships with Jews like me in my first year because I became one of those Jews who looks down on those who do not have the same observances. I hate that I did it, and I apologize to everyone I know for being such a weak person then.

What lessons have I learned from being at Columbia?

I must always be proud of who I am

and should feel more grounded in my beliefs. I came to Columbia an Orthodox Jew, but with the trappings that made me comfortable. Had I stayed with that, I would have had a much better experience. I am lucky that I have gained close, genuine friends in my upperclass years. They see me for who I am, not for what I do. I missed my chance to get closer with some people in my class, and I will always regret that.

The biggest lesson I learned here is that if someone doesn't like me for what I do religiously or places too much emphasis on what I am, rather than who I am, then that person is not worth it. Plain and simple. This community alienates too many people during orientation. We lose freshmen every year that want to be active, but feel threatened by the Orthodox community and by the general stress placed on religious programming. To combat that alienation—since I am so stubborn—I became more observant. That let me stay a part of things. Big mistake. I didn't do it for myself, but to fit in.

Look around JSU programs. Why do we not have more secular Jews in our active membership if they make up such a substantial percentage of Columbia University? It is ridiculous. We cannot say that we are the strongest Jewish community in the country if we are alienating so many Jews. I am ashamed whenever I meet someone who says that he or she came to an orientation event but was scared away by the intense religious content. The Jewish community should be based on bringing Jews together socially, not only religiously. The mission

continued *Second Question* page 29



THE CONFLICT WITHIN

By: JESSICA REZAK (GS, JTS, '00)

Two days before my second semester of college was to begin, I had a conversation with a friend that still at times echoes in my mind. He had something he wanted to tell me, but he did not know how. A secret. Something he had never even told his parents or his girlfriend who he had dated for three years. I couldn't fathom what this secret could be. He compared his situation to a hidden Jew of the Holocaust. Many hidden Jews had concealed their true identities and lived separate lives with different identities for much of their lifetime. Yet, did the life that they had lived for so many years diminish from their true identities as Jews? Were these people responsible for all the lies that they had told so many people? This friend eventually told me that he was a homosexual; he "came out" to me as his first friend in college. The next few months were a very trying process for him. How was he supposed to tell his parents or his ex-girlfriend of three years that he was gay? How would people relate to him now that he would have a new identity? But the most significant issue for me was how would he reconcile both his traditional views of Judaism and his homosexual identity?

This event served as a turning point for me in my theological journey. I struggled to blend my moral and ethical ideals with my appreciation of *halacha*, Jewish law. I had never been faced with this conflict before. I had never even known a committed Jew who was also a committed homosexual. How could I adhere to a traditional Jewish lifestyle when it explicitly stated that my friend and his acts are an "abomination?" At first these two views seemed so opposed to each other. However, as my searching continued, I found an understanding of Judaism that still resonates within me .

The kind of soul-searching and critical questioning that I went through is a common phenomena for the college student. Not once did I regret being faced with this challenge. It was an opening to the beginning of many questions that I began to formulate.

At the same time that I was beginning my process of forming critical questions about traditional Judaism, I attended the First International Conference of Feminism and Orthodoxy. This conference led me to

question my role in Judaism as a woman, a role which was not satisfying me. I was also taking classes in Jewish studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary where I was taught Jewish philosophy and Bible from very different perspectives than those with which I had been raised. Each issue that I dealt with was extremely difficult for me. I experienced tensions and serious conflicts within

myself. But I feel that these conflicts have ultimately brought me to lead a more fulfilling life as a Jew. The outcome of how I understand and practice Judaism is not the essence for me now in college. Rather, the

fact that I have allowed myself to be placed in vulnerable situations and have opened myself up to the realities of life is the crucial factor that has guided my college experience.

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AN ALTERNATIVE VIEW OF JUDAISM

BY: MILES BERGER (CC '01)

Traditional, religious Judaism is not moral. Neither is Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or any other religion that proposes a lifestyle based on unconfirmed faith. The problem is that one cannot universalize the maxim of a religious person's lifestyle, which is that "it is acceptable to live and act in accord with ideas that are based on faith rather than evidence." This maxim is clearly not universal because if it were, this would force one to accept the faith-based actions of any person, including extremists who commit murder for religious reasons. After all, there is no real way to determine whose religious faith is true, since faith is essentially belief in the absence of evidence. Thus, one religious person cannot logically reject the actions of a person of a different faith as immoral or unnecessary because one person cannot have any evidence that his faith is true and that of another is not. According to this reasoning (the Kantian theory) religion is not moral.

What does this mean for religious believers? It means they must choose between living a life based upon faith in which they cannot criticize anyone else's actions that are also based upon faith, or living a life based upon reason in which they can do so. This choice is not purely academic: it has far-reaching moral repercussions. If we are to affirm that God wrote the Torah and that therefore we must strictly follow halakha, then how can we call immoral the actions of Muslims whose faith in the Koran tells them they must kill Western infidels and blow up the World Trade Center? Do we have any more evidence that God wants us to keep kosher than that he wants the Muslims to kill? The answer is: no.

So how should this issue be resolved? Are we to give up Judaism entirely just so that we can have the philosophical right to condemn the faith-based actions of others that we find distasteful? We must rethink our relationship with our religion. We must be willing to admit that while we may see many beautiful aspects of Judaism, we still have no more evidence that Judaism came from God than any other religion does. Nonetheless, one need not believe that God actually wrote the Torah to live a meaningful Jewish life.

The essence of the Torah and all of Judaism, in my view, is not that one should dogmatically insist that it was authored by God. Rather, one should hope that God exists, but simultaneously realize that He is far from our capability to understand. Thus we tend to think of Him as being One, yet being everywhere, and the Torah cautions against making idols or graven images of Him. The essence of Judaism is hoping that there is a God (which, after the events of this century, is, I think, the most optimistic way to state things).

Judaism is about constantly asking whether our actions accord with our best understanding of what is right and true. To be a Jew is to consistently think and question and to hope that there is a Truth, however distant and hard to find, just as we continually hope that there is something Higher. Following the exact exegetical laws of halakha is the opposite of true Judaism. The Torah argues against the arrogance of believing that we know God or exactly what he wants of us.

The Torah should be viewed as an incredibly complex, multilayered work that should be used as an important starting point for discussing moral and lifestyle questions, not as the final authority on all of these issues. I am not advocating that we should drop the Torah and Judaism, but in order to live as intelligent, educated people, we must question its teachings rather than rationalize its truths, and we must disapprove of its teachings if we find them immoral. Essentially, we must decide for ourselves what is moral instead of letting the Torah decide that for us. However, we should not be so quick to reject its teachings. Even practices such as *shomer negiya* (abstaining from touching members of the opposite sex), which may initially seem strange or perverse, often have a hidden beauty beneath them (in this case, ensuring that physical intimacy is emotionally meaningful). Thus, we should study the Torah and search for the wisdom and truths in it, but we should not view every statement contained within it as true by definition.

"Do we have any more evidence that God wants us to keep kosher than that He wants Muslims to kill?"

EDUCATIONAL AND UPLIFTING EXPOSURE

By: RENA GELB (BC '99)

Assimilation or acculturation? That is the question. Whether 'tis viewed as nobler in the mind of a Jew to brave the slings and arrows of an outrageous college world or to take arms against a sea of influences and by opposing, evade them? Why is it that as I travel further and further into my college experience, it becomes harder and harder for me to appreciate that struggle? I view the secular college experience as a challenge to the religious community and to the individual to approach Judaism with thought and creativity, so that its meaning and integrity be appreciated in the context of a broad and culturally diverse world. At one point, I did struggle with the issue of exposure. I attribute that struggle to a young person's concern about her own ability to meet challenges, and to a lack of faith in the ultimate integrity of her religion. After four years of thinking through issues in college and facing challenges to my traditional religious beliefs, I emerge so much more confident and articulate in my religious commitment. I would like to be able to appreciate both sides of the issue, but every time I try to think of a reason that exposure should be avoided, I think of my smart and thoughtful friends who are at home in so many areas of the world just because they have been exposed to them. I think of how much I love the ways in which I have grown because I have been in a secular institution for the first time in my educational experience.

I came to college with a mixture of excitement and wariness — excitement about new opportunities and experiences, and wariness about how these new experiences would affect my prior values and lifestyle choices. I don't think that these feelings were unique to me as a Jew. They apply to all young people exploring their values and commitments. However, especially as a religious Jew, committed to a certain lifestyle infused with the import of religious obligation, I was wary of how newness would affect that commitment.

My thoughts have evolved since I have come to Barnard as a junior transfer student from Stern. I have had the opportunity to become friends with people who affiliate with the Conservative and Reform movements, instead of thinking of these movements as the vague philosophies discussed in books and Jewish history classes. I have befriended non-Jewish students, and I enjoy so much of our common experiences and values. We have different backgrounds but similar struggles. One of the most important ways that my thinking has expanded is that I have come to look at Jewish life with more distance and objectivity and to see it in the context of a greater whole of world thought and culture.

"I HAVE COME TO LOOK AT JEWISH LIFE WITH MORE DISTANCE AND OBJECTIVITY AND TO SEE IT IN THE CONTEXT OF A GREATER WHOLE OF WORLD THOUGHT AND CULTURE."

I have thought a lot about how I present myself as an observant Jew to non-observant Jews and to non-Jewish people. It is important to me to feel organic, to feel at one with my Jewish identity, and to incorporate it into

myself in a way that is not strange to a world that does not relate to the same dietary restrictions, palm branches, and regular prayer services. The more I have presented myself as an observant Jew in a diverse world, the more I have developed an inherent appreciation for the individual aspects of my Jewish life, as opposed to just a general commitment to comply with a religious system as a whole. To me, this is the kind of commitment that is more important; it is deeper, more integrated, and more uplifting for me as I practice Jewish rituals.

The college campus is a dynamic world. One can feel the energy increase as he or she steps through the Columbia gates. Dynamism means change. It means people go in different directions at different times. I view my college experience as so positive. I am grateful for every ounce of challenge and exposure that it has given me, for my relationship to religion and to myself has been enriched as my experience of choice has broadened.

WORK THAT RUNWAY, BABY!

THE TRIALS OF A NEW FACE ON A FRIDAY NIGHT

By: BRIELLE STARK (visiting student at BC)

My first Barnard/Columbia Shabbat was an experience that I'll never forget. I'll admit I was a little overly excited about it. It was to be my first experience with a large and well-established collegiate Jewish community, the first time that I would be joined in Jewish observances by hundreds of people. My suite-mates had given me different perspectives regarding what the evening would be like. They promised to help me out by introducing me to as many people as possible. After they heard about the tiny Jewish life at Vassar, where I generally attend college, they warned me that I would probably feel a bit overwhelmed by *Yavneh*, the Orthodox community at Columbia. They assured me that I should not worry, though; the opportunities here for valuable Jewish involvement are immense. I absorbed everything and thought I was ready.

There was one little tiny thing they never mentioned, though. Only when the evening was over did I realize how critical this information was...WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL ME ABOUT THIS WALKING-DOWN-THE-AISLE THING?

Apparently, an entrance into Friday night services isn't just your average, everyday walking-in-the-door. It is in fact a runway walk into - or out of, depending on the critics' reviews - Jewish life.

As soon as I entered the room and headed over towards the women, I realized that many more eyes than I had expected were resting on me. They looked me up and down, side to side; a steady flow of curiosity, disdain, or approval focused on my outer layers. I felt this in the pit of my stomach, along with a growing sense of shock. My knees got shaky, but I managed to make it to the back of the room with a modicum of dignity still intact.

In discussing this entrance-trauma after Shabbat, I became aware of the apparently crucial nature of "walking down." Friends asked, "what did you wear?" or "did you manage to get through all right?"

This was alarming to me. Here I am in a place where, for the first time I am not one of only two traditionally Shabbat-observing students on campus. Now I have a chance to be supported by an entire community, rather than solely by my friend Michal who is my partner in not-answering-the-telephone-on Saturday at Vassar. But in an environment where I feel so harshly criticized, I wonder if it is possible to experience the type of community-based Jewish life that I came here to find. I am saddened and I desperately hope that I'm wrong.

I'm visiting at Barnard this semester from a college whose Jewish community is extremely - how shall I put it- grassroots. Tiny, but strong, and definitely

unconventional. Part of that unconventionality comes from its diversity - we don't have enough people at services to split up into a *Yavneh* (Orthodox), a *Koach* (Conservative), a *Kesher*

(Reform), and a Women's *Tefillah*. We all sit in a circle and sing a service designed to meet everyone's needs to some degree. If we get twenty-five people on a Friday night, that's great. If we get fifty for dinner, it's a miracle. But it's lovely and warm, in the Cheers "where everybody knows your name" sense, though it does become complex to negotiate the needs of so many different views. However, this struggle is a beautiful one, by virtue of the challenge it issues to every student who is sure that he or she has all the answers.

I am hardly unfamiliar with the trials of Jewish life in a university setting. I am well-acquainted with the "me, myself, and I" Jewish experience. Oddly, even in a place where I grew in Jewish observance alone, I was able to feel complete, and even enriched Jewishly because of the general openness and warmth of the Jewish community. My concern right now is this: if it turns out that the Jewish community here is as wary and exclusive as walking-down -the-runway made it

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continued *Runway* page 29