

THE FLOERSHEIMER INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

From Yeshiva to Work

The American Experience and Lessons for Israel

Amiram Gonen

Jerusalem, December 2001

1

English Language Editor: Fred Skolnik
Principal Editor: Shunamith Carin
Preparation for Print: Ruth Lerner
Printed by: Ahva Press, Ltd.

Published in Hebrew as:

**מהישיבה לעבודה:
הניסיון האמריקני ולקחים לישראל
עמירם גונן**

Available in English and Hebrew on:

www.fips.org.il

ISSN 0792-6251

Publication No. 4/5e

© 2001, The Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, Ltd.
9A Diskin Street, Jerusalem 96440 Israel
Tel. 972-2-5666243; Fax. 972-2-5666252
office@fips.org.il
www.fips.org.il

About the Author

Amiram Gonen is a Professor of Social Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Director of the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies.

About the Research

As part of the Floersheimer Institute's ongoing program of studies on religion, society, and state, Prof. Amiram Gonen surveyed the processes of transition from the world of yeshivas (rabbinical seminaries) to the labor market among the Haredi (also known as ultra-Orthodox) population in the New York area. The survey found that men in both cultural groups that make up the Haredi population - Hasidic and Lithuanian - devote fixed periods of time to full-time religious study in yeshiva or kolel (a yeshiva for married men): Hasidic men for a brief period and Lithuanian men for slightly longer. Both groups, however, evince a high labor-force participation rate, unlike the situation in Israel, where young men are draft-deferred as long as they are defined as "professional religious scholars," i.e., as long as they engage in full-time religious study. The survey examines the various routes along which Haredi men in the New York area make their way to the labor market. In recent years, growing numbers of Haredi men have been gravitating to computer occupations, as manifested in the establishment of vocational-training institutes in these fields. Finally, Prof. Gonen presents a series of lessons for Israel on the basis of the situation among the Haredi men in the New York area.

About the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies

In recent years the importance of policy-oriented research has been increasingly acknowledged. **Dr. Stephen H. Floersheimer** initiated the establishment of a research institute that would concentrate on studies of long-range policy issues. The purpose of the Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies is to research fundamental processes likely to be major issues for policy-makers in years to come, analyze the long-range trends and implications of such problems, and propose to the policy-makers alternative options and strategies.

The members of the Board of Directors are **Dr. Stephen H. Floersheimer** (chairman); **I. Amihud Ben-Porath**, advocate (vice-chairman); **David Brodet**, former Director General of the Ministry of Finance; and **Hirsh Goodman**, founding editor of the *Jerusalem Report*. The director of the Floersheimer Institute is **Amiram Gonen**, Professor of Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The deputy-director is **Shlomo Hasson**, Professor of Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

THE FLOERSHEIMER INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

***Publications in English on:
Religion, Society, and State in Israel***

1. **The Cultural Struggle over Jerusalem: Accommodations, Scenarios and Lessons**, Shlomo Hasson, 1996.
2. **The Cultural Tension Within Jerusalem's Jewish Population**, Shlomo Hasson and Amiram Gonen, 1997.
3. **Religion and Democracy in Israel**, Benyamin Neuberger, 1997.
4. **Ultra-Orthodoxy in Urban Governance in Israel**, Yosseph Shilhav, 1998.
5. **Religion and Political Accommodation in Israel**, Eliezer Don-Yehiya, 1999.
6. **The Haredi Educational System: Allocation, Regulation, and Control**, Varda Schiffer, 1999.
7. **Haredi and Secular Jews in Jerusalem in the Future: Scenarios and Strategies**, Shlomo Hasson, 1999.
8. **From Yeshiva to Work: The American Experience and Lessons for Israel**, Amiram Gonen, 2001.
9. **Between Three Branches of Government: The Balance of Rights in Matters of Religion in Israel**, Shimon Shetreet, 2001.
10. **The Struggle for Hegemony in Jerusalem: Secular and Ultra-Orthodox Urban Politics**, Shlomo Hasson, 2001.

* Available on the Institute website: www.fips.org.il

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction: Dilemma and Issues | 7 |
| The Dilemma of a ‘Society of Scholars’ | 7 |
| Some Policy Issues | 12 |
| The American Comparison | 14 |
| 1 The New York Study | 17 |
| The Nature of the Study | 17 |
| Main Findings and Lessons | 21 |
| 2 Between Two Norms: Religious Study and Breadwinning | 28 |
| The Different Camps of the Yeshiva World | 28 |
| The Role of the Welfare System | 34 |
| Pressures on the Norm of Religious Study | 35 |
| 3 Preparing to Enter the Labor Market | 41 |
| The Attitude of the Rabbis | 41 |
| Hasidic Men Lack Basic Occupational Skills | 43 |
| Hasidic Men Join the Labor Market Earlier | 48 |
| Lithuanians Join the Labor Market Later | 49 |
| Differences in Income Levels | 51 |
| Age of Entry into the Labor Market | 53 |
| Routes to the Labor Market | 55 |
| 4 The Route to Education and Religious Services | 57 |
| Education Jobs | 58 |
| Religious-Service Jobs | 62 |
| 5 The Direct Route to Trade and Services | 65 |
| Historical Continuity | 65 |
| What Are Their Occupations? | 68 |
| Where Do They Work? | 71 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| 6 | The Route of Vocational Training | 73 |
| | Consent of Rabbis and Yeshiva Heads | 75 |
| | Where Vocational-Training Institutes Are Located | 79 |
| | Separation of Men and Women | 83 |
| | The Shift to Computer Occupations | 85 |
| | Placement in Skilled Jobs | 89 |
| 7 | The Academic Route | 91 |
| | The Yeshiva as a College | 92 |
| | Combining Yeshiva and College Studies | 93 |
| | A Yeshiva-Compatible Haredi College | 94 |
| | College Credits for Yeshiva Studies | 96 |
| | Fields of Academic Studies | 99 |
| | Government Assistance | 99 |
| 8 | Geographical Patterns | 101 |
| | Working at Home | 101 |
| | A Haredi Labor Niche | 102 |
| | Concentrating in Haredi Neighborhoods | 103 |
| | Building a Haredi Economy in the Suburbs | 104 |
| 9 | Lessons for Israel | 106 |
| | Consent of Rabbis and Yeshiva Heads | 107 |
| | Who Will Join the Labor Market, and When? | 109 |
| | How to Encourage Haredi Men to Join the Labor Market | 113 |
| | Routes of Entry into the Labor Market | 121 |
| | Separate Haredi Workplaces | 126 |
| | The Relationship between Place of Residence and Place of Work | 127 |
| | Overview | 129 |
| | References | 130 |

Introduction: Dilemma and Issues

The Dilemma of a ‘Society of Scholars’

During the past few decades, Israel’s Haredi or ultra-Orthodox population has produced a large ‘society of scholars’ (Friedman, 1991). Most young Haredi men have come to embrace the norm of full-time religious study in institutes of higher talmudic education: the yeshiva for bachelors and the kolel for married men. This time-honored Jewish tradition was first institutionalized by the State of Israel during and immediately after the War of Independence. At that time, the Israeli government established a quota of 400 yeshiva students formally defined as ‘professional religious scholars.’ Their induction into the army was to be deferred as long as they continued to study. The government justified this decision by the need to revive the yeshiva world that had been annihilated in the Holocaust (Tal Commission, 2000: Report of the Yisraeli Committee, Part B-1, p. 92). In subsequent years the state developed a system of financial support for these yeshiva and kolel students in the form of stipends provided through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and distributed through the yeshivas and kolels rather than directly to the students. Receiving such stipends did not depend on receiving a draft deferment; it was sufficient to be engaged in full-time religious studies in a recognized institution, whether under a deferment or under a full exemption from military service. The term ‘professional religious scholar’ was thus used in two senses: for those receiving deferments and for those receiving stipends, the former definition being used by the Ministry of Defense and the latter by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The stipends evolved over the years into an important financial mainstay of yeshiva and kolel studies, though they never provided more than a minimal standard of living.

The protracted deferment of yeshiva students from military service and the evolution of the system of state financial support made it possible for the

Haredi 'society of scholars' to grow steadily from several hundred in the 1950s to tens of thousands in the 1990s. It is still growing at a substantial pace as high birth rates produce new members and the norm of full-time religious study is effectively inculcated. One such increase took place in 1968, when a ministerial committee decided to double the annual quota of yeshiva students to 800 (*ibid.*, p. 92). Further growth occurred mainly after 1977, when, as part of the coalition agreement in the Begin government, the annual quota of 800 yeshiva students recognized by the IDF Manpower Branch as 'professional religious scholars' was abolished (*ibid.*, p. 93). Since that time, the number of draft deferments on grounds of full-time yeshiva and kollel study has grown continually. There were now no legal limits to this number. Consequently, more and more young Haredi men joined the ranks of 'professional religious scholars' whose induction into the army was deferred year after year until final exemption was granted on grounds of age or number of children. Moreover, the financial support of 'professional religious scholars' irrespective of draft-deferment status, became in itself an important economic incentive for the continuation of full-time religious studies among Haredi men well into middle age.

In 1995, the Yisraeli Committee, set up by the Ministry of Defense, made it possible for an increasing number of persons with the status of 'professional religious scholar' to receive exemptions from military service by IDF administrative fiat. The main grounds for such exemptions were, again, number of children and age (Tal Commission, 2000: IDF Manpower Branch Survey, Volume B-2, p. 387). In effect, since 1995 it has been the practice of the IDF to exempt many yeshiva students from induction at a younger age than had been the case in previous years.

However, the practice of exempting religious scholars from the draft did not lead to a decline in the numbers of kollel students. The norm of full-time religious study continued to prevail among Haredi men. Apart from the entrenchment of this norm there was an additional incentive for continued studies. As mentioned, a system of financial support had developed over the years parallel to draft deferment, mostly within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in order to sustain yeshiva and kollel students qualifying for such support as 'professional religious scholars.' Again, this arrangement was based on full-time religious study in a recognized institution and was independent of military status (Tal Commission, 2000: Support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs for Institutions of Religious Study, pp. 494-495). The support is thus

provided on the basis of full-time religious study alone, irrespective of age. Consequently, thousands of Haredi men, now exempt from the draft, remained in kolels on a full-time basis, receiving financial support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and thus not entering the labor market.

At the present time Israel's 'society of scholars' continues to consist of two elements from the point of view of military service: those with deferments stretching out over the years and those with exemptions who continue to study full time in a kollel and therefore qualify for state support. As of October 1999, 28,389 men were accorded the status of draft-deferred 'professional religious scholar' as defined by the IDF Manpower Branch and attended 701 recognized yeshiva institutions (Tal Commission, 2000: IDF Manpower Branch Survey, p. 380). Of them, 48.8 percent were aged 17-21. In all, according to the data for October 1999, the Ministry of Religious Affairs was supporting 57,118 Israeli citizens attending a *yeshiva gevoha* (higher yeshiva) or kollel; all were defined as 'professional religious scholars' from the standpoint of the Ministry. This number represented the total 1999 population of the 'society of scholars' not part of the labor force. Since then, membership has increased, as additional young people have become liable to the draft but received deferments enabling them to join the ranks of 'professional religious scholars.' But, as already noted, only 28,389 of the 57,118 religious scholars supported by the Ministry of Religious Affairs had draft deferments. The rest, amounting to 28,729 men, although exempt from military service continued to study full-time in a kollel and to stay out of the labor market. They were full-fledged members of the 'society of scholars,' not by virtue of draft deferment but through an entrenched cultural habit, supported by state funds via the Ministry of Religious Affairs as well as by philanthropy. They were potential breadwinners for a population of over 150,000 people.

Thus, the phenomenon of the Haredi 'society of scholars' in Israel is linked to two public issues: non-performance of military service and non-participation in the labor force. The first issue raises the problem of inequality between population groups, between those who do military service and those who do not. The second issue is economic. It centers around non-contribution to the economy, low income levels, and large-scale state payments to the Haredi population. Indeed, the extent of non-participation in the labor force among yeshiva-educated Haredi men of working age rose to 49.6 percent in 1980 and 67.1 percent in 1993, as against 10.3 percent among academically educated men in 1993 (Berman and Klinov, 1997: 11).

Inequality in the performance of military service, the low proportion of breadwinners, the dire economic circumstances of much of the Haredi population, and the substantial financial support received from state institutions are becoming more and more a subject of public debate. The question that has been on the public agenda for more than a decade now is to what extent the Haredi population specifically, and Israeli society generally, can maintain a 'society of scholars' that grows from year to year. Menachem Friedman, a sociology professor who specializes in research on Haredi society, stated the problem explicitly (Friedman, 1991: 192). He asked: "Is a society of scholars which requires that its adult members attend yeshivas and receive advanced religious training for many years in kolels, while forgoing general and vocational schooling, at all possible in the long run? Will Haredi society not be forced in the near future to draw a line between those admitted to yeshivas and those forced in one way or another, to yield to the socialization processes current in the Western world?"

The economic problem associated with extended religious study preoccupied Haredi society in Eastern Europe as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. It then faced challenges from rival Jewish movements - Zionism and the Bund - that prepared the young for a working life based on general schooling in the arts and sciences and vocational training. Haredi society made an effort to find a middle path that would enable the young to combine religious studies with general secular studies and vocational training. This process also unfolded in North America, where the majority of Haredi society went along with the idea of combined studies. Haredi society in Israel chose a different path, scorning all study that was not religious. The norm of full-time religious study, and non-participation in the labor force, was the one that prevailed, dovetailing with the norm of avoiding military service. These factors have come together to create immense hardship in Haredi society as well as to preoccupy and disturb non-Haredi society because of the civic and economic implications of the existence of such a large 'society of scholars'. Evidently a good part of the Haredi leadership, including yeshiva heads, rabbis, and Hasidic rebbes, are coming around to the realization that a situation in which numerous Haredi families suffer from economic distress because the men do not contribute to their support cannot be allowed to continue. They may even understand that the non-Haredi population will not stand for increased taxation to support those who have chosen the path of full time Torah studies over that of gainful employment.

The issue of sustaining a large 'society of scholars' raised its head again on the public agenda, when the question of the legality of deferment procedures for yeshiva students, enjoying the status of 'professional religious scholars' came before the High Court of Justice in the form of a petition. In accordance with the Court's ruling, the Government of Israel appointed a public commission to examine the deferment arrangement and to recommend relevant legislation. The Commission for the Formulation of an Optimum Arrangement for the Induction of Yeshiva Students, chaired by retired Supreme Court Justice Tzevi Tal - the Tal Commission - sought to expand the conceptual framework of its brief and in the end submitted recommendations that address themselves not only to issues of national security and military service, but also to economic and social problems. The upshot of the Tal Commission's recommendations was that drafting Haredi men, particularly family men, is impractical. It was preferable to induce them to enter the labor market so that they might support themselves, reduce the burden on the state budget, and contribute to the economy. The Tal Commission's recommendations envisaged giving the work option to men who had reached the age of 23 and had spent several years in a yeshiva (Tal Commission, 2000: Volume A). In fact, by the age of twenty-three, many Haredi men are married and have children. They would not be expected to opt for military service. It is assumed that they would therefore try to enter the labor market or remain in the yeshiva world. A revised draft of the Tal recommendations passed its first reading in the Knesset but has not yet been enacted. Instead, the Knesset passed provisional legislation allowing for the continuation of draft deferment for the immediate future. The Tal bill remains pending.

If the Tal bill were to pass into law, or if under changing political circumstances a different bill were to be passed by the Knesset, the question would arise whether a large flow of yeshiva students to the labor market would indeed ensue. It seems today that Haredi society would divide on the issue, as can be seen from various public pronouncements. Moreover, the large-scale exemption from military service of kollel students in their mid-twenties has not produced a large-scale entry of Haredi men into the labor market. This fact is in itself an indication that the size of the 'society of scholars' in Israel is not linked entirely to the existence of compulsory military service, as in the prevailing view, but entails a cultural preference now deeply embedded in Haredi society in Israel. Nonetheless, there are some indications of movement among Haredi men toward the labor market in one way or another. Vocational-training settings for the Haredi population are being established

apace. Individual Haredi men are having second thoughts about the personal implications of being part of a ‘society of scholars’. This is especially true for men who have received full exemption from military service after years of deferment, but still study full time as a way of life.

If conditions are ripe, Haredi men could move in significant numbers out from the yeshiva and into the workplace as a result of three different kinds of processes. One might be a kind of ‘grass roots’ movement engendered by changes in the Haredi population’s own norms regarding work or by a deterioration of the economic situation of Haredi families. A second process might be imposed from above, wherein the Haredi leadership or parts of it would recognize the need to limit the size of the ‘society of scholars’ and create standards by which some of its members might join the labor force without being socially stigmatized. A third process could be imposed from outside Haredi society in the form of legislation or new regulations. Such measures would reduce financial support for yeshiva students, make it more difficult for them to obtain ‘professional religious scholar’ status, and enhance the option of going to work at a young age in the spirit of the Tal Commission’s recommendations. The measures might include financial support for vocational and academic studies, made directly to yeshiva students or to designated institutions. One way or another, Israeli society and the economy would do well to prepare for the possibility that such a change will occur on a significant scale.

Some Policy Issues

Several policy issues arise in regard to the probable flow of yeshiva students to the labor market:

- Will rabbis and yeshiva heads in Israel favor this movement or act to thwart it? Which rabbis and yeshiva heads will support it, and which will oppose it? If rabbis and yeshiva heads favor the move from yeshiva to work, will they impose conditions in regard to training facilities, workplaces, occupations, or industries? If rabbis and yeshiva heads object to the move, will yeshiva students heed them when no longer faced with compulsory military service?

- Will Haredi society in Israel adopt a different attitude toward ‘professional religious scholars’ when the threat of compulsory military service is lifted? Will Haredi society in Israel confer a status of respectability upon those who leave the yeshiva or kolel to go to work?
- What percentage of yeshiva students in Israel will join the work force after the threat of military service is lifted?
- Which yeshiva students in Israel will join the work force? Will there be differences between older and younger students, between Hasidic and Lithuanian, between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim (Sephardim), between the offspring of wealthy and impoverished families ?
- When yeshiva students in Israel begin to seek work in larger numbers, what occupations will they prefer? Will they follow their rabbis’ instructions or seek occupations on the basis of expected income? Will men leaving the yeshivas enter new and modern fields or cling to age-old patterns of petty trade and traditional crafts?
- How will the Israeli yeshiva students acquire their training? Will they opt for apprenticeship or enroll in actual vocational-training institutes and other schools?
- Which vocational-training institutes will be accessible to these yeshiva students - existing ones or newly established ones? Will these be institutes serving the Israeli population at large or special institutions established for yeshiva students and featuring the strict observance of Haredi rules of behavior - first and foremost, the separation of men and women? Will the state or the private sector meet the challenge and develop a system of vocational training and job placement to help those wishing to enter the labor market?
- Will some Israeli yeshiva students entering the labor market seek to attend institutes of higher education - universities and colleges - or will they regard these as scholastic settings that clash with their Haredi culture? Will the rabbis and yeshiva heads instruct them to regard these settings as such?
- If yeshiva students evince a demand for higher education, will it lead them to existing institutions or will special institutes of higher education for the Haredi population be established? If there is demand for study at

existing institutes of higher education in Haredi society in Israel, will these institutions meet the challenge of the increase in the number of Haredi men seeking academic training?

- How will Israeli employers treat these new members of the labor force? Will they welcome them as workers of high professional potential or consider them an inadequately trained group with special demands and problematic traits? Will there be employers unwilling on ideological grounds to hire yeshiva students who have not served in the army?

These and other issues will no doubt preoccupy policymakers as the groundrules concerning military service for yeshiva students are changed and the way is opened for their large-scale entry into the labor market. Furthermore, academic researchers and pollsters will soon attempt to address these issues and estimate the number of Haredi men who will join the labor force along with their demographic, economic, and cultural features, the occupations they will prefer, and the vocational-training routes they will choose. Some politicians will try to influence the process in various directions. The private sector, in contrast, will strive to adapt itself to the new reality in order to profit from it.

The American Comparison

Future studies relating to the possibility that yeshiva students will join the labor force will focus mainly on prevailing conditions in Israel itself. However, as is common in social, cultural, and economic research, data from other countries should be considered to gauge possible developments. Although superficially one may feel that this issue is unique to Israel, this is not so. There are yeshiva students in other countries as well. Even though they may not be faced with compulsory military service as their Israeli counterparts are, they still have to choose between full-time religious study and working for a living. The Haredi norm that places yeshiva students who persist in full-time religious studies at the top of the social hierarchy exists in Haredi population centers outside of Israel, too. In Haredi centers in the West, as in Israel, leaders are on the lookout for welfare-state resources that can contribute to support of a growing population of yeshiva students and the religious institutions that serve them. In these countries, too, yeshiva students have to choose an

occupation that will support them when they decide to enter the labor market; and having made this decision they must find training facilities that are suitable for them. Here, also, the suitability of institutes of vocational and higher education with regard to the needs of Haredi students is an issue of some import.

The North American Haredi population is worth special attention when a comparison with the Israeli situation is warranted. In North America, and especially in North-eastern United States, the Haredi population reached significant numbers and built a sizable and diversified network of institutions that serve its needs and strive to address new challenges. The present study focuses attention on the American Haredi population and its experience with the transition from yeshiva studies to gainful employment.

There are no data enabling us to make an accurate estimate of the percentage of employed persons among the American Haredi population. According to surveys, the size of this population ranges from 100,000 to 150,000 (Heilman, 1995: 147). Be this as it may, it can be said that the percentage of persons employed in the U.S. is considerably higher than in Israel. Eli Berman, who has studied the work patterns of the Israeli Haredi population, cites data that attest to vast differences between Haredi men in Israel and North America. According to manpower survey data, the percentage of Israeli Haredi men aged 25-54 who attend yeshivas rose from 41 percent in 1980 to 60 percent in 1996 (Berman, 1998: 11). The percentage of full-time yeshiva students is especially high among Haredi men aged 25-29 (77.4 percent). It declines gradually in older age groups but still remains high in the 41-44 group (46.1 percent) and even in the 45-54 group (25.5 percent) (Berman, 1998: 19). In the United States and other countries, by contrast, few students remain in yeshivas after the age of twenty-five (Berman, 1998: 12). In Montreal, the percentage of yeshiva students among Hasidic men over 25 years old was 6 percent (Berman, 1998: 19). Although the figure is presumably higher among the Lithuanian population of Montreal, it illuminates a clear and basic fact: the percentage of yeshiva students among Haredi men is immeasurably lower in North America than in Israel.

The relatively low proportion of Haredi men over twenty-five years old who attend yeshivas and kolels in the United States does not mean that the percentage of Haredi men who attend such institutes of religious studies before reaching this age is small. Many American Haredi men fill the yeshivas and attend the kolels for several years after they marry. However, American

Haredi yeshiva students do not extend their full-time religious studies; after several years of study, they enter the labor market to support their families and achieve an acceptable American standard of living. Few men past the age of thirty remain in yeshivas instead of joining the labor force.

To gauge the various aspects of a possible accelerated movement of Israeli Haredi men into the labor market, I visited the New York area to find out what was being done in this regard in the two main sectors of the Ashkenazi Haredi population - the Hasidic and the Lithuanian. Yeshiva students in the United States are not liable to military service. They are free to decide how much time to devote to full-time religious studies, when to join the labor force, and how to train themselves for the transition. I also wanted to assess the attitudes of rabbis and yeshiva heads toward the movement from the yeshiva to the workplace as well as the differences among Haredi groups and social strata. I was interested in charting the various routes of entry into the labor market that yeshiva students choose, and the institutional settings that enable yeshiva students to make the transition.

In this survey, the Haredi population in the New York area serves as a laboratory of sorts for examining the patterns that yeshiva students follow when they join the labor force. I realize that the conditions under which they live do not include compulsory military service. However, to some extent, similar conditions could come to prevail in Israel if the relevant legislation is passed. Moreover, the findings in the New York survey could be of some relevance for a sizable segment of the Israeli 'society of scholars' currently exempt from military service, as described above. In this sense, their situation is not significantly different from that of their American counterparts. Yet, despite their exemptions, many of the former remain full-time religious scholars and avoid joining the labor force.

It is my view that the "New York laboratory" can allow Israeli policymakers to examine the patterns that will develop in Israel among yeshiva students entering the labor market. By familiarizing themselves with these patterns, policymakers in the public and private sectors will be able to map out the policy measures required to facilitate the integration of former full-time yeshiva and kolel students into the Israeli economy.

1 The New York Study

The Nature of the Study

The New York survey of the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace among Haredi men is partially based on conversations with the staffs of institutes of vocational and higher education as well as with researchers knowledgeable about Haredi society in the United States. I spoke with staff members of a number of yeshivas as well as with yeshiva and kollel students. However, most of my interviews were with young Haredi men in one stage or another of finding their place in the labor market. Some were students at institutes for vocational training or academic studies, some had already entered the labor market. The interviews were open-ended and unstructured - free-flowing conversations focusing on the relevant issues. The interviewees were asked to talk about themselves in the context of their studies at these institutions, the conditions that prompted them to terminate their full-time religious studies, and the factors that caused them to act as they had. They were asked about the involvement of their rabbi or yeshiva head in the decision to cut down on religious studies and take their first steps toward acquiring a non-religious occupation. They were also asked to state what considerations prompted them to choose the particular occupation for which they were studying and the institute of vocational training or higher education which they were attending. I asked them whether they continued to combine general and religious studies. They were also asked for their impressions of their peers - yeshiva students as such and especially members of their study group or class - in regard to these issues.

The survey is based on data and information derived from many sources. Here I note several individuals who shared their time and knowledge with me and gave me a glimpse into a world that I had not previously known. With their assistance, I was able to fill in the general contours of the relationship between

the yeshiva world, on the one hand, and the labor market and related training requirements, on the other, among the Haredi population of New York.

Several of these sources are affiliated with the academic institution at which I was a guest researcher in May-June 2000 - the Center for Judaic Studies, Graduate and University Center, City University of New York (CUNY). A few deserve special mention: Samuel Heilman, Professor of Sociology at Queens College; William Helmreich, Professor of Sociology at City College; Professor Egon Mayer, Director of the Judaic Studies Center and Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College. Three other colleagues, who are well versed in various aspects of American social policy and practice, assisted me as well. In the matter of welfare payments, I spoke with Professor Julian Wolpert of Princeton University. To acquaint myself with the educational systems of New York State and their regulations, I consulted with Professor Saul B. Cohen, former president of Queens College and currently chairman of the New York State High Education Commission's Board of Regents for matters of education and higher learning. I discussed the behavior of Haredi organizations vis-à-vis the various levels of government administration –local, state and federal - with Dr. Hune Margulies, who explored Haredi society for his Ph.D. dissertation and has been active in Haredi society as a consultant.

To track the yeshiva-to-work transition, I interviewed different people at various stages of the process. The first station was the setting of Talmudic learning, the yeshiva. For this purpose, I visited several of the largest and most important yeshivas in America. At the Beth Midrash Govoha yeshiva in Lakewood, New Jersey, I talked to the yeshiva director, Rabbi Aaron Kotler; one of the presidents of the yeshiva, Rabbi Gedalia G. Weinberger; the registrar, Rabbi Ya'akov Burstyn; Rabbi Eliezer Goldstein, who is in charge of placing graduates in teaching positions in the new kolels founded in recent years across the United States; and Rabbi Rothenberg, chief editor at the Mishnat Rabbi Aaron Institute, which specializes in the publication of religious books. I also interviewed several students at the Lakewood yeshiva. At the Mir yeshiva in Brooklyn, I spoke with one of the yeshiva directors, Rabbi Pinhos Hecht, and with several students. At Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore, I spoke with the head of the kolel, Rabbi Elazar Neugarten, and with several students, some enrolled in the yeshiva and others in the adjoining kolel. At the Hasidic Satmar yeshiva center in Williamsburg, I spoke with the director of the yeshiva, Rabbi Yaakov Shimon Cohen. I also

spoke with Rabbi Aaron Friedman, managing director of the editorial board of the Satmar newspaper, *Der Yid*.

A second stop in the transition to the labor market were the institutions that train yeshiva students for work. There are two types of institutions in this category: for vocational training and for higher education. First I shall list the people with whom I spoke at the institutes of vocational training. These also provide their students with job placement services. At the COPE Institute, I spoke with various people - most notably the principal, Rabbi Yerachmiel Barash, and Moshe Borenstein. I also spoke with teachers and students at the Institute; the latter were more than happy to discuss this new turn of events in their lives. COPE was established under the auspices of Agudath Israel of America. At Machon L'Parnassa (lit. "Livelihood Institute") in Boro Park, Brooklyn, I had a long conversation with the principal, Esther Braun. Machon L'Parnassa operates under the auspices of the Touro academic network and is attended mainly by Hasidic men. At PMES - Professional Management and Employment Services - a vocational-training and job placement center in Lakewood, New Jersey, that also operates under the auspices of Agudath Israel of America to promote employment and vocational training among Haredi men in the New York area, I spoke with Rabbi Yehiel Sakies, the director of the Lakewood office of the organization, and with Rabbis Binyamin Babad and Aaron Schindler, who run the organization's office in Brooklyn. I also had a telephone conversation with Aryeh Kranz, former director of the office in Lakewood. At the Help Employment Center of the Satmar yeshiva in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, I spoke with the director of the office, Rabbi Isaac Brauner.

I visited several academic institutions attended by young Haredi men. To acquaint myself with the multi-institutional academic network of Touro, I had a long talk with the president, Dr. Bernard Lander; his assistant, Rabbi Elihu Marcus; Professor Arthur Kruger, dean of the network's school for graduate studies; Dr. Robert Goldschmidt, dean of students at the Touro College campus in Flatbush, Brooklyn, which offers undergraduate studies for Haredi men and women; Professor Barry Bressler, dean for business administration at the Flatbush campus; Carol Rosenbaum, who deals with financial assistance at the Flatbush campus; and teachers and students at the campus.

At Brooklyn College, part of the CUNY network of colleges, I conversed with officials at the Office of the Registrar dealing with the admission of Haredi students there and with Professor Jonathan Helfand of the Center for Jewish

Studies and Professor Mervin Verbit of the Department of Sociology, who coordinates studies in Israel for Brooklyn College students. At Yeshiva University, I spoke with the president, Dr. Norman Lamm; the vice-president, Rabbi Robert Hirt, and several students. To explore various aspects of primary and secondary education, I had lengthy telephone conversations with Professor Alvin I. Schiff of the Yeshiva University College of Education.

The transition from the yeshiva world to the labor market ends at the workplace itself. I spoke mainly with yeshiva graduates who worked in the Greater New York City area. Several deserve special mention: sales personnel in a number of Brooklyn stores, workers in the diamond center on 47th Street in Manhattan, and employees of B&H, a large camera and optical instruments store in Manhattan. I wish to note the frankness and sincerity that I encountered among a large majority of interviewees in this group of former yeshiva and kolel students, who were willing to describe the circumstances that prompted them to join the labor force. Two managers at B&H, Mr. Hirsh and Mr. Bagel, gave me a detailed description of the process of recruiting and training yeshiva graduates for work in their establishment. To assess the integration of Hasidic men in vocational-training and job situations, I spoke with Mr. Abraham Heschel of Boro Park, Brooklyn.

After I completed the first draft of the study, several authorities on Haredi society in Israel read it and offered their remarks: Professor Menachem Friedman of the Department of Sociology at Bar-Ilan University; Professor Yosseph Shilhav of the Department of Geography at Bar-Ilan University; Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg of the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem; and Shahar Ilan, an *Ha'aretz* correspondent on issues related to Haredi society in Israel.

I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to everyone who helped me understand the patterns of transition from yeshiva to work place among American Haredi men and the significance of these patterns for Haredi society in Israel. They shared knowledge and wisdom gathered in the course of many years. However, I wish to emphasize that responsibility for the hypotheses, generalizations, comments and conclusions set forth in the study is mine alone. My gratitude does not imply a connection between the above- mentioned individuals and specific data or views.

This is also the opportunity to express my gratitude to the Haredi teachers, principals, students, and employees who treated me graciously and welcomed me to their community and institutions as a desired guest. I wish to note, in

particular, the students with whom I spoke at yeshivas and kolels, vocational-training institutes and colleges, workplaces, homes, and public places. I confess that, owing to preconceived notions, their openness initially took me by surprise. However, I quickly learned that yeshiva students in the New York area take their breadwinning responsibility very seriously and are willing to further any effort, including research that will help yeshiva students in Israel solve the problem of earning a living.

Main Findings and Lessons

The following is a concise summary of the main findings and lessons of the New York study:

Differences between Hasidic and Lithuanian Communities

One of the most noteworthy findings in the survey is the distinct difference between Hasidic and Lithuanian communities in the United States in terms of joining the labor force. Hasidic men spend a short period of time in the yeshiva, marry young, and promptly go to work. The structure of studies in their schools leaves many of them inadequately equipped with basic skills in English, mathematics, and the sciences. Most enter the labor market directly and find rather poor-paying jobs as unskilled workers. Lithuanians, on the other hand, invest more time in their studies, do not rush into marriage at the age of 19-21 like Hasidic men, remain in the yeshiva for two or three years after marriage, and then join the labor force. Some Lithuanians continue with full-time religious study for several more years and go to work in their late twenties. Those with relatively affluent parents and in-laws can afford to prolong full-time religious study for an even longer time. Unlike most Hasidic men, Lithuanians acquire training of various sorts in academic or vocational institutes, which enables them to find well-paying jobs as skilled workers. Because of these differences, the two main Haredi groups in the United States occupy different rungs on the occupational and income ladders. Many Hasidic households are below the poverty line, whereas many Lithuanian households belong to the socio-economic middle class, as can be seen from data on their respective main places of residence in the New York area. (Heilman, 1999: 24-27). It is difficult to judge whether these differences between Hasidic and Lithuanian men in the U.S. are fully reflected among Haredi men in Israel.

Lithuanian pupils who attend the Haredi educational system in Israel lack basic skills as do Hasidic ones; the Israeli system does not as a rule imbue basic skills with the thoroughness of American Lithuanian primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, Hasidic men in Israel also spend long periods in yeshivas because of the threat of military service, and this pattern has already become entrenched among the Hasidic population in Israel as a way of life. If and when the threat of military service in Israel is removed, students in Hasidic yeshivas should not be expected to enter the labor market with the eagerness that Hasidic men in the United States have demonstrated. Evidently, however, the percentage of Hasidic yeshiva students who get jobs will exceed the percentage of Lithuanians who do so.

From Yeshiva to Work place: At What Age?

American yeshiva students join the labor force gradually. In each age group, there are some who terminate their full-time yeshiva studies and enter the labor market. Hasidic men do so in their early twenties; Lithuanians throughout their twenties, starting at the age of 23-24. Their specific age depends on various factors: economic circumstances, vocational and academic training programs, and, of course, the Lithuanian sect to which the yeshiva student belongs, which influences the duration of his full-time religious studies. Presumably, the age differences in joining the labor force will exist among Israeli Haredi men as well. The Tal Commission recommended that yeshiva students enter a “year of decision” at the age of twenty-three. This arrangement would seem appropriate mainly for Lithuanians. It is worth examining whether Hasidic men in Israel would be willing to join the labor force at an earlier age than that recommended by the Tal Commission.

How the Labor Market is Entered

The American Haredi population moves into the labor market by several routes:

- As *educators* in Haredi schools, where Hasidic teachers serve mainly in the early primary grades and Lithuanian ones in senior positions, including teaching positions in yeshivas.
- As *providers of religious services*, Hasidic men serve as kashrut (kosher food) inspectors and in similar capacities and Lithuanians in rabbinical and religious-court positions.

- Through direct entry into the labor market, usually in *unskilled jobs in trade and services*. Hasidic men who take this route do so after a year or two of yeshiva study. Starting with these unskilled jobs, some move up to skilled positions over time, after completing an apprenticeship. Lithuanians who take this route do so after five to seven years of yeshiva study. Usually they move into management positions in family businesses.
- Through *vocational training*. This is prevalent only among a small portion of the Lithuanian and Hasidic populations and operates along two tracks - one accelerated and the other institutionalized. The former track is prevalent among Hasidic men. A small group of yeshiva students will take a short basic course in computers (several weeks long) and then finds jobs in the field with the hope of obtaining on-the-job training or continuing to study at home. The institutional track involves recognized vocational-training facilities. In the New York area, such facilities, existing primarily for the Haredi population, reach enrollments in the hundreds. They operate in a Haredi ambiance (separation of men and women, appropriate attire, and a schedule that takes account of Jewish observances). Study takes place in the evening so that students can continue their religious studies or work for a living during the day.
- Through *academic education*. This route is chosen by quite a few Lithuanians. It has two tracks, one of which, first developed in the 1930s, combines yeshiva study during the day with night school classes in a college. The second track is acceptable to a smaller segment of this population group, mainly those leaving the more rigid Lithuanian yeshivas established by Holocaust survivors wishing to revive the Lithuanian yeshivas that had been annihilated. Since these yeshivas and kolels do not permit students to attend college concurrently, college studies are started after the years of religious study.

Israel's Haredi population considers the first three routes acceptable, especially work as providers of religious services or unskilled workers in trade and services. Movement to the labor market through the route of vocational training is just beginning to take place, though at an accelerated pace. Academic training in its present state is largely unacceptable, though some thought is given to develop a specialized track for Haredi students.

Target Occupations

Hasidic men tend to find unskilled jobs when they first go to work, though some do try their luck in computer-related fields. In recent years, Hasidic men have become increasingly aware of the need to escape from the dead end of unskilled work and have been seeking ways to move into “new-economy” occupations. Lithuanians, in contrast, are already strongly represented in computer and hi-tech occupations. Bookkeeping, business administration, and finance are also common occupations for members of this group. The Lithuanian invasion of these occupations has been propelled by their high level of secondary schooling and the common practice of combining yeshiva and college study. The American Lithuanian population has rapidly created a large pool of talented workers in new fields demanding highly qualified personnel. The lesson for Israel is that young Haredi men, currently enrolled in yeshivas, constitute a fairly large reserve of manpower that may be enlisted in the new jobs being created in Israel. This pool is especially large in the two largest Haredi concentrations in Israel - in Jerusalem and in Bene Beraq. Both concentrations are located in large hi-tech centers where skilled workers are much in demand in recent years. The availability of Haredi-skilled manpower in Jerusalem could affect the future of hi-tech industry there.

The Vocational-Training Route

The immediate challenge for Israel is to establish a vocational-training network. The American experience shows that special vocational-training institutes for the Haredi population are needed and that the existing vocational-training network does not meet the cultural demands of this population group. The first steps taken in this respect in Israel show how important it is to have separate institutes for the Haredi population. Institutes such as the Haredi Center for Vocational Training, which operates in Jerusalem, Bene Beraq, and several other Haredi population centers, have recently come into being (Sheleg, 2000: 153-154; Oded Hermoni, “Not for Heaven’s Sake: Haredi Men Discover Hi-Tech,” *Ha’aretz*, September 10, 2000). These institutes will need support and guidance from state institutions to discharge their functions properly. However, it may be possible to create partial Haredi settings within vocational-training institutes that serve all Israeli population groups. Separate classes for yeshiva students could meet Haredi requirements and allow existing institutes to provide vocational training for yeshiva students who are heading into the labor market.

The Academic Route

The biggest problem is to propagate the academic route to the labor market among yeshiva graduates. Israel's yeshivas, Lithuanian and Hasidic alike, are staunchly opposed to academic education. Indeed, at present no Ashkenazi Haredi group considers academic study acceptable. Haredi men do not even avail themselves of the facilities at Bar-Ilan University, an institution run by religious people. Recently leaders in the Shas movement have spoken of establishing a Haredi college (Sheleg, 2000: 154). The American experience could inspire Haredi leaders to re-examine the Haredi aversion to academic studies. Regulations in the public sector requiring applicants for senior positions to hold an academic degree, and similar demands in the private sector, could prompt Haredi men, including those leaving the yeshivas, to seek an academic education - if only to meet formal requirements.

The Need to Reinforce Basic Skills

The Haredi population in the New York area exhibits conspicuous differences in the level of basic skills inculcated at the primary and secondary levels. The Hasidic communities provide boys with minimal instruction in such basic general subjects as arithmetic, science, and English, whereas most Lithuanian schools teach them competently. In Israel, the situation in the Haredi population at large resembles the one in Hasidic schools in the United States. To enable yeshiva students in Israel to enter the labor force by way of vocational training and academic schooling, general studies in Haredi schools must be reinforced. For men who have attended yeshivas and kolels for many years and wishing to receive vocational training or academic schooling and afterwards join the labor force, a system of preparatory programs should be established to remedy their deficiencies in basic skills.

Separate Facilities for Men and Women

Vocational-training and academic institutes in the New York area catering to Haredi men maintain strict separation between men and women, with the exception of one institute where external pressure (from the courts) has made the separation less than total. Separation is accomplished in three ways, in descending order of preference: separate buildings, separate time frames in the same building, and separate classes concurrently in the same building. Any policy aiming to induce yeshiva students in Israel to enroll in such institutions must treat the matter of separation as a basic condition.

Avoidance of the Humanities and Jewish Studies

Vocational-training and even academic institutes in the New York area wishing to serve the Haredi population tend to refrain from teaching the Humanities - such as history, philosophy, and art - as ordinary American colleges do. They also avoid Jewish studies. Such studies clash with the Haredi worldview and are perceived as a threat to it. The Israeli Haredi population will certainly maintain a similar if not more rigid position.

Accelerated and Phased Training

By the time yeshiva students move into the labor market they are married and have children. They wish to acquire their training as fast as possible. For this reason, they prefer to attend institutes that will allow them to start earning a living quickly. Some prefer to complete their training in stages in order to find a job after the first phase.

Financial Assistance

To allow yeshiva students to receive training in vocational-training or academic institutes before they join the labor force, they must be helped with their tuition and related expenses. The United States has a well-developed system of financial assistance for vocational training and academic study. The system is also available to yeshiva students. Since the Haredi population in Israel is for the most part short on financial resources, a system of tuition support should be built. The availability of such a system could convince many men wishing to enter the labor market to take time out to acquire skills in big-demand occupations and thereby earn more and make a greater contribution to the Israeli economy. If they cannot afford tuition, the process will be nipped in the bud. Financial assistance will also be required for on-the-job training. Employers should be encouraged to train new workers on the job by being offered financial inducements in the form of part payment of wages for a predefined period of time, just as employers are encouraged to hire the unemployed or disabled.

Vocational Guidance and Job Placement

The New York area offers several examples of employment agencies run by professionally trained Haredi staffs for Haredi jobseekers. Yeshiva students about to enter the labor market require considerable guidance and placement services. They are ignorant about how the workaday world operates and are

not familiar with society at large. They are afraid to step out of their yeshivas into an alien world and have no job experience. For all these reasons, they require guidance as they take their first steps in the labor market. Vocational guidance is one of the most important services that should be made available to forward-looking yeshiva students seeking a job. It is true that such services are currently available to one and all, but since yeshiva students belong to a singular cultural group, services geared especially to them, staffed by people familiar with the customs and needs of Haredi society, should be considered.

Part-Time Work during Yeshiva Studies

In numerous conversations with yeshiva students in the New York area, I found that many hold part-time jobs while studying to help support themselves and, in the main, to help their own parents, who support them while they attend their yeshivas. Most of this part-time work takes place *bein ha-zemanim* (“between semesters”). Some students also do odd jobs in free hours during the day. This issue should be considered in Israel as well, mainly in light of the possibility that local yeshiva students will engage in part-time work, which will draw them toward work as a way of life.

Separate Workplaces for Haredi Men

A general lesson binding together several of the issues discussed in this survey relates to the marked Haredi preference for separate milieus. Haredi men - in Israel and in the U.S. - prefer to live in their own neighborhoods, educate their children in their own schools, worship in their own synagogues, and attend their own yeshivas. The same can be said about the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace. Yeshiva students prefer to attend their own vocational-training institutes, to receive advanced training in their own academic institutes, to utilize their own job-placement services, and to work in their own workplaces. The expression “their own” does not necessarily mean ownership of the institutions and workplaces; rather, it refers to the way things are done there. Anyone who wishes to ease the transition of yeshiva students to the labor market should offer a system of training, schooling, placement, and work that has a large element of Haredi exclusivity. The Israeli army, too, should continuously examine the practicality of this principle in order to encourage yeshiva students to consider military service under conditions amenable to their Haredi culture.

2 Between Two Norms: Religious Study and Breadwinning

The general picture that emerged from my interviews and from the literature points to two parallel modes of normative behavior among Haredi men in the New York area and, evidently, elsewhere in North America. One conforms to the time-honored Haredi norm of encouraging those with the aptitude for it to engage in religious study in the yeshiva and kolel. The other is the norm of supporting a family and providing it not only with basic needs but also with the standard of living common in the United States and particularly among American Jews. These two norms - full-time religious study and breadwinning - coexist. Neither has prevailed over the other, though from the ideological standpoint the religious-study norm has achieved primacy in the scale of Haredi social values, especially in recent decades.

The Different Camps of the Yeshiva World

The norm of religious study has deep roots in Jewish religious culture. It has persisted throughout Jewish history in varying degrees of intensity (Katz, 1963: 222-230; Friedman, 1991: 7-13). In the course of the nineteenth century, this norm became widespread in Eastern Europe and, in particular, in the cultural world of Lithuanian Jewry. It created an institutionalized system of yeshivas and kolels bolstered by such social norms as preference for marriage with outstanding religious scholars and even the willingness of in-laws to support the scholar and his new family in every possible way.

This norm made only limited inroads in North America in the decades preceding World War II. Haredi Jews did not come to North America *en masse*. They preferred to remain in the centers of Haredi Jewish culture that

had developed over centuries in Europe. America was viewed as a *treife medine* (meaning an “unkosher” or “unholy” country). The few Haredi immigrants who reached the shores of America began to set up schools with Jewish curricula, first at the primary level and later on at the secondary level. Yeshivas developed gradually and on a very small scale. The Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva, today part of Yeshiva University under the name of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), was the pioneer. Established in New York in 1896, it taught English as a second language (Helmreich, 1999: 18). After World War I, students began to demand the inclusion of general studies in the curriculum to assure themselves the skills that American social conditions required (Helmreich, 1999: 21). In 1928, the new administration acceded to their demands after a struggle and established Yeshiva College, which included the Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva and departments for the liberal arts and the sciences like an ordinary American college. The more rigid Lithuanian Jewish population resisted this move, its leaders rejecting the idea of combining religious and general studies in a single institution. Thus, a rift developed between the two camps, the Modern Orthodox and the Haredi; the latter termed the new college a “viper’s nest of atheism and epicurianism” (Helmreich, 1999: 22). Yeshiva University, which in the meantime had emerged from the embryo of the new college, became a Modern Orthodox institution turning out scientists and rabbis. The more rigid element in Lithuanian Jewish society in the New York area went its own way and developed its own yeshivas on the basis of the secondary school system it had previously established. While this rift persisted, secondary schooling in the form of yeshiva high schools, which combined religious and general studies under the same roof, became commonplace in some Haredi neighborhoods in the New York area just as they did among the Modern Orthodox population. As early as 1970, for example, some 40 percent of inhabitants of areas densely populated by Haredi households, e.g., the Boro Park neighborhood of Brooklyn, sent their children to high schools where a general education was offered side by side with religious studies (Mayer, 1979: 55).

Flexible Haredi Yeshivas

In 1929, in response to the Yeshiva College crisis, Torah Vadaath High School, where a combination of religious and general subjects were taught, gave rise to Torah Vadaath Yeshiva, where only religious subjects were taught to high school graduates wishing to immerse themselves in religious studies for a protracted period of time. The creed of this yeshiva was that those not

intending to become providers of religious services or teachers of Jewish subjects should also receive religious instruction. Graduates were to become heads of households (*balebatim* in Yiddish and Hebrew) who continued to study the Talmud, lived full Jewish lives, and thereby set an example for their children (Helmreich, 1999: 29). If students at this yeshiva wished to acquire general knowledge preparatory to joining the labor force, they were allowed to enroll in evening classes at a college or vocational-training institute. Many of them attended nearby Brooklyn College. Thus, different approaches to the combination of religious and general studies developed in the two camps. The Modern Orthodox camp, as represented by Yeshiva University, allows both types of study to take place under a single roof, though with a break in scheduling - religious studies in the morning and general studies in the afternoons and evenings, on the model of the Lithuanian yeshiva high schools in the New York area. The second approach is what I call “flexible” Haredi for lack of an accepted term. Its yeshivas physically separate the two types of study and thus follow the norm that evolved in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in response to the challenge of the modern Enlightenment (Friedman, 1999: 12). Volozhin Yeshiva closed its doors in 1892 solely to avoid complying with the demand of the Russian authorities that it teach several subjects in the yeshiva setting (Friedman, 1991: 12-13; Helmreich, 1999: 11).

Over time, additional yeshivas joined the flexible Haredi camp represented by Torah Vadaath. Among those in the New York area, Rabbi Chaim Berlin Yeshiva in Brooklyn and Yeshivat Chafetz Chaim in Queens stand out. Both of them grew out of existing yeshiva high schools offering a combination of religious and general studies. However, this camp received its biggest boost after the Ner Israel Rabbinical College was opened in Baltimore. The institution was founded by Rabbi Ya’akov Yitzchak Ruderman in early 1933 as a yeshiva (i.e., not as an outgrowth of a yeshiva high school) and allowed a combination of religious studies on its own campus and general studies in one of the colleges in the Baltimore area. It took this course because Rabbi Ruderman understood the growing desire among American Jews to acquire a college education and a higher level of professional training. He recognized the yeshiva students’ need to prepare themselves for the future as breadwinners. In his view, the more the norm of academic study became ingrained among American Jews, including growing segments of the Haredi population, the more important it was to allow yeshiva students to attend college simultaneously. This was especially important for young Jews who

wished to take up medicine, law, or other liberal professions. Much of their professional academic training was to take place at the master's level and begin only after they completed undergraduate studies in the specific field. A leading figure at Ner Israel explained Rabbi Ruderman's views to me. His purpose in combining both kinds of study was to nurture religious knowledge and to shape a Haredi "worldview" (*hashkofe*) in the sheltered environment of the yeshiva while allowing students to acquire productive and useful skills. In this way, Rabbi Ruderman affirmed the new trend that had set in among Haredi men.

It is worth noting that, especially after World War II, when academic education became commonplace in American society, both Modern Orthodox and flexible Haredi yeshivas, each in their own way, allowed for the combination of religious and general studies. Students in institutions of both camps could prepare to enter the labor market while immersed in yeshiva study. For the most part, graduates could join the labor force at an early age, even before marriage. The bone of contention, apart from theological differences, had to do with the framework of these two types of study. The flexible Haredi system insisted on physical separation. The yeshiva, its proponents believed, should be off limits to all general studies. However, they did not overly object to the simultaneous pursuit of general and religious studies, as long as it was done in different places. The Modern Orthodox approach chose to integrate the two types of study under a single roof, as at Yeshiva University.

Later on, especially in the 1960s, the doctrine of integration made further headway in the flexible Haredi system of yeshivas. Students in yeshivas affiliated with the flexible Haredi system and, above all, their parents insisted on their having the option of attending a college and yeshiva concurrently. Yeshiva heads, realizing that many of their students had also enrolled in colleges in the New York area, acceded to the parents' demand, with the proviso that students devote most of their time to religious study in the yeshiva (Mayer, 1979: 90-91). This compromise allowed the yeshiva heads to maintain their positions of authority in the community and gave young flexible Haredi men the chance to prepare for a working life inside or outside the narrow confines of the Haredi economy.

Rigid Haredi Yeshivas

In the period during and immediately after World War II, a third system of yeshivas came into being in the United States. The first and leading yeshiva in this system is the Beth Midrash Govoha, located in the town of Lakewood in southeastern New Jersey. Rabbi Aaron Kotler, who had fled from Europe two years previously, established the Lakewood yeshiva in 1943. His aim was to create a yeshiva where simultaneous college studies would not be tolerated. The basic idea of total commitment was predicated on the norm of full-time religious studies for which the pre-Holocaust yeshivas in Lithuania and northern Poland were noted. The attempt to recreate the old Lithuanian yeshiva model in America, under modern conditions, was a bold act, most likely inspired by the impending disaster of the Holocaust. The yeshiva heads who reached British Palestine and later Israel during and after the Holocaust were also driven by the goal of revitalizing the yeshiva world that had been destroyed (Friedman, 1991: 47-48). Rabbi Kotler was joined by Rabbi Abraham Kalmanowicz, who had extricated the Mir Yeshiva community from Europe and, after a period of exile in Japan (Kobe) and China (Shanghai), brought it to the United States and reestablished it in Brooklyn. Eventually, additional yeshivas of this persuasion were founded in New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere. The establishment of new but more rigid Lithuanian yeshivas in the United States, on the Lakewood and Mir models, represented more than an effort to revitalize the yeshiva world as a basis for the formation of a religious elite. It also sought to negate the older flexible Haredi yeshiva system that had pioneered the coexistence of religious and general studies, by means of which students could join the labor force at an earlier stage in their lives. It is noteworthy that the founders of the two disparate streams in the Lithuanian yeshiva world, Rabbis Kotler and Ruderman, were relatives (their wives were cousins) and graduates of the Slobodka Yeshiva. However, when they reached the United States, at different times, each adopted different views about the propriety of combining religious and general studies.

The new “rigid” Haredi yeshivas, as I call them here, again for lack of an accepted term, acted to propagate the old norm of exclusive and full-time religious study among American Haredi men. A similar process seems to have set in after World War II in other Western countries, including Israel. The establishment of these yeshivas mainly fed off the wave of Haredi Holocaust refugees reaching the United States after World War II. They brought with them the norm of full-time religious study, which they had known before the

war. To sustain and expand the system, it was necessary to build yeshivas and kolels, establish fund-raising organs, and entrench the norm in various ways. One way was to encourage adolescent girls attending Haredi schools as well as women enrolled in Haredi teachers seminaries to marry yeshiva students, preferably a “prodigy” (*ilui*). Girls were urged to accept willingly and eagerly the fate that awaited the brides of such students: a life of penury unless the parents of both spouses, and especially the bride’s parents, could support them on a long-term basis. This custom, prevalent today among Haredi men in Israel, is also evident among Haredi men in North America in the rigid Haredi yeshiva system.

In the first twenty years after World War II, however, few Haredi men could live up to the norm of full-time religious study in the unbending way advocated by rabbis wishing to revitalize the traditions of the destroyed Lithuanian yeshivas. The Haredi Holocaust refugees who immigrated to the United States arrived destitute and had to concern themselves with establishing an economic base. For many, the norm of breadwinning tipped the scales and led them to look for work. Only a few spent years in full-time religious study. Over time, however, the number of Haredi men who prolonged the period of yeshiva study rose. The growing affluence of the Haredi population allowed the network of Lithuanian yeshivas to expand. Now young Haredi men could enroll in a large and diverse system of yeshivas and kolels with their many facilities, teachers, and stipends for married students and fathers who wished to continue studying full time (Heilman, 1995: 153). With the outset of Haredi prosperity, many Haredi households, affluent and even ordinary, regularly made contributions to yeshivas, allowing facilities to multiply further. This relative economic prosperity also allowed a growing number of second-generation Haredi men to devote years to full-time religious study and defer their entry into the labor market. The first generation increasingly commanded the economic resources to support this practice. As the norm of full-time religious study spread, it became increasingly acceptable among parents; who were more than willing to have their sons or sons-in-law devote all of their time to religious study and to support the young couples and their children. For a growing number of Haredi parents who had sent their children to academic institutions in the past, yeshiva studies climbed past college studies on the scale of social prestige. In the course of my encounters with the Haredi population in the New York area, I met academically trained parents who quite willingly supported sons attending yeshivas exclusively for many years, as long as they could afford to do so.

Hasidic Yeshivas

The influx of Holocaust refugees to the United States also included members of various Hasidic sects. They too eventually set up yeshivas in their new places of residence. However, Hasidic men have never equaled the commitment of the Lithuanian counterparts to years of full-time religious study. Neither have they accepted the norm of a general education. Hasidic men enter the labor market at an early age and only a few vacillate between work and full-time religious study. In most of the Hasidic population, the cultural preference is clear-cut, abetted by a fundamental economic fact: many Hasidic families live below the poverty line (Heilman, 1999: 24-27). Because Hasidic men marry at an early age (18-19), they spend less time in the yeshiva. After marriage, they immediately move to a kolel to continue their full-time religious studies. However, this phase is also relatively brief - a year or two, and in some cases less. It is true that some Hasidic men, those who seek careers as providers of religious services, attend kolels for lengthy periods. Many of them are offspring of rabbis (*rebbishe kinder*) or prodigies aiming at a rabbinical career or embracing the norm of full-time religious study in the fullest sense. However, they are a minority among Hasidic men. Early marriage means the early birth of children. Wives are no longer available for work after their first children are born. At this stage, Hasidic men join the labor force, not out of choice but because they must support their families. The large majority of them enter the labor market at the age of 20-22.

The Role of the Welfare System

The American welfare system, which became more refined in the 1960s and 1970s, is another important resource allowing Haredi men to embrace the norm of full-time religious study. Income maintenance, rent subsidies, and tuition assistance for yeshiva study are the most conspicuous examples of welfare resources that help yeshiva students maintain their young families at a minimal living standard, over and beyond parental support and the wife's paycheck. To enable students to qualify for tuition assistance, many yeshivas have obtained recognition as scholastic institutes under federal criteria. Indeed, Haredi activists, like activists in other groups, have learned to use the welfare system for their own purposes, and especially for the needs of the yeshivas, in direct and indirect ways. Each year yeshiva students apply, under the auspices of their respective yeshivas, for the fellowships, loans and subsidies available

to the rest of the American population. In Israel, such reliance on the state welfare system is much more elaborate and massive, with certain provisions specifically enacted for yeshiva and kolel students, but in principle the American yeshiva population also relies on the state for support.

Be this as it may, the enlistment of the welfare state to support yeshiva students cannot match growing needs. The 1990s saw increasing enrollment in yeshivas of the rigid Haredi system that prevent students from attending college while studying there. This phenomenon has become more marked from year to year as additional young Haredi men take up long-term and full-time religious study in kolels of the rigid Haredi type. Observers of American Jewish religious life have noticed an increasing “move to the right” in recent years, i.e., a stricter attitude to religious life with regard to observance and the style and content of study. As the move to the right proceeds, some yeshivas have taken a stricter view of simultaneous study at colleges or vocational-training institutes. This has become more perceptible in recent years. As one of my interviewees told me, Rabbi Chaim Berlin Yeshiva in New York and Yeshivat Torah Vadaath considered stopping college studies, but pressure from students and parents forced them to back down. The students, however, were permitted to attend only Touro College, which observes the rules of Haredi culture, and even then within limits: after several years of full-time religious study at the yeshiva, only three times a week, and only in the evenings. All these measures have worked to militate against the possibility of a swift and easy entry into the labor market at a more advanced stage, when the student is married and has several children to support.

Pressures on the Norm of Religious Study

As against the increasing enrollment in yeshivas and kolels and the upswing in the extent of full-time religious study in the New York area, the norm of breadwinning still remains prevalent among American Haredi men. After several years in the yeshiva and kolel, students leave to learn a trade or find a job. In other words, although more men enroll in institutes of higher religious education and spend more time there, full-time religious study among American Haredi men comes to an end at a relatively early age in comparison with Israel.

Growing Concern and Mounting Hardship

The upsurge in enrollment in rigid Haredi yeshivas has led to a buildup of concern and pressures among parents. Several questions have begun to be asked in Haredi society and were also raised in my interviews: Can a Haredi population living under the norm of full-time religious study sustain it in the long term? Can such a population continue to maintain the supremacy of this norm in the long run? Can the increase in the number and percentage of yeshiva students in the past twenty years, though very different from the figures for Israel, be maintained into the next generation? Can the current generation of veteran religious scholars induce the next generation to behave similarly? Parents and rabbis are preoccupied by these questions. Some place their trust in God, believing that He will find a way to make it possible for the next generation to sustain the pattern of full-time religious study. Others are seeking ways to deal with the issue now. Parents and wives would like to see a new equilibrium established between the two norms. Rabbis have also been giving some thought to the matter. Thus, the length of yeshiva study among Lithuanians has been challenged at both the economic and normative level, turning the entire question into a public issue.

In the early 1990s, Haredi men who did not take up “new-economy” occupations were in dire straits. The Haredi population suffered from a lower per capita income than the rest of American Jewry (Heilman, 1995: 154). Some parents were less able than before to support the families of their adult children attending yeshivas full time. Furthermore, the American welfare economy experienced resource cutbacks and threatened crackdown on non-participants in the labor force. The new “Wisconsin” school of thought spread across the United States and came to New York - home to a large Haredi population - being embraced by the municipal administration under Mayor Rudolph Giuliani. According to this doctrine, the unemployed should be forced to work to reduce the percentage of jobless people on the welfare rolls. Most of the proposed jobs are in occupations that Haredi men wish to avoid. This policy has aggravated the tension besetting Haredi men living under the economic burden of educating their children in the community’s own institutions. In the clash between the norms of breadwinning and full-time religious study, it is the former that has been revitalized.

The clash between the two norms is thus partly a function of the economic duress brought on by the increase in kollel students dedicating themselves to years of full-time religious studies. The financial resources of some parents and in-laws are insufficient to meet the burden. It may have been possible to provide for the young married couple when the husband was studying in the kollel and the wife was able to earn a meager living. But when a growing number of children are added to the young family, expenses increase and the young mother has to quit her job, the grandparents find it hard to foot the bill. The problem is exacerbated when the same young couple, now in their forties and without a decent income, cannot support their own adult children.

The situation of parents with several daughters is especially grim, for they must provide them with a dowry. A kollel-student father who does not earn enough to support his own family and has not accrued property or savings through inheritance cannot marry off his daughters if he cannot meet the dowry obligation firmly entrenched in Haredi society. In my conversations, I often heard of young women who cannot find husbands among yeshiva students because their fathers cannot offer what the Haredi population calls the “full set-up” or even a partial set-up. The worst off are young women in the more rigid Lithuanian population centers where religious studies are prolonged, such as the Lakewood community.

Most young Haredi women do manage to marry and establish families, but a growing number find themselves raising children under straitened economic circumstances. Indeed, the very fact that married Haredi men with children find jobs after a few years in the yeshiva and kollel is a reflection of the growing economic distress of recent years. Some do so with little enthusiasm; they make the move in response to economic realities and pressure and prodding from wives, parents, and, in the main, in-laws, who have had to bear the heavy burden of supporting their families. One even hears about this or that important rabbi or yeshiva head telling his students that the time has come to observe the basic religious precept of breadwinning “by the sweat of your brow.” One of the young Haredi men whom I interviewed reported this verbatim and rationalized his enrollment in a vocational-training institute on the grounds of wishing to honor this basic religious obligation. Thus it would seem that the Biblical account of Adam and Eve has been invoked of late to bolster the breadwinning norm as against the norm of full-time religious study. Another rationale for the norm of breadwinning (the Hebrew word for breadwinning, *parnassá*, is usually pronounced in its Yiddish form, *parnóssó*)

is the need to satisfy the basic needs of one's wife and children. When my interviewees expressed themselves in this spirit, I detected an undertone implying acceptance of responsibility: "It would be nice if I could continue learning, but unfortunately my parents and in-laws can't support us in the long term, so I have to make sure my family has *parnóssó*." This phrasing was invoked repeatedly as my respondents explained why they joined the labor force.

Material Aspirations

The norm of being a breadwinner is not restricted to the imperative of delivering a household from economic hardship. Young Haredi men in the United States have been caught up in the consumer culture that surrounds them, watching their American and especially Jewish neighbors enjoy a perceptibly rising standard of living, achieved largely "by the sweat of their brow". To attain this high standard of living for their families, young Haredi men must join the labor force in suitable occupations, many of which entail training and formal schooling. The wish to share in the consumer culture beyond the minimal level of "scraping-by" that typifies those who extend their yeshiva studies thus moves young Haredi men to change tracks, abandon the life of full-time study, and become breadwinners. A measure of material ambition therefore helps reinforce the breadwinning norm, prompting young Haredi men to consider moving from the yeshiva bench to the work bench. A former kolel student in the New York area who is studying computer programming told me that he had made the move after coming to know himself: "I'm a big spender. I'd love to have a big house, I like to eat well [indeed, he is somewhat stout-A.G.], and I want to be able to take my family to the mountains for summer vacations." He was referring to the Catskill Mountains, north of New York City, where Haredi families congregate at several resorts, perpetuating a long-time tradition among New York Jews. This somewhat materialistic student has similar aims for his children. He wishes to give them "everything they see that other children have." He is twenty-seven and has four children. Until recently he had been a full-time kolel student intending to keep to this career track. Then, however, "the children got to be too much," and under the new circumstances his festering doubts about his scholastic ability came to the fore. "I'll never be a great scholar anyway, so I'd better start providing for my family. I'm not such a diligent student as to doom myself and my family to a hard life." This is why he chose computer programming - an occupation that, he says, ensures a good income.

These remarks and the new career of this young man further show how material ambitions are helping to reinforce the norm of breadwinning vis-à-vis the norm of full-time religious studies among young kollel students. Material ambition, so fundamental to American culture, presented a challenge to the masses of Jewish immigrants of recent generations, and like other Americans, old and new, they became swept up by it (Heilman, 1995: 8-28). It was the main form of Americanization experienced by Jewish immigrants in America. For many, it meant less involvement in Jewish religious life, a transition to new religious frameworks (Conservative or Reform), a shift from religious to secular Judaism, and, in some cases, outright abandonment of Judaism and conversion to Christianity, the prevalent faith in the United States. Theirs was a time of anti-Jewish prejudice, resentment and hatred, coupled with discrimination in work, services, housing, and education - the very hub of participation in the consumer economy. Religious Jews suffered in particular, with employers pressing them to work on the Sabbath or lose their jobs.

Joining the labor force is not a novelty for American Haredi men. Those who immigrated to the U.S. after World War II, a time of economic prosperity and burgeoning of the American consumer culture labored day and night, first to satisfy basic needs and afterwards to expand consumption in their households. They passed their material ambition on to the second generation, which had greater opportunities for schooling and vocational training. Many Haredi households chose the consumer-culture path to Americanization. Over the years, however, there occurred, as mentioned, a shift toward the norm of full-time religious study, which spread among American Haredi men just as it did in Israel. Thus, the two norms have enjoyed a simultaneous revival. On the one hand, enrollment in yeshivas and kollels has increased in recent years, as one may surmise from the number of such institutions in the New York and other metropolitan areas. On the other hand, one may encounter many young Haredi men in the workplace or the institutes of higher education or vocational training. Banks, insurance companies, and similar businesses employ Haredi computer programmers, computer technicians, bookkeepers, and other professionals.

Even though the norm of religious study takes precedence over the norm of breadwinning in ideological terms, the latter has not been totally overshadowed, being treated as socially respectable and even important in many American Haredi circles. This coexistence of norms allows greater flexibility in the transition from yeshiva to work, either directly or after the

acquisition of vocational training or higher education. Many young Americans in various cultural milieus invest a great deal of time in study even if their studies are not directly linked to their future livelihoods. The American Haredi population largely shares this tendency. Like other population groups, it has created social conventions and institutional settings that facilitate the transition from full-time study to work, even though the former course still holds symbolic pride of place.

This coexistence of norms is reflected in the integration of both into the life cycle of the Haredi individual. Moving into the labor market does not mean a total divorce from the world of religious study. Haredi men who work do not abandon religious studies. Yeshiva men who have gotten jobs frequent their synagogues and *battei midrash* (study houses), to study in the morning and evening hours. My interviewees stressed this point repeatedly. For example, a young Hasid in computer graphics at an optics and electronics store noted that even a few hours of religious study a day are important. “I read somewhere that if you learn two to three hours a day it’s like a whole day in a kollel.” Thus, at the personal level, he resolved the dilemma of the clash between the religious-study norm and the livelihood norm. Indeed, he and his study partner learn at the *beit midrash* of his congregation between 8:30 and 10:30 in the evening. Despite joining the labor force, he managed to maintain a foothold in the world of religious study. For many Haredi men going to work does not necessarily mean divorcing themselves from religious studies. They strike a balance between the two.

3 Preparing to Enter the Labor Market

The Attitude of the Rabbis

In the Haredi world, *da'at Torah* - the views of rabbis (including Hasidic ones) - is crucial in all areas of life. New ideas and policies rise or fall depending on the imprimatur of rabbis, especially those of great stature and importance. The recommendations of the Tal Commission concerning the induction of yeshiva students into the army and even legislation in this matter - all intended to induce yeshiva students to enter the labor market - will prove useless if such rabbis, including yeshiva heads, raise objections and instruct students to remain in yeshivas and kolels even after the threat of induction is lifted. Consequently, it is worth citing remarks in the interviews about the attitudes of rabbis and yeshiva heads in the New York area toward employment among yeshiva students. My interviews with students and student affairs personnel at vocational-training institutes indicate that many rabbis and yeshiva heads understand that numerous Haredi men are poorly equipped to persevere in long-term full-time religious study and should be allowed to fulfill the breadwinning imperative. I discovered that former yeshiva students who had consulted or conversed with their rabbis or with teachers in their yeshivas about making this transition found an attentive ear and even received their blessings. Desire and intellectual ability are the litmus tests applied by religious authorities when they talk to students about becoming breadwinners. When the student himself says that he has little desire to remain in the kolel full time, that he is incapable of achieving excellence in his studies, and that he feels compelled to support his family, they do not press him to continue studying at any price; instead, they actually encourage him to act in accordance with his personal circumstances.

The rabbis' consent and encouragement in the matter of moving from the yeshiva to the workplace apparently involves an additional element. The

transition not only allows Haredi households to support themselves but may also serve to create an economic base for community support of the yeshivas. In one of my interviews, an Orthodox university official who is well versed in yeshiva affairs and comes into contact with yeshiva graduates who enrolled in his institution, told me that some yeshiva heads, encourage students to join the labor force as a long-term investment in creating an infrastructure of affluent benefactors. The phenomenon of college and university graduates maintaining long-term relationships with their alma maters - supporting them financially and even sending their children there - is widespread in the United States. This American tradition may have influenced American yeshivas, especially since it is also rooted in the history of the yeshiva world itself. The economic hardships that beset Haredi religious institutions, including yeshivas, has placed many of them under great pressure, prompting them to seek financial resources that will allow them to keep going despite growing needs (Heilman, 1995: 156). If yeshiva students join the labor force, they can eventually become an important internal, namely Haredi, source of support for the yeshivas.

Rabbinical consent to the transition to the workplace is the rule among Hasidic men, especially when the transition is direct and entails no vocational training. Those who leave full-time studies for jobs in sales, warehouses, or any other occupation that requires no prior general education obtain the consent of rabbis and teachers in Hasidic yeshivas, as a matter of course, and even their advice about the types of work suitable for young Hasidic men, lest they find themselves in inappropriate surroundings. Hasidic community leaders also grant their consent to short-term vocational training, outside the academic setting of a college as a means of preparing to join the labor force. At times, however, this consent is somewhat qualified to ensure that no clash with the Hasidic way of life occurs. Remarks I heard in various places indicate that some Hasidic men forgo consulting their rebbes to avoid a negative reply. Although specific institutions are sometimes banned, the main problem among Hasidic men, it would seem is related not to the attitude of the rebbe but to the prevailing attitude in Hasidic society toward study in general and vocational training and higher education in particular. The absence of a cultural motive to advance scholastically causes Hasidic men to settle for unskilled jobs and explains the relatively difficult economic circumstances of much of the Hasidic population. We shall have much to say about this below.

Lithuanian rabbis and yeshiva heads are also reconciled to the move of kolel students from the yeshiva to the workplace. However, they have a vested interest in avoiding the competition of the breadwinning option. They are troubled by the financial rewards awaiting kolel students on the outside, which may tempt many to leave the yeshiva after only several years of study. Consequently, I found a certain effort to control the transition to the workplace, because the outcome of this process can be an excessive departure from full-time involvement in the world of Torah.

Hasidic Men Lack Basic Occupational Skills

The new occupations typical of the fastest-growing American industries require sophisticated skills and rule out the easy transition from the yeshiva world to the workplace. Indeed, religious study hones the intellect and makes an important contribution toward shaping an individual with cognitive skills potentially relevant “out there” in the workplace. However, this is not enough. Students require information and knowledge in many fields, and the education systems of certain Hasidic groups do not furnish this. One of the obstacles facing young Hasidic men wishing to become breadwinners is the lack of basic skills occasioned by inadequate preparation at the primary and secondary school levels. This is especially conspicuous among some Hasidic sects, such as the Satmar one. They have had insufficient teaching of the English language, nor are they well schooled in arithmetic and in the civic and economic systems of the modern society in which they live and aspire to work. I was reminded of the “empty cart” metaphor that the Israeli Haredi population uses to characterize the lack of religious knowledge among the secular population. In the case of some Hasidic men in New York, the “cart” of general studies is quite empty, when they try to find a way to support their families.

The inadequate preparation for work in schools is not equally severe in all Hasidic communities. The educational institutions of the Bobov Hasidic community, for example, have taught English and basic subjects for some time, at a level that facilitates entry into the labor market. This, I was told, was the policy of the rabbi who had reestablished the Bobov community in the United States. He urged his followers to orient themselves toward the world in

which they were living and elevated the status of English in the community's education system.

In my interviews with Satmar Hasidic men, I met quite a few young kolel students who had recently gone to work but could barely converse in English. For this reason, having newly joined the labor force, they could hold only simple jobs that required no contact with English-speaking customers, such as loading and unloading merchandise or arranging stock in a warehouse. This is what I found in a large outlet for optical supplies that employs many Hasidic men, in accordance with their command of English, and pays them accordingly. In this sense, they are no different from recently arrived young immigrants who engage in unskilled manual labor not requiring proficiency in English.

Like many immigrants, however, Hasidic men eventually learn the English language on the job. After accumulating several years of experience, they are given work that requires speaking and other skills that are learned on the job. Young Hasidic men who move directly into the labor market count on this. They rely on their ability to overcome every disability in knowledge and skills fastened on them by their school system. They are convinced - on the basis of prior examples - that their experience in religious studies has trained them for any learning challenge. They trust to their *gemora kop* ("Talmudic mind") to bring them deliverance. However, the *gemora kop* cannot always accomplish this, and not all young Hasidic men share this feeling. In the course of a conversation with young employees on 47th Street in Manhattan, the center of the diamond district - where many Hasidic men work - a young Hasid asked me, "Why didn't they prepare us to go to work? Why didn't they teach us what you need to know out there? Why did they throw us to the dogs? Why don't the rabbis do something? Someone should tell them that we can barely make it on the outside when we go to look for *parnosso* (livelihood). All we do is occasional diamond peddling; we hardly bring home \$400-\$500 a week." I asked, "Why didn't you say this to the rabbis yourself?" Embarrassed, he replied, "I can't do that, but we talk about these things among ourselves and get angry." The other young Hasidic men who took part in the conversation did not contradict his remarks but did not wish to elaborate on them. The young Hasid who had revealed his inner thoughts to a stranger was also disconcerted and he excused himself from the sidewalk conversation, explaining that a customer was waiting for him.

Lithuanian Haredi schools treat the matter differently. Primary and yeshiva high schools in the Lithuanian system allocate time for general studies and prepare their students for SAT and other exams. Several schools are known for the high proportion of students who pass these tests with flying colors. Although general studies are not always given top priority in Lithuanian yeshiva high schools vis-à-vis religious studies, students work hard at English, mathematics, and science at the urging of parents who wish to see their children get into college and make respectable and lucrative professional careers for themselves (Mayer, 1979:155). The level of general studies in Lithuanian yeshiva schools varies. One reason seems to be the varying degrees of commitment on the part of the school itself. Some principals promote a high level of general studies; others believe a lower level will suffice. Be this as it may, young Lithuanians seldom have a problem, in terms of skills, in going from yeshivas - which function like full-fledged American high schools in respect to general studies - to colleges and from there to the graduate programs that turn out scientists, doctors, lawyers, business administrators, and other professionals. Hasidic men are underrepresented in these academic institutions, in the liberal professions, and in the occupations that technological progress has brought into being in recent years. Thus, the economic gap between American Hasidic and Lithuanian communities is widening, and a basic reason for this are the differences in the educational infrastructures of these two American Haredi groups.

The gap between Hasidic and Lithuanian communities is also widening because the latter accrue many years of experience in religious studies in the *yeshiva gevoha* ("higher yeshiva") and kolel while Hasidic men rush into the labor market. I repeatedly heard about the role of intensive Talmudic study in Lithuanian yeshivas in preparing men for vocational training or academic schooling *en route* to the labor market. One of the skills especially noted is communication, namely, the ability to make a presentation in a compelling and sophisticated way, orally or in writing. Another skill occasionally cited in the interviews is analytical ability. The fact that law schools are willing to admit graduates of important Lithuanian yeshivas speaks for itself. So does the fact that these graduates are accepted into courses and hired for jobs in the hi-tech industries.

The difference in skills between Lithuanian and Hasidic men was mentioned repeatedly in various interviews. I also encountered it at COPE, a vocational-training institute run by Agudath Israel of America that attracts

Haredi students and administers conventional American aptitude tests. Not many candidates pass these tests, and the failure rate is especially high among graduates of Hasidic schools, especially among cloistered groups like Satmar. This is eventually reflected in the composition of the student body at COPE. A large majority of the students are Lithuanian; the Hasidic among them come from groups that are more open than others to the challenges of the outside world.

Underlying the profound difference between the two Haredi cultural groups - Hasidic and Lithuanian - in routes of entry into the labor market is the difference in the level of basic skills acquired in school at an early age. Hasidic men enter the labor market directly, gravitating to jobs and industries that do not require skills connected with general studies at the primary and secondary levels. Lithuanians join the labor force often after completing vocational or academic training. Hasidic men move into jobs and industries that were typical of American Jews in the first decades of immigration. They start mostly in petty trade and remain there, initially as peddlers and in the hope of becoming shopkeepers or small-scale suppliers. Many operate in the Haredi neighborhoods themselves, as is customary with immigrants in the new neighborhoods they establish. In this local economy, the ability to speak only Yiddish or rudimentary English is not a serious obstacle. Many of the neighbors of the Hasidic population are recent immigrants or other people who are not put off by a shopkeeper whose English is less than perfect.

I found evidence, however, that even the education systems of the most cloistered Hasidic groups have begun to address themselves to the need to equip students with a suitable measure of general knowledge, especially in English and arithmetic. The aim is to enable them to cope with the vocational training they must undertake if they wish to move into occupations that provide a respectable livelihood. The change in outlook is the result of the increasing and spontaneous flow of young Hasidic men to vocational-training institutes and industries that require proficiency in English and basic skills like arithmetic. Thus, conservatism may not be absolute even among groups that are considered the most conservative. Again, the continuing Americanization of patterns of consumption in the American Haredi population is beginning to influence even those in charge of its education systems and causing them to bring general studies in their yeshivas into line with American practices. Any such upgrading of general studies in these systems will make it more likely

that Haredi men leaving yeshivas will enroll in vocational-training programs and find better jobs than in the past.

The differences in the levels of general studies in Haredi education systems are rooted in the dispute over the scope and importance of these studies in primary and secondary schools. Various American Haredi groups are engaged in this dispute, although with less vehemence today than in the past. It is a long-standing dispute that dates back to before the wave of yeshiva building that commenced in North America after the Holocaust and the influx of Haredi leaders from Eastern and Central Europe. Even before World War II, religious and Haredi Jews locked horns over the nature of Jewish parochial schools, i.e., Jewish schools outside the public education system and run by religious and Haredi groups. Religious groups aligned with Modern Orthodoxy espoused a formula of integration - *Torah u-mada* (religious and general knowledge). One may trace the roots of this integrationist spirit to the Mizrahi movement in Eastern Europe. Rabbi Isaac Reines advocated such an integration of religious and general studies and established a small yeshiva in this spirit in Lida in 1905 (Helmreich, 1999: 13), mainly to counter the Jewish schools run by the Bundists and Zionists. Although the Bundists taught in Yiddish and the Zionists taught many subjects in Hebrew, they had one thing in common: they included a liberal choice of general subjects that prepared students for the labor market at a time when East European Jews had begun to undergo a process of professionalization (the early twentieth century). Parents who were concerned about their children's economic future but also wished to preserve their Jewish cultural identity preferred to enroll them in schools that combined general and religious studies. Several Haredi groups, first and foremost among the Lithuanians, geared up to meet the competition. Agudath Israel, founded in 1912, established Haredi education systems in Eastern Europe, including the Beth Jacob system for girls, which included some general studies (Friedman, 1991:26-29). The American Lithuanian groups adopted the approach of integrating general studies when they undertook to establish a Haredi education system that would assure the perpetuation of Haredi society but would at the same time help the young generation fit into the American economy and avoid the economic distress that had hitherto characterized Jewish immigrants. The Hasidic immigrants, on the other hand, most of whom reached the U.S. after World War II, did not take the teaching of basic skills seriously. The level of teaching, especially of general subjects among boys, was of the lowest standard. Only recently has the Haredi population shown signs of a change of attitude toward general studies. However, religious

studies remain supreme, as manifested in the daily schedule of classes. Mornings and most of the afternoon are devoted to religious studies; while general studies have been confined to a relatively small number of afternoon hours since the integrative model was first applied (Mayer, 1979:116).

Hasidic Men Join the Labor Market Earlier

The Hasidic population encourages young men to begin working after they marry and after a year or two of study in a kolel. The norm of full-time yeshiva study is not as important or as deeply entrenched among the Hasidic population as it is among Lithuanians. In my visits to workplaces in the New York area, I indeed encountered young Hasidic men who had terminated full-time kolel study a year or two after they married and especially after having their first or second child. Many interviewees cited the birth of children as the reason for joining the labor force. “When I had my first kid, I began to look for something to do for *parnóssso*,” many Haredi men in their early twenties told me. A few said in effect, “After the wedding, they (meaning in-laws and parents, presumably) told me to look for *parnóssso*.” Some maintained their relationship with the kolel but found part-time work. Others married at an early age and with one or two children underwent vocational training of some kind, and still others went to work for parents, in-laws, or other relatives. I encountered Haredi men who started their own businesses at a relatively early age, a year or two after marrying - some with their wives’ dowries. I heard the following at a vocational-training institute serving mainly Hasidic men: “Lots of young people are here because of pressure from fathers, fathers-in-law, or the wives themselves. Women play an important part in pushing kolel men to study or work. Now they are starting to rebel against the idea of their husbands’ studying Torah and not supporting the family. It’s hard for parents and in-laws to support the kolel student’s family, and they wonder if he’s really learning full-time.”

Married Haredi men are responding to the challenge. I came across them, somewhat innocent and slightly lost, in a previously unknown world of diamond houses or outlets for electronic or optical equipment. In these workplaces, they start at the bottom as porters and sales clerks or in other simple jobs. Though some have a very poor command of English and arithmetic, they are determined to support their families. “It doesn’t matter

what work I do. I'll do anything to support my family. That's what counts." They go to great lengths to support their wives and children, coming to the center of the city, to the heart of New York's business district, and striking one as being as unformed as adolescents. The depth of the breadwinning impulse and the responsibility of supporting a family lead them to leave the yeshiva for the workplace quite early in life.

Among those who join the labor market directly there are some bold enough to strike out on their own. The allures of the business world ensnared them, as it did other Jews before them. With the little money their families make available and sometimes with their wives' dowries, they start their own businesses - a small shop, a service company or any other enterprise that offers the prospects of a good living in the future. Some open grocery stores; others sell merchandise to grocery stores. I met a young Bobov Hasid who had managed a peanut roasting plant but, wishing to strike out on his own, bought an ambulance company with money he had obtained from his family. A chance conversation with a twenty-one-year-old Satmar Hasid, whom I encountered while riding the subway from Brooklyn to Manhattan, illustrates the entrepreneurial spirit that prevails mainly among young men who leave Hasidic kolels: "I'm going to 34th Street in Manhattan now. My partner and I rented a place to open a wholesale business for baby clothes. I have connections, and everything depends on connections. My father's from Brazil and we'll have connections there. We'll buy baby clothes from different vendors and sell them to retail stores. You have to start somewhere. I can't see myself working for someone else. I want to have a business of my own. I know someone a little older than me, a Satmar Hasid like me, and he's already made a lot of money in a business he began after he got married. Like me, he used a dowry to get started."

Not all young Hasidic men are as bold or forward-looking as this budding wholesaler, but many are willing to leap into the chill waters of private enterprise, driven by the ambition to support their families at an early age. In my talks with them, I noted no second thoughts about leaving the kolel.

Lithuanians Join the Labor Market Later

Unlike Hasidic men, Lithuanian men are characterized by an overriding ambition to spend years in full-time religious study. Therefore, they go to

work later than their Hasidic counterparts do. There are two approaches among the Lithuanians. In the old “flexible” yeshivas, the combination of daytime religious study and evening general study in an academic or vocational institute preparing students for work at a relatively early age, immediately after graduation from the institute, is accepted. In the new “rigid” Lithuanian yeshivas, absolute supremacy to the norm of full-time religious study reigns. These yeshivas forbid simultaneous general and yeshiva or kolel study and encourage students to prolong their full-time religious studies as much as possible. The more yeshiva study overshadows general study, the smaller the chances that students will join the labor force at a relatively young age and the more likely that students will become providers of religious services - teachers in yeshivas, rabbis, and rabbinical judges. This career choice sometimes requires a further extension of full-time religious study.

Young Lithuanian men, unlike Hasidic practice, do not rush into the labor market after marriage. Since they also marry later than is common among Hasidic men, they remain kolel students for a longer period of time. The turning point for Lithuanian men in terms of breadwinning is neither marriage nor the birth of their first children. The student’s parents and/or in-laws are expected to support the new family as long as the young man shows an interest in remaining in the kolel. The student’s own desire to remain in the kolel is related to personal considerations, but is also shaped by the deep-seated norm of *hatmada* (perseverance) that prevails in his cultural surroundings. The Lithuanian cultural environment reserves pride of place to *talmidei hakhamim* (religious scholars), whose scholastic achievements, diligence, and perseverance ensure that they will continue their studies. The respect that such a scholar enjoys is reflected in the match that awaits him in terms of the socio-economic status of the bride’s parents. Affluent parents are more than willing to support the young family of a kolel student for quite some time to enable him to continue his studies. The student’s parents are also willing to do so, as best they can, since they too are guided by the “perseverance” norm. This norm prevails particularly in important “rigid” or “flexible” Lithuanian yeshivas, especially those that attract men wishing to become religious functionaries and prepared to spend many years at full-time religious study.

In these yeshivas, I encountered many students over the age of thirty who have quite a number of children. To support themselves, they mobilize relatives, apply for various welfare payments, and earn some money teaching or counseling at the yeshiva itself or in Haredi schools nearby. Wives are also

important contributors to the support of the families of Lithuanian kolel students. Many have acquired the schooling and vocational training that will enable them to help their husbands remain in a kolel full-time. For the most part, they too subscribe to the norm of perseverance.

In this regard, it is worth relating the story of a student at the Lithuanian Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore, which allows students to attend college simultaneously. Before he enrolled in the yeshiva, he had acquired all his schooling, from kindergarten through Talmudic academy (yeshiva high school). He even spent a year in a yeshiva in Israel before he enrolled at Ner Israel. He spent four years at Ner Israel - as a daytime yeshiva student while studying at the Baltimore County campus of the University of Maryland at night, majoring in accounting. After completing his bachelor's degree at the age of twenty-four, he passed his accounting examinations and was certified as a CPA. By this time, he had married. Armed with his BA and his certification, he could have moved into the labor market and made a good living. However, he and his wife chose to begin their married life by building a "firm foundation of Torah." Evidently, apart from the collective Haredi social goal of *Torah li-shma* (religious study for its own sake), the couple added the personal goal of building a foundation of full Jewish life - a goal that the student and his wife fully shared. The student continued to build this foundation for four years through kolel study; his wife continued to practice her profession as a paramedic at a university hospital in Baltimore. The student admitted frankly that he had not planned such a turn in his career from the outset: "When I got married, I never imagined that I'd spend another four years in yeshiva, especially from the financial point of view, but we made do somehow and now it's time to go to work." I met him at the end of his foundation-building enterprise. He was twenty-eight years old. Several CPA firms in Baltimore had already interviewed him. He knew that he would accept a job with one of these offices after terminating his studies in the kolel. Graduates of Ner Israel are prized in the labor market.

Differences in Income Levels

A determining factor in the move from the yeshiva to the workplace, making for distinct differences, is the level of parental income. Interviewees sometimes noted that those who extended their full-time yeshiva studies were

the sons or sons-in-law of wealthy people. Young men whose parents or in-laws are not affluent cannot remain in the kolel for long. “I’d like to spend another year or two in the kolel, maybe even longer, but I can’t afford it,” I was repeatedly told by men in transition from yeshiva to work. When I asked interviewees why they left full-time kolel study while others continued, I was told, “They have someone who can cover their living expenses; I don’t.” Evidently, the norm of perseverance still prevails among those able to conform to it.

Fulfillment of the norm makes parents proud. Many Haredi men who did not follow this course in their youth for lack of financial resources find consolation and satisfaction in supporting their sons. Their attitude calls to mind American immigrants, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, who themselves could not afford to attend college but spared no effort to enable the second generation to do so. Many Lithuanian parents spare no effort to enable their sons to attend a yeshiva, and those who can afford it are happy to continue supporting them for an extended period of time. “I’ll be glad to do it as long as it’s possible,” I was told by one proud father who has three sons, each with a family and several children, attending the kolel of the Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood. The father himself had spent only a few years in a yeshiva, being forced to leave to support his young family. Now that he can afford to support yeshiva studies, he does so willingly - “as long as it’s possible.”

This, however, does not mean that all wealthy Haredi parents subscribe to the norm of perseverance. I heard of some parents who urged their sons to prepare themselves for a working life by devoting themselves to vocational and academic studies that will guarantee a decent living and keep the economic level of the next generation from falling below the level of the present one. Some parents were even concerned that the norm of perseverance would prevail over the norm of breadwinning in their sons’ thinking, mainly because of the influence of teachers in the Haredi education system, who guide their students toward spiritual fulfillment as long-term yeshiva students. In a conversation with a successful optometrist who, as a young man, had attended Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood and Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem, concern was expressed about the future that awaited his young son, who would eventually enroll in a yeshiva: “Today things are not what they were when I went to Lakewood. All my classmates in Lakewood left after several years to learn a trade or to go straight into business. Things are different today. The teachers steer them toward many years of yeshiva study, and I don’t approve

of it. I'm trying to educate my sons to go to college after a few years in yeshiva." In this respect, teachers and some parents seem to be engaged in a covert struggle for the ascendancy of one of the two norms: yeshiva study or breadwinning.

Age of Entry into the Labor Market

As stated, Hasidic men tend to join the labor market early, mostly at the age of 20-22, while Lithuanians do so over a longer period. The older the Lithuanian kollel students in the New York area are, the more inclined they are to go to work. I did not have precise figures on the age of students and jobseekers, but visits to several yeshivas and conversations with yeshiva heads and students gave me the impression that there is a clear-cut stage of progression. Among students at Lithuanian yeshivas, those in the 24-28 age group are the ones most likely to be seeking a livelihood. Some do so earlier and others later, depending on individual circumstances.

There are two explanations for the correlation between age and the termination of full-time religious study: by a certain age, the student has completed his "quota" of study and already has several children. The older a student is, the more years of yeshiva and kollel study he has completed. Thus he has more fully complied with the norm of full-time yeshiva study and may now feel less compelled to submit to it when faced with the "competing" norm of breadwinning. This does not mean that such students cease to engage in religious study in other ways, but they cross a watershed of sorts in terms of the process. Yeshivas, unlike colleges and universities, have no clearcut rule about the formal number of years required for the training they provide, but, at the practical level, they do resemble colleges to some extent. In colleges, it takes four years to earn an undergraduate degree and another two years for a master's, six years in all. In terms of age, a student acquires the two degrees at twenty-four. Many yeshiva students begin their move into the labor market at the same age. One may say then that Hasidic men, for example, settle for the equivalent of a "bachelor's degree" in yeshiva studies and start to make their move from the yeshiva to the workplace at the age of twenty-one. Young Hasidic men whose parents are not well off make do even with a lower threshold of yeshiva studies. In contrast, many young Lithuanians wish to complete the equivalent of a "master's" and even a "doctorate" in full-time

religious study and therefore postpone the move into the labor market until the age of 24-25 or even later.

The more children a kollel student has, the greater the burden that his wife, parents, and in-laws must bear and the greater the pressure he faces from the family and the breadwinning norm to get a job. Indeed, some interviewees expressed themselves directly in this matter: “I spent enough years in yeshiva,” or, “Now that I’ve got four children, it’s time to support the family.” Most Haredi students whom I interviewed at the COPE Institute in New York were aged 24-28, and most of them had three or four children. The oldest still attended kollel at rigid Lithuanian institutions; the youngest members of the group were from Hasidic families.

It was my impression that very few kollel students are over the age of thirty. The handful that are have chosen to devote their lives to full-time religious study for as long as they can. Some of them have wealthy parents who, willingly or unwillingly, continue to support this way of life. They are noteworthy for their strong commitment to the norm of full-time religious study. At times it seemed to me, on the basis of my talks with them, that personal factors underlay their scholastic perseverance and that they had made the kollel a place of refuge.

One may conclude that the Haredi population in the New York area adopts two approaches to balancing the norms of religious study and breadwinning, differentiated by age: Hasidic, flexible Lithuanian, and rigid Lithuanian. The Hasidic group invests a short period of time conforming to the perseverance norm and joins the labor force at an early age (20-21). The flexible Lithuanian group, along with other non-Hasidic groups of German and Central European origin, invests six or seven years in religious study after graduation from yeshiva high school. Men combine these yeshiva studies with simultaneous general studies that enable them to join the labor force on the termination of their religious studies (at the age of 24-26). Lithuanians who attend the rigid yeshivas extend their full-time religious study go to work at an advanced age (26-30) after learning to be religious-service providers or receiving vocational and/or academic training. However, in all these balancing acts between the norms of religious study and breadwinning, one principle is accepted by all - the overwhelming majority of Haredi men are in the labor force by the age of thirty. Few continue to attend the kollel beyond this age.

Routes to the Labor Market

Those who move from the yeshiva to the workplace do so by several principal routes: as educators in Haredi schools, as providers of religious services (rabbis, rabbinical judges, kashrut [kosher food] supervisors, etc.), through direct entry into trade and services, and business, and through vocational training or academic education. It is mainly as providers of religious services that yeshiva studies prepare students to enter the labor market. Often, the trade and services route requires no preparatory studies, religious or general. The other routes require a period of preparation, whether lengthy or brief, involving formal general studies.

Although individual preferences have something to do with the choice of a career, several social factors limit the options available to those who wish to enter the labor market. Each Haredi group is characterized by a certain typical level of acquired skills or general education and a given normative orientation toward certain types of careers. Basic skills, scholastic background, and the normative social environment greatly affect what is acceptable in each group. Developed modern societies place increasing emphasis on entry into the labor market via the vocational training or academic route, which generally assures a higher income and higher social status than direct entry into the labor market with no prior academic or vocational training. Since the years of a mass immigration, American Jewry has shifted from the custom of entering the labor market directly and only later undergoing vocational training to the current situation where most young non-Haredi Jews prepare themselves for the labor market by studying for a degree. The Haredi population is entering this process after a delay of several decades and has only in part reached the last phase. Two developments have abetted the decline of direct entry into jobs in trade and services since the era of mass Jewish immigration: the decline of anti-Jewish discrimination in the workplace and the increase in income levels, which enabled Jewish parents to finance their children's vocational training and, later, their academic schooling.

The current situation in the New York area labor market is a polarized one that largely cuts across ethnic and cultural lines. Those who enter trade and services directly, taking the "low" track in terms of income and socio-economic status, belong mainly to low-income groups such as African Americans, Hispanics, and recently landed immigrants from the Third World, especially from Latin America. Most American Jews and most members of

other ethnic groups that rank high on the socio-economic scale choose the “higher” tracks into the labor market. Such is the structural situation in the New York labor market, the one that yeshiva students who join the labor force encounter. As we shall show below, not all of them have equal access to the “higher” tracks. The lack of basic skills and a normative social mechanism to encourage yeshiva students to acquire vocational or academic training prompts some yeshiva students to enter the labor market directly, generally in trade and service occupations requiring no vocational or academic credentials but failing to provide a decent living. This has far-reaching implications not only for the standard of living of much of the Haredi population, noted for its large families, but also for the ability of individuals within this population group to support their community institutions in the future, for the extent to which families will depend on support from the community and from municipal, state, and federal institutions, and, of course, for their ability to contribute to economy as such. It will also affect the place which the Haredi groups will command in the social fabric of the American spectrum of social status, ethnicity and residential differentiation in the urban space. The following chapters present detailed discussions of each of the routes of entry into the labor market available to yeshiva students in the New York area.

4 The Route to Education and Religious Services

The career choices that follow most naturally from full-time religious studies are those related to educational functions in Haredi schools and positions as providers of religious services. Indeed, in conversations with yeshiva students and officials, I found these careers acceptable to kollel students about to look for work. At Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn, I was told that about 60 percent of those who leave the yeshiva take up rabbinical and teaching positions. At Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood, the figure quoted was 30 percent. The rest are divided between direct entry into the business world and, after appropriate training, into the liberal professions. Although these are rough estimates, they give us an approximation of the breadth of these routes to the workplace.

Careers as educators and providers of religious services have their advantages from the standpoint of students and Haredi society. Training in the yeshiva and kollel has only one aim: the acquisition of knowledge in areas considered fundamental in Haredi education. Above all, religious studies in the yeshiva and kollel provide the basis for careers as providers of religious services, and especially as rabbis and religious judges. For these jobs, kollel students face competition only from other Haredi men, as opposed to the widespread competition they face in the open market. Furthermore, as educators and providers of religious services they remain within the Haredi fold and are not exposed to the outside world. After all, Haredi society fights so energetically to prevent exposure to the secular way of life and its adverse influence on the Haredi individual. The transition from the yeshiva to Haredi educational or religious work occurs within a single cultural universe, and from this standpoint such careers have a special advantage over the others, where students are required to overstep the severely limited bounds of Haredi society.

However, a career in education and religious services in Haredi society also has its drawbacks. The main one is the pay relative to professional and business occupations, particularly in the expanding new industries. Wage levels in these occupations outside the Haredi world far surpass the general level in public services, not to mention the level in Haredi public services. Another disadvantage is the dependence on the public officials who control the Haredi education systems and religious service jobs. Personal connections and family relations are important in these systems, and not every kolel student has the pull to get a desired position. Furthermore, some jobs in these systems lack prestige and are particularly low paying. On the other hand, American Orthodoxy, including Haredi circles, has sustained the prestige of its teachers - unlike other Jewish sectors, where teaching has lost ground to other occupations (Heilman, 1995: 158). Conversely, the function of kashrut supervision does not command particular respect in Haredi society.

Differences in status and pay are sometimes reflected in differences in the distribution of Hasidic and Lithuanian men along the socio-economic scale of teaching and religious-service jobs. Hasidic men with their relatively short period of full-time religious study usually occupy the lower rungs of the scale. They serve as teachers in the *cheder* (Haredi school for young boys) or as kashrut supervisors. Lithuanians reach the upper rungs, as high school and yeshiva teachers, or as rabbis and judges (*dayanim*). The meagerness of general studies in the Hasidic education systems has perpetuated this gap between Hasidic and Lithuanian teachers and has made it difficult for the former to teach the general subjects that the American educational authorities require Haredi high schools to offer.

Education Jobs

Many of those who wish to become educators feel that they will be strengthening Haredi Jewish life - to their way of thinking, a supremely important and lofty vocation. Many of the kolel students whom I interviewed, Hasidic and Lithuanian alike, made such remarks as, "To teach Torah is the most important thing a Jew can do. Nothing is greater than this," or, "I want to disseminate Torah among the Jews as much as possible, because nothing matters more than to attract people to the Torah."

The Chabad (Lubavitch) Hasidic group is especially fervent. In its school system, even before the yeshiva stage, it teaches children that all non-observant Jews require a helping hand. The Chabad system inculcates the value of Jewish teaching above all in the Jewish periphery, among those not living as religious Jews and even among those estranged from their Jewish identity. In a visit to a Chabad school in Crown Heights - the heart of the Chabad community in Brooklyn - I engaged the fifth-grade teacher and pupils (all of them boys) in conversation. I asked, "Who wants to learn to work in computers when he grows up?" About one-third of the pupils raised their hands. The teacher intervened immediately and said, "I want to ask a more important question: Who wants to be a *shaliach* [Chabad outreach emissary] when he grows up?" All the boys raised their hands eagerly, of course.

The sense of mission among those who envision themselves as educators is observable not only in Chabad novices but also in kolel students at Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood who are about to finish up their studies. Kolel students aged twenty-six or so, after years of full-time religious study, consider religious education one of the most exalted callings they can engage in, even surpassing rabbinical ordination. They also evince a desire to be active in the Jewish periphery as multipurpose educators of children and adults. In recent years, there has been much work done toward establishing kolels for heads of households in cities far from Haredi population centers, such as Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, and Phoenix in the American Southwest and Minneapolis in the north. Pioneering kolels have also been established in such East Coast cities as Philadelphia and Boston. Some of the biggest American yeshivas, including Chafetz Chaim in New York, have been involved in founding these kolels. One of the focal points of this activity, sponsored by a movement called Kolel, is Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood. At this yeshiva, students who undertake to be educators in places where new kolels are being set up are given special preparation and then sent to the target areas with their families. Members of the local communities are expected to pay their wages. Thus, the Haredi world is creating a new network of workplaces where yeshiva graduates engage in the pioneering work of delivering the message of religious study to the Jewish periphery.

In a conversation with a twenty-nine-year-old kolel student with eleven years of yeshiva and kolel study behind him, studying at Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore and not attending a local college, as many others do in this institution, I was given the following response: "I am preparing for the

rabbinate or education, and especially outreach in Jewish communities that are far from Judaism. I want to establish an Orthodox Jewish congregation in places that don't have one. Take San Diego, for example, where there are 60,000 Jews and only one Orthodox synagogue. Attending college for a BA won't help me attain this goal, except for studies in adult education, which I am completing in the summer, between semesters." This student and several others at the yeshiva join the kolel students I met in Lakewood in setting their sights on the pioneering task of building Haredi communities in the Jewish periphery.

Kolel students who aim at teaching positions in the Jewish periphery are a drop in the bucket in comparison with the penetration of yeshiva graduates into Haredi education systems across North America and even beyond. The important Lithuanian yeshivas, especially the rigid ones that do not allow kolel students to enroll in college while engaged in religious studies, consider themselves factories for the production of Jewish educational leadership. Indeed, teaching, especially in yeshivas, is considered one of the greatest calling among students in these yeshivas. I found this attitude among students and staff at Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood. At Ner Israel Rabbinical College and Mir Yeshiva, kolel students whom I interviewed stated that their goal was to teach and that their ultimate desire was to teach in a yeshiva. Those with this goal in mind do not see themselves going into business or professional life. Their only alternative is to enter the world of religious services as rabbis, since rabbis are, in a sense, the public's teachers and disseminators of Torah, and in this capacity they can fulfill their wish to propagate Torah knowledge and observance among Jews through educational activity.

Since the supply of teaching positions in yeshivas is smaller than the demand, many kolel students find the road to this vocation blocked. However, apart from the availability of jobs and of course the level of scholastic excellence that these positions entail by virtue of their seriousness, I came across the signs of a phenomenon characteristic of certain yeshivas: the connection between family lineage and getting a yeshiva teaching job. I looked into the matter and discovered that teaching positions in yeshivas, especially at the top academies, are reserved for kolel students related to the yeshiva's founding families. Holders of senior positions are often descendants of yeshiva founders and in some cases even bear the family name as sons, grandsons, or cousins. "I want to teach at this yeshiva when I finish my studies," a student at an important

yeshiva told me, “but I know I can’t because teachers here usually belong to the family.” I could not and did not determine whether this particular kolel student was fit to teach in such an important yeshiva, but what matters is the existence of such a perception in his mind coupled with the simple fact that indeed certain positions are held by members of the founding families. Though the indications of nepotism in Lithuanian society evinced above still bear thorough investigation, it may well be that the supply of teaching positions in yeshivas is limited by criteria other than ability, and this may affect the pattern of transition from yeshiva studies to yeshiva teaching.

Kolel students who wish to teach at the primary and secondary school levels compete for teaching jobs with Haredi women, who graduate from the Beth Jacob seminary and other teacher-training facilities for women. Women have the advantage of acquiring teachers’ training at the seminary, which kolel students lack. In many schools, especially Lithuanian ones, it is hard for uncertified candidates to get a job. Thus, in the final analysis, the Haredi education system cannot meet all of the demand for teaching positions among kolel students. This gives the “pioneering” kolels in the Jewish periphery an advantage, since ordinary standards do not apply in these localities. The rules in effect there are those of the yeshivas and the kolels affiliated with them. It is thus easy to make the transition from the kolel in Lakewood to these new environments, a move that also meets the challenge of outreach, which has become an important focal point of Haredi activity.

The limited scope of the Haredi education system vis-à-vis the demand for teaching positions among graduates of Haredi teachers seminaries for women and among kolel students has given rise to a phenomenon familiar in Israel, namely the influx of Haredi educators into the education system of non-Haredi religious society, known in the U.S. as Modern Orthodoxy. Since the Modern Orthodox do not turn out enough teachers to meet their needs, mainly because the Modern Orthodox people are interested in other occupations, a track leading Haredi teachers to Modern Orthodox schools has been created. Since these two societies are not as clearly differentiated in the U.S. as in Israel, and since the boundary lines are marked by various hues and shades, it is easy to cross from one to the other. This is indeed what happens, but in one direction only - from Haredi society to Modern Orthodox society. However, schools that educate in the Modern Orthodox spirit occasionally resist this movement. One such school - so I was told - gave candidates a test to gauge the extent of their commitment to Modern Orthodox ideas. The aim was to stop the infiltration of

teachers from the other society and thus modify Haredi influence over the young. However, monitoring devices are not foolproof; despite their existence, some teachers in Modern Orthodox schools come from Haredi communities, where candidates for teaching posts are abundantly available.

Religious-Service Jobs

Religious-service careers would seem to be the most natural and obvious ones for men who have invested years in full-time religious study. Indeed, a perceptible, though inconsequential, proportion of students in rigid Lithuanian yeshivas aim to become rabbis or other providers of religious services in Haredi society. Some even wish to serve as rabbis outside this society and fill rabbinical posts in the Modern Orthodox community. I spoke with them about the rabbinical route as a means of joining the labor force. After all, I pointed out, even a rabbinical job is *parnóssó*. However, I found little enthusiasm among them. They gave two reasons for this. First, the Jewish tradition sends out conflicting messages about the rabbinate. The tradition oscillates between the Mishnaic injunctions to “choose a rabbi for yourself” to “avoid the rabbinate and get a trade,” and not to use the Torah as “a spade to dig with.” Holding a rabbinical post is also a problem for those who subscribe to the norm of religious study for its own sake. A rabbinical posting undermines this norm somewhat and seems to suggest that all those years of yeshiva and kolel study were not for their own sake but to get an edge in the labor market. I did not delve too deeply into this area of potential conflict between Torah study per se and as a means to an end, but occasionally I sensed distress among interviewees when I mentioned the possibility of rabbinical service as a post-study vocation. Indeed, few students at Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood choose rabbinical service as a vocation. Many more go to the trouble of obtaining rabbinical ordination and acquiring the right to prefix their names with the title “rabbi” while not serving as rabbis.

The second reason for the reluctance to serve as rabbis, as explained by kolel students, has to do with the difficulties they anticipated in dealing with the lay leaders of synagogues in the Jewish cultural space that serves as a potential market. Each congregation hires its rabbi directly. There is no umbrella organization and no state to pay the salaries of congregational rabbis, as in Israel in the case of many rabbinical jobs. Thus, congregational leaders serving

on the executive committee of a nonprofit organization are the proprietors of the synagogue and the employers of the rabbi. Such a situation can lead to tension between employer and employee. The lay leadership has its own ideas about how the religious and cultural affairs of the congregation should be handled, and these may clash with the rabbi's way of seeing things. In reality, one may expect that rabbis from the Lithuanian yeshivas, especially the rigid ones, will be stricter in their religious views than the lay leadership of most American synagogues. A rigid Haredi outlook will not be helpful in keeping down conflicts in heterogeneous congregations struggling to survive and concerned lest any of its members cross lines or affiliate themselves with a neighboring synagogue or a rival Jewish movement (Conservative or Reform) that eschews the prohibitions associated with the rigid Haredi worldview. In such a situation, a rabbi may be urged to make compromises and disregard basic tenets of his Haredi faith. He can try to exercise persuasion but is at a disadvantage in the asymmetric employee-employer relationship. If he cannot compromise, his only option is to resign. Stories circulate among kollel students about men who accepted rabbinical postings in distant communities - jobs that not only paid well but also entailed a religious and educational mission - and had to leave within a year or two if not less after being fired or resigning over some conflict with the community leadership. "To move somewhere else with your wife and kids and to come back a little later and wander around in search of another job is no life," a kollel student at the Lakewood yeshiva told me. "I know quite a few classmates at the yeshiva who had this happen to them. I don't want it to happen to me and my family." This has given him second thoughts about the idea of seeking a rabbinical post.

This brings us back to the option of teaching in a kollel, even in a distant community in the Far West - anything to avoid the possibility of entering into an irresolvable conflict with the synagogue leadership. Kollel students make a prior commitment to engage in religious study for its own sake. Furthermore, a kollel teacher has neither the authority nor the desire to assume authority in matters pertaining to the management and way of life of an entire community, with all its diverse elements, aims, and peculiarities. "It's hard to be a rabbi in America," I was told by someone who had taught rabbinical law in a yeshiva and had prepared himself for a rabbinical career. As soon as he became familiar with the problems of rabbis in the United States, he applied for vocational training in computer programming. Kollel students at the prestigious Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood are also reluctant to serve as rabbis; most want other jobs. Among those intending to be rabbis, some seek an academic

degree in the belief that congregations in search of rabbis will favor a cleric who also has academic credentials and is familiar with their world. “It looks good on your CV to have a degree,” a kolel student at Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore told me in reference to the accepted practice among some of his acquaintances who chose the rabbinical track.

There are additional jobs as religious functionaries open to students leaving the kolels. One is as a rabbinical judge (*dayan*). These officials are employed not by a specific congregation but by the organizational system of a given Haredi sect. Thus, rabbinical judges are not dependent on lay leadership in the way that congregational rabbis are. In this sense, the occupational status of the rabbinical judge resembles that of the congregational rabbi in Israel, who in many cases is employed by the state and by organizations that represent it. I met only one kolel student, a Satmar Hasid, who intended to become a rabbinical judge. Evidently, there are few positions in this field and, in any case, not enough to make it a significant factor among the possibilities open to men about to move from the yeshiva to the workplace.

In contrast, many kolel students make a living as kashrut supervisors, a post that combines a professional mission with an administrative job. Inspection in food processing plants, food stores, and restaurants does not put the vast knowledge and profound wisdom acquired in religious study to full use. At times, the jobs are part-time and divided among several establishments. Kolel students take part-time inspection jobs while studying. Afterwards, they can string together several part-time positions, until they leave the kolel altogether.

Kashrut supervision is accepted more among Hasidic men than among students on their way out of Lithuanian yeshivas. The latter usually aim for positions that offer greater prestige than such supervision can provide. They do not hasten to utilize the knowledge they have acquired in the yeshiva when they join the labor force; instead, they seek to supplement their learning by acquiring knowledge and skills through vocational training and academic schooling. Hasidic men who do not opt for religious-service jobs in the internal economy of the Hasidic world enter directly into the labor market, mainly in trade services, and even crafts.

5 The Direct Route to Trade and Services

In the New York area it is the young Hasidic men who often move directly from the yeshiva to the workplace with neither vocational training nor academic schooling. For the most part, they start at the bottom, acquiring job skills as they go. They find work in trade as sales or stock clerks. Some go into the hauling industry as porters or drivers, others get jobs in shops or factories as unskilled workers. In the short run, direct entry into the labor market has no perceptible effect on the standard of living of the breadwinners' families. The money they make in the jobs that await them on the direct-entry track usually does not amount to much more than the assistance they receive without joining the labor force. They hope, however, eventually to acquire skills, change jobs, and earn much more.

Historical Continuity

Starting out as an apprentice in a workshop or in trade, at the bottom of the occupational ladder, was an accepted course in East European Jewish society - the main source of Jewish immigrants to North America since the 1880s. This was a principal model of occupational mobility in traditional society, Jewish or other. Young people wishing to work sought lowly jobs that had the advantage of regular training at the hands of a knowledgeable and experienced mentor, either a fellow employee or the owner of the establishment himself. Often the mentors were the young apprentice's fathers or near or distant relatives. In modern society, where much of the labor force has undergone processes of formal education and professionalization, this course remains the province of the poor.

In America's mass-immigration period, it was mainly the immigrants, including Jews, who went in this route. African Americans who migrated from

the southern states to cities in the Northeast followed a similar route. Many migrants, including Jews, enjoyed an additional advantage here: they found employers and mentors from among members of their own cultural group. Earlier immigrants to the U.S. who had established small businesses now hired fellow countrymen from among more recent immigrants. At the workplace, they spoke the language of the immigrant group, shared its customs, and partook of its cuisine. The newly hired, recently arrived in an unfamiliar world, expected protection on the job from the foreign, and at times, hostile environment. This was especially true for groups that the host population did not receive warmly. Jewish immigrants to the United States were given such a chilly reception, spiced with a large dose of anti-Semitism, and therefore opted mostly for Jewish employers.

Jewish immigrants preferred Jewish employers also for religious reasons. The new country forced them to work on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, so they sought a haven with Jewish employers who honored these observances, though many did not because of the fierce competition they faced. Obviously the situation was not as ideal as implied by the advantages of working for a Jewish employer. The employer–employee relationship was often marked by exploitation, in an environment that achieved notoriety under the sobriquet of “sweatshops”.

Since that time, new groups of immigrants have replaced the old ones in these sweatshops and at the bottom of the social ladder. In recent years, they have come from Latin America and Asia and even Africa. The Jews have moved up to more respectable and well-paying jobs. Many have gone into business and some are quite well-to-do. The economic success of Jews who started at the bottom as trainees, apprentices, and even milkmen before making it in business has become part of the American myth of success in the land of unlimited opportunity. Other Jews went into the professions, achieving both high incomes and social prestige. This was the great era of the rush to college, with Jewish parents pushing their children into the ranks of the medical, legal and other professions, which they had missed out on because of their circumstances as immigrants.

Most Haredi Holocaust survivors reached the United States after many of the Jews who had preceded them had already taken the vocational or academic route to the labor market. The new immigrants faced a serious dilemma. On the one hand, if they missed out on a college education they might doom themselves to the fate of other immigrants and also miss out on the economic

and social rewards of such schooling, such as their Jewish neighbors had attained. On the other hand, going to college and being exposed to the “heresy” and other “undesirable” elements of its environment might weaken their faith. Among Haredi Holocaust survivors, many Lithuanians and others of like mind did become professionals after attending college, but many others went into crafts and trade. Hasidic immigrants, given their aversion to general studies, chose mostly to go into crafts and trade and acquire on-the-job training. They engaged in a variety of occupations. Garment industry shops continued to attract them as they had in the past, but over the years Jews left these places and moved into the clothing trade. Others built up the diamond industry, some as cutters and polishers and others as dealers. This industry is one of the most notable and well-known examples of a Hasidic concentration of forces. Hasidic men also entered the electronics and optics businesses and in recent years the computer trade has become popular, with Hasidic men active mostly in sales and technical services.

In all these old and new industries, however, the old pattern of a traditional society has been preserved: group specialization in a specific occupation or field, with apprenticeship and informal training for group members just starting out. Only the industries have changed - diamonds instead of needlework, electronics instead of shoemaking, selling computers instead of shopkeeping. Non-Hasidic Haredi men have gone into security trading, business administration, finance, as well as computer programming. The new industries offer a higher income and occasionally provide the opportunity to amass real wealth. The visible and alluring examples of Haredi men who have become wealthy fuel the hopes of many who choose trade and business over academic education or vocational training. Ultimately, however, we are dealing with masses of petty tradesmen and their employees, a few making a good living but most barely scraping by, their large families reduced to penury.

The profile of Haredi men in trade and business in the New York area thus reveals considerable economic polarization. There are “millionaires” known to everyone and pointed out as models of financial success “without going to college” while maintaining a full Haredi life and supporting Haredi institutions. However, as mentioned, masses of families live in want and some below the poverty line. The existence of a large Jewish population living below the poverty line comes as a surprise to the American public at large, which has grown up on the myth, perhaps prejudiced, of the universally rich

Jew. This reality also surprises Jews in the affluent suburbs. “What?” they ask in amazement. “Are there poor Jews in America?” Many of these impoverished Jews are of the Haredi population. In many of these families the heads of household are attempting to make a living after several years in the kollel. Some cannot support themselves by working; they rely on the state and community welfare systems. Others barely scrape by.

What Are Their Occupations?

Haredi Jews in the New York area follow the direct-entry route into several trades and services. The garment trade is still important, although it has lost the primacy it enjoyed during the period of mass Jewish immigration. Real estate and insurance are accepted fields among Jews today, as in the past. Realtors and insurance agents usually choose their own hours, whether they work for themselves or for big companies. Here it is possible to work from one’s own home and avoid contact with non-Jewish or female employees. One can celebrate Jewish holidays, divide one’s time between work and religious study, and participate in synagogue prayer in the early morning and the evening.

The diamond industry is an important direct-entry route for many Haredi men. The industry is centered on 47th Street in Manhattan. Hasidic men of various sects are active in both its branches - manufacturing and trade. Some learn the craft of cutting and polishing diamonds on the job; others try their luck as salesmen or brokers. Access to the industry is based mainly on family ties or connections within the Hasidic sect. “It’s easy to get into the diamond industry if you have someone who knows you, preferably relatives or Hasidic like yourself; and once you’re in, you can continue in all sorts of directions,” a Hasid with many years of experience in the diamond industry told me.

Travel agencies are another type of establishment acceptable to Haredi men who join the labor force directly. Many Haredi travel agents are active in the New York area. Some have small offices serving mainly a Haredi clientele. Haredi families often visit relatives in other parts of North America and abroad. They generate a lively traffic between the United States and Israel for Jewish holidays, weddings, bar mitzvahs, circumcision ceremonies, and - at the other extreme - for funerals and memorial services. Furthermore, many

Haredi businessmen frequently travel around North America and to distant countries. The combination of these two groups produces a big demand for the services of travel agents. For example, in the diamond industry center on 47th Street in Manhattan I found a travel agency run by a Haredi on the second floor of a large office building. His customers were Haredi businessmen who operated in Manhattan, mostly in the diamond industry, from out of the building or nearby buildings. Extensive travel is routine in the diamond industry. The office has a branch in Boro Park, a Haredi neighborhood in Brooklyn. The Haredi-run travel agency divides its business between its two specific market segments: the diamond industry and Haredi families. The agency offers rather low - and at times extremely low - air fares. Like many others, it has evidently found a way to offer cut-rate fares in a market that is run somewhat like a stock exchange. Airlines and air-travel packagers are always offering cut-rate prices to boost bookings. The discounted tickets are “auctioned” shortly before the date of the flight. Haredi agencies specialize in acquiring such tickets for Haredi customers who wish to keep down their travel expenses. The agencies leave themselves a profit margin in accordance with the circumstances. A long-time customer gets a better price than a one-time customer.

Some of this cut-rate airfare traffic operates over the Internet - a development that has created new breadwinning possibilities for Haredi entrepreneurs. One need only purchase a computer and learn the Internet to find flights. There is no need to acquire professional knowledge of the sort that entails big outlays of time, money and effort. Agents who build up a clientele in the cut-rate ticket traffic can make a living on the commissions or on the spread between what they pay the airline or packager and what they charge their customers.

Haredi men who learn to use the Internet can get into another field based on electronic commerce: mortgage brokerage. Aiming at people who cannot obtain mortgages from banks in the New York area because of the stringent criteria in this market, small brokers scour the Internet for small banks in states willing to give larger mortgages than those for which the borrower would qualify under normal conditions. Insurance brokerage, directly or over the Internet, is also widely practiced by Haredi men. It requires neither financial investment nor special professional skills to bring together an insurance company or agent and a customer.

For various reasons, the Internet is very popular among Haredi men, even though Haredi rabbis have voiced their concern about it and sometimes

prohibited its use. In our context, the Internet is important as a convenient springboard to the labor market. It encourages individuals to use the computer and ultimately to transform it into a major tool in their lives as workers and breadwinners. A computer is not particularly expensive and allows one to work at home, tailoring hours and conditions to fit individual circumstances. These factors are especially important for Haredi men who prefer to live near a *beit midrash* and synagogue, avoid an inappropriate working environment, and eliminate the expenses that even small-scale business activity outside the home entails, such as commuting, rent, etc. Since some of these occupations do not by themselves provide a living, a combination of part-time occupations is common among Haredi men. One person may sell insurance, airline tickets, and even telephone phone cards.

I also found Haredi men just out of yeshivas working as salesmen, porters or junior clerks in small businesses that for the most part engage in retail trade in Haredi neighborhoods - grocery stores, outlets for hardware, appliances and clothing, food shops and restaurants, jewelry stores, and even computer outlets. The spectrum of retail fields is wide and includes merchandise of the most modern kind. Haredi men also provide miscellaneous services, either from offices or from the home. All personal services conventionally offered in urban consumer societies are available in Haredi society.

Young Haredi men looking for work can also find it in the specialized markets catering to the Haredi population in particular and the Jewish population in general. Haredi neighborhoods are full of stores selling Jewish books and such religious articles as tefillin, mezuzot, prayer shawls, skullcaps, candlesticks, photographs of rabbis, and holiday decorations. The commercial landscape of some of the streets in Haredi neighborhoods in Brooklyn strongly resembles that in Haredi neighborhoods in Jerusalem and Bene Beraq.

The general picture that emerges from the survey of businesses that Haredi men enter to support themselves points to a marked reliance on the local economy of Haredi neighborhoods. In many respects, the situation of yeshiva students who take the unskilled route into the labor market resembles the situation of the unskilled and impoverished immigrants seeking employment in the New York area. However, the two groups neither compete in the same workplaces nor for the same jobs. Young Haredi men prefer industries and workplaces that have Jewish owners or managers and are located for the most part in Haredi neighborhoods. These workplaces provide suitably supportive and protective Jewish environment. Haredi employers and managers prefer to

hire former yeshiva students, though for legal reasons they employ a small number of non-Jewish workers. Former yeshiva and kolel students feel comfortable in workplaces within a Haredi management and a large proportion of Haredi employees; these workplaces constitute a small niche within the cultural and ecological niche of the Haredi neighborhood and Haredi society.

Where Do They Work?

Special importance is attached to working in a Haredi environment if the workplace is outside the Haredi neighborhoods and in particular in the business districts of Manhattan. Examples of such niches are the diamond center on 47th Street, a string of clothing outlets and sewing shops around 30th Street near Seventh Avenue, and the camera stores on 18th–23rd Streets. While most of the businesses are small, some are large and serve markets that extend beyond New York. A notable example is B&H, a giant outlet for photography supplies and optical instruments, including the most sophisticated, on Ninth Avenue and 34th Street. B&H is Haredi-owned and has about 600 employees, of whom about 350 are Haredi men, overwhelmingly Hasidic. This enterprise serves as a fascinating example of the application of the assembly-line principle in retail trade. All operations, from helping customers and processing orders to the movement of the purchase through routing, checking, and payment stations and delivery into the hands of the customer and security checks at exit points, as well as other operations that I did not notice from my angle of observation, are divided among numerous staff members. Many of them perform simple tasks. After brief training, an employee can move onto the assembly line and receive immediate support and assistance if he runs into problems. Haredi workers may be found at all levels of the system, in skilled and unskilled jobs alike. Many jobs require no special skills; and young Haredi men, nearly all of them Hasidic, move into such jobs each and every week. Hired with no professional credentials, they acquire their skills while on the job. Most work in the warehouse, where 150 young Hasidic men may be found, or in the simple checking of orders moving down the assembly line. Eventually they learn how to use the computer, familiarize themselves with the sophisticated instruments and other merchandise in the store, check credit cards, and telemarket items across the United States and abroad. This large establishment provides systematic in-house training. In addition to in-house training, B&H encourages

employees to take outside courses, mainly in computer programming and information technology, and pays their tuition. Most of the professional management at B&H began at the bottom, showed ability and moved up step by step until they reached the top.

The direct route into trades and services is used mostly by the Hasidic component of the Haredi population. It suits this group's circumstances and requirements. It does not necessitate prior training and formally-acquired skills. It is largely based on the job training, when income is immediately earned. Being very young husbands and fathers, Haredi men have no time for a prolonged period of vocational training. Trade and services are part of the Haredi residential setting and as such are enabling young Hasidic men to stay within their own milieu, without having to brave what they perceive as a threatening environment. They can always try and fit into a business of a relative or a friend. They can also cherish the hope that in spite of their lack in formal skills they stand a chance to do well in a business they may once set up on their own. The Lithuanian group, it seems, counts more on vocational training and academic education than on friendly connections and luck.

6 The Route of Vocational Training

Vocational training aims at providing job skills. Vocational schools run by the government have fulfilled this aim in the past and continue to do so. However, vocational training is increasingly being provided by privately run institutes offering short-term and highly specialized courses. They meet the increasing demand for training in the new occupations continually evolving in an era of rapid technological change and commensurate innovation in the business world. These changes have occasioned a greater demand for specialized, fast, state-of-the-art vocational training. Not all public vocational schools are geared to meet these needs; some continue to offer programs of study that take several years to complete. Since the private vocational-training institutes are run on a commercial basis, they adapt to the needs of the market and provide the kind of training that the market demands.

The New York area has many vocational-training institutes - of all types and on all levels - that equip young and not-so-young people for new and high-demand occupations. In particular, these institutes satisfy the demands of recent immigrants who wish to find employment in their new country and whose skills are not tailored to local conditions. Bulletin boards, local newspapers, and subway cars in this huge city are full of advertisements for vocational-training institutes, promoting their services in several languages. Ads in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Korean abound in the New York subway system. Many advertise the fact that students signing up will qualify for federal aid. This aid is also a mainstay of the institutes' economic existence, since without it, many would forgo vocational training in high-tuition occupations. A computer-programming course at a reputable vocational-training institute is priced at \$13,000 or so, a hefty sum that not every recent immigrant to the United States can come up with.

The yeshiva and kolel students in the New York area who utilize the services of vocational-training institutes are those who eschew the other routes of entry

into the labor market. A career in religious services demands a commitment and abilities that not everyone possesses and the remuneration is not especially enticing. Direct entry into the market as a wage laborer in trade and services also does not promise an adequate income; after all, the whole point of going to work is to bring home a paycheck that will allow one's family to live in dignity. Direct entry into one's own business is risky and not suited to the circumstances and character of many yeshiva students. I heard young Haredi men say: "I don't have a father who has a business that I can get into easily," or, "It's risky in business, only a few do well and most eventually fail." The academic route strikes some as too protracted and unnecessary: "I'm not made for it" or "Even people who finish college don't always find suitable work that gives them a decent living." In contrast, various rationales are marshaled in favor of vocational training: "I'd rather find a job where I can use my head" or "I'm interested in doing something real and practical".

Vocational training is favored over academic training because of the time factor: four years of study for a bachelor's degree means four years of tuition payments without an income. The time factor is directly related to the circumstances under which kollel students live. After they marry, they devote several years to full-time religious studies in the kollel. During these years they also bring several children into the world. When they decide to go to work, it is with a sense of urgency: "At my age, with a wife and two children at home, I can't afford to spend four years in college now," was a typical response from many interviewees, especially the older ones. The older students are also the ones who have spent relatively long periods of time in the yeshiva and kollel - sometimes because they married late, sometimes because their parents supported them for years, and sometimes because they had hoped, in vain, for an eventual career as a rabbi or as a teacher in a yeshiva. When they finally turn to the labor market, it is out of a sense of obligation to become breadwinners. Vocational-training courses lasting a few months are a quick and inexpensive route to the labor market vis-à-vis a degree program. It also enables them to do without college, an institution that much of the Haredi population considers off limits. In the field of computers, one can quickly learn an occupation that provides a good living. "I could go to Touro College, but that's a lengthy process, and here I can go to work after a few months," a young yeshiva student who is learning computer programming at COPE told me. Vocational-training institutes deal specifically and pragmatically with imparting job skills, and no more - which is precisely what kollel students want from these institutes.

Consent of Rabbis and Yeshiva Heads

The history and modus operandi of Project COPE (Career Opportunities and Preparation for Employment) show how Haredi leaders, namely rabbis and yeshiva head, are moving toward the idea of vocational training. They support it as long as their conditions are met and they retain a measure of influence and perhaps control. COPE, established by Agudath Israel of America in the early 1970s and located in the Wall Street business district of Lower Manhattan, serves mainly the Haredi population. It was established to facilitate the job-hunting process among Haredi men in the New York area. The idea was to treat applicants with respect, provide efficient service, and eliminate the prejudice and hostility encountered in employment agencies not run by a Haredi management. At the time COPE was established there was an efflorescence of government occupational-training programs offering financial assistance to those eligible on economic grounds. COPE offers four-to six-month courses and occupational certification. The main ones are computer programming, computer networking, bookkeeping, and secretarial services.

When the idea of COPE was first tabled for discussion at an annual convention of Agudath Israel of America, it was approved by the rabbis approbation on two conditions: that the institute did not compete with yeshivas and that it did not recruit students directly on yeshiva campuses. The existence of COPE was not to be advertised in yeshivas and no effort would be made to entice yeshiva students, even individually, to attend the institute. COPE has strictly adhered to this policy and instructs its recruitment officers to act accordingly. Haredi students who attend COPE told me that they had learned about the project both from conversations with friends and acquaintances and from advertisements in the local Jewish press and Jewish public institutions. Thus, a distinction evolved over the years between direct advertising for COPE in yeshivas and indirect advertising through communications media accepted by the Haredi public. This has sugarcoated the pill of direct competition between COPE and the yeshivas.

Another measure designed to maintain a certain degree of control was related to the demand that students who enroll in COPE obtain the consent of their yeshiva heads. When Agudath Israel of America set forth its policy with regard to the project, it stipulated that a yeshiva student who wished to enroll for vocational studies at COPE must consult with his yeshiva head and obtain his authorization. This authorization is forwarded to the director of COPE in

writing or over the telephone. The director of COPE emphasized in a conversation with me, that in the nearly thirty years of its existence no yeshiva head has turned down a student's request to commence vocational training at COPE. When I asked him why this was so, he had a ready explanation: "When I asked one of the yeshiva heads how it happened that no request from a yeshiva student to begin vocational studies at my institute had been turned down for so many years, he said, 'Look, if the student has gone so far as to request permission to go out and work for a living, then he knows that he can no longer continue studying at the level of a *talmid hakham* [scholar]. If I force him to stay in the yeshiva, what kind of studies will these be, kept up against his will? ...' " What is evident is that there are rabbis and yeshiva heads in the New York area that evidently understand their students' need to train themselves as breadwinners after several years of full-time religious study. They also realize that not everyone can engage successfully in yeshiva studies for endless years, since some lack the skills and others have to support their families. However, the Haredi system has an interest in allowing students to take this step without diminishing the authority of yeshiva heads and rabbis, who are meant to guide and approve the process of moving from the yeshiva to the workplace.

It was also evident from interviews with students at COPE that rabbis and yeshiva teachers showed understanding when yeshiva students decided to start working and consequently to enter the transitional phase of acquiring a trade. The students did in fact consult with their yeshiva heads or personal rabbis. A Belz Hasid who was taking a computer programming course told me that when the officials at COPE asked him for a letter from the head of his kolel, he had no difficulty getting one. "The head of the kolel understood the matter and realized that it was my decision and gave me the letter," the young Hasid said. He even quoted a saying of the Belz Rebbe about how to divide the day: mornings and evenings for religious study and the rest of the day for work. In my interviews I came across no signs of tension or of attempts to block the process. Yeshiva rabbis and teachers in the New York area seem to accept the fact that many of their students cannot maintain the norm of full-time religious study for a protracted period and when this becomes clear they concede *de facto* primacy to the norm of breadwinning.

The studies at a vocational-training institute called Machon L'Parnassa in Boro Park, Brooklyn, also received tacit consent. Most students at Machon L'Parnassa are Hasidic men and women seeking to acquire vocational skills

that will help them get jobs. Machon L’Parnassa - The Institute for Professional Studies was founded in 1999 by the Touro higher education system, which runs a network of academic and vocational-training institutes, mainly in New York City but also elsewhere in the United States and even abroad (Jerusalem and Moscow). The Boro Park Machon L’Parnassa is located in a residential area of Brooklyn with a large Haredi population, Lithuanian and Hasidic alike. The Touro system states in its website that the Machon L’Parnassa “was established to serve the academic needs of the Hasidic communities, whose unique culture, commitment and lifestyle require bold and innovative approaches to higher learning”. It offers a wide variety of courses. The most popular are computer programming, computer networking, business administration, and accounting among men, education and health services among women. In early summer 2000, about 250 men and women were enrolled there, about 95 percent of them Hasidic. Men and women attend classes in separate buildings, several blocks apart.

Although Hasidic leaders did not overtly oppose the activities of Machon L’Parnassa in Boro Park, they did not explicitly urge members of the community to go there. Despite the lack of explicit consent from rabbis, enrollment at the Boro Park institute soon grew, including students from cloistered Hasidic groups like Satmar. However, when an attempt was made in early 2000 to open a branch of Machon L’Parnassa in the Williamsburg neighborhood, at the initiative of a leader of the non-Hasidic Haredi groups in the neighborhood, something went wrong. Neighborhood rabbis publicly and vehemently opposed the opening of the institute. Severe prohibitions against enrollment there were announced in synagogues and notices were posted on walls and published in the local press. Once the rabbis issued their ban, there was little likelihood that a Haredi resident of the neighborhood would set foot in the new institution. In the summer of 2000, the building rented by Machon L’Parnassa and the computers and other vocational-training equipment it had acquired stand unused. The directors of Machon L’Parnassa in Williamsburg continued to seek a way out of the impasse.

It was difficult for me to get to the bottom of the problem, but apparently the main reason was related to Machon L’Parnassa’s institutional affiliation with Touro College, the network of academic institutes operating in New York and elsewhere. The Touro system established a college in Flatbush, Brooklyn, to give the Haredi population a chance to start undergraduate studies, something ruled out in ordinary colleges where men and women attend classes together

and where anathemized subjects are taught. At the time, the rebbes of the Haredi communities issued a ban against attending the new Flatbush institution. However, when Touro opened Machon L’Parnassa in Boro Park, also in Brooklyn and an institute meant above all to enable young Haredi men and women to train for an occupation under conditions conforming to the Haredi outlook, the Hasidic rebbes did not issue such bans. Indeed, people from Hasidic communities make up most of the student body at this Boro Park institute.

In Williamsburg, the bastion of the Hasidic population, the attempt to establish a similar institute met, as noted, with staunch resistance. Several factors seem to be noticed. One has territorial aspects. As long as Machon L’Parnassa operated outside territory that was markedly Hasidic, relatively few Hasidic men and women enrolled there, because of the distance; thus, the institute was not perceived as a territorial invasion or threat. However, some local rebbes could not bring themselves to countenance such an institution in their midst. I also heard that the Hasidic rebbes had demanded control if not proprietorship of the new institute. Another reason, as stated above, was Machon L’Parnassa’s institutional affiliation with the Touro system. The ban issued at the time the college was established in Flatbush was now repeated. However, the institutional affiliation could not be forgone because Machon L’Parnassa needed Touro College’s accreditation to enable students to apply for government assistance. For Machon L’Parnassa to obtain such accreditation, it would have had to embark on a lengthy process. When the rebbes in Williamsburg discovered that students applying for government assistance had to use Touro College forms, the formal institutional relationship became obvious and they immediately repeated the ban they had originally issued against attending the college in Flatbush.

In the meantime, Machon L’Parnassa has continued to operate in Boro Park and has made inroads among Hasidic students. It is apparently harder to disrupt a going concern in a distant neighborhood than the opening of a new institution in the heart of Hasidic territory.

As I wound up my study in the summer of 2000, I discovered from highly placed sources in the Satmar community, the largest Hasidic group in Williamsburg, that as soon as appropriate clarifications and arrangements are made, it will become possible to obtain the consent of local Hasidic leaders for the operation of Machon L’Parnassa. One reason for acquiescence is the grassroots demand of local residents for the essential service of a facility that

will train them for work. If they enter the labor market directly, without prior training, they will only be able to get low-paying jobs.

The following story is indicative of the thinking of Haredi men with respect to vocational training and making a decent living: When word of Machon L’Parnassa in Boro Park reached Jerusalem, a Haredi leader in Jerusalem went to visit the institute. At his request, several students were summoned so that he could speak with them. The Jerusalemite asked one of the students, a Hasid around thirty years old who was studying computer programming, “What has all this got to do with you?” The Hasid pulled out a check for several hundred dollars from his coat pocket and said, “This is the first check in my name that I received for putting to use what I’ve learned here at Machon L’Parnassa. I brought the check home and showed it to my wife. When I saw the pride in her eyes, which seemed greater than the pride I saw in her eyes when I told her about my studies in the kolel, it was clear to me that I was on the right path.” The realization among rabbis in Williamsburg that this is how members of their communities think will probably go a long way toward changing the patterns of life of the Hasidic population in this neighborhood as well.

Where Vocational-Training Institutes Are Located

A general view of the map of vocational-training settings for the Haredi population underscores the importance of geographical proximity to residential centers. Since Hasidic men tend to cloister themselves in their neighborhoods more than is the case with Lithuanians, the location of a vocational-training institute appears to be extremely important. The proximity of the institute to the target population is significant in another way too: it facilitates the integration of vocational training and study at a yeshiva or a synagogue-affiliated *beit midrash*, or of study and work. The nearer the institute, the more likely it is that Haredi men will be inclined to use its services. Understanding this, the directors of Machon L’Parnassa decided to situate its facility in the heart of the target area, in the midst of the Haredi population. By doing so, it removed a constraint from a population ripe for vocational training and made it possible to reach a larger number of students in a short period of time and thus assure the economic success of the enterprise. The immediate proximity of the institute proved itself. More than 90 percent of students at Machon L’Parnassa are Hasidic living nearby. Thus, the

geographical factor helped attract Hasidic men to vocational training. The institute is located near home, workplace, synagogue, and *beit midrash*. Proximity also allows people saddled with the demands of childrearing, part-time work, ritual observance, and study to maintain their busy schedules.

The directors of Machon L’Parnassa also had the factor of proximity in mind when they tried to open a branch in Williamsburg. This neighborhood has a large Hasidic population, mostly Satmar. Williamsburg is quite far from Boro Park, where the existing Machon L’Parnassa is located, and the distance clearly plays a part in the extent to which Hasidic men in Williamsburg make use of it. Boro Park also lies outside Satmar cultural territory. Although the initial attempt to establish Machon L’Parnassa in Williamsburg failed, it underscores the importance of geographical proximity, especially where the Hasidic population is concerned.

However, a long ride does not deter people who are really serious about vocational training. At Machon L’Parnassa in Boro Park, I encountered a twenty-two-year-old former kollel student affiliated with Satmar who commutes to the institute from Monroe, New York, more than an hour away from Brooklyn. The Satmar Hasidic sect is dominant in Monroe, which is something like a self-contained Haredi suburb (Shilhav, 1998). The Haredi mayor of Monroe has encouraged the initiation of short-term courses in computer literacy in the town. More than a hundred people acquired such proficiency in 1999/2000 and basic bookkeeping courses are also available there. However, the young Hasid I spoke to insisted on getting a degree in accounting and becoming a CPA. He refused to settle for the basic vocational training on his own turf that would just enable him to make a living. He wished to achieve a respectable professional standing and to enjoy the income that goes with it. The Satmar community of Monroe is not pleased with the step he has taken. He is leaving the confines of his community and exposing himself to cultural risks. He will find it difficult to participate in the intensive life of the local community. Also he is looking to take a professional route that involves university-sponsored study. All this represents an overstepping of bounds. His resolve has led him to make the arduous trip into the city on a regular basis. His parents support him and want to see him get beyond the vocational level accepted in Hasidic society. As I spoke with this young Hasid I felt that he was in the vanguard of a growing number of young Hasidic men who wish to escape the confines of their society, which holds them back from achieving the higher standard of living promised by suitable training.

Project COPE is located outside the Haredi residential core. It is situated in a high-rise building in the heart of Downtown Manhattan. The students come from various parts of New York, but mainly from the Haredi neighborhoods of Brooklyn. Only a few come from a distance, but they illustrate the willingness and resolve that inspire some students to spare no effort to equip themselves with suitable vocational skills before joining the labor force. One of these students commutes every day from Lakewood, in south New Jersey, about an hour and a quarter from Manhattan. Thirty years old, married, and a father, he continues to attend the kolel of Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood and works part time to earn a living. Nonetheless, he makes the enormous effort to learn computer programming in order to get a well-paying, prestigious job. From 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. he studies at the kolel in Lakewood. From 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. he studies at COPE in Manhattan. He spends the rest of the day fighting traffic and has little time left over for his family. “I see my wife at midnight, when I come back from Manhattan,” he says, and I can sense his determination to prepare himself properly for the labor market after years of full-time yeshiva and kolel study. Like a number of other Haredi students, he is not willing to settle for the basic programming course and is taking a course in JAVA to stay on top of things and improve his chances of advancement. To do this, he is prepared to travel long hours while keeping up his religious studies to the maximum extent.

But this kolel student is the exception. Given the great distance between Lakewood, New Jersey, and the vocational-training institutes of New York, Haredi circles have taken the initiative to obviate the hardship of lengthy commuting. A setting has been created near the Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood that allows graduates to benefit from the yeshiva’s academic standing and enter the labor market at a high professional level. In Lakewood, Agudath Israel of America has established a combined program of training and referral known as PMES (Professional Management and Employment Services), which helps kolel students and other Haredi residents of the town join the labor force. The idea was conceived in 1991, when the American economy was in a recession and many people, including Haredi men and women, lost their sources of livelihood. Several affluent members of the Haredi community personally helped others in their community to overcome the crisis of losing their jobs. This spontaneous response metamorphosed into an institutional activity under the auspices of Agudath Israel of America. An employment office for Haredi men and women was established in Brooklyn. Haredi men and women employed in various companies stay in touch with it

and pass on information about job vacancies as well as give recommendations to jobseekers served by the PMES office in Brooklyn, which has remained open to the present day. Most of the clients of the Brooklyn office have already held jobs; a large majority of them are Lithuanians who chose the professional track, which entails a suitable level of schooling. The idea eventually came to Lakewood, where a large concentration of kollel students has developed. In Lakewood, however, services are not limited to job placement; they also include training for young people who have not entered the labor market as yet and lack occupational or academic credentials because they have spent so many years in the yeshiva and kollel. Hence the need to establish a program of vocational training and degree studies. The training facility operates in two fields: computer programming and accounting. This is an example of an effort by the institutional Haredi community, i.e. Agudath Israel of America, to meet the challenge of penetrating the labor market at a high professional level and making it possible to earn a decent living from “clean and easy work.”

Training in computer programming at the Lakewood PMES is offered in the standard courses available in vocational-training institutes. Training in accounting is offered within the framework of degree studies. To complete an accounting degree and pass the CPA tests, yeshiva graduates must take a certain number of academic courses in this field. PMES in Lakewood is affiliated to the CPA program at nearby Ocean County Community College and offers under the college’s institutional auspices, though not on its campus, accounting courses for graduates of Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood. After they complete the courses and receive their undergraduate degrees from the yeshiva, students are allowed to take the CPA tests. At present, in view of demand for social workers in Haredi society, PMES in Lakewood is attempting to devise a program of social-work training for men who are winding up their studies at the yeshiva.

Just as PMES provides kollel students on their way out with vocational training, it trains their wives in management, bookkeeping, accounting, computer programming, and various kinds of secretarial services. Women account for 60 percent of participants in the training programs in Lakewood. Men and women study separately - following the usual pattern in Haredi society - but the goal is the same: to train members of this society to participate in the labor force as professionals and to assure them a decent level of income.

The training offered by PMES in Lakewood has three important advantages for kolel students: a closed Haredi environment, proximity to places of residence and to the yeshiva that they continue to attend during their training, and tuition that is significantly lower than tuition elsewhere. An additional advantage is the job-placement assistance that PMES offers. Although the yeshiva itself is not formally involved in running the PMES program, the vocational and academic training activities are part of the environment in which students at Beth Midrash Govoha are immersed, and the heads of the yeshiva give the program their blessing. Thus, with the backing of Agudath Israel of America, acting in accordance with rabbinical guidelines and operating under the auspices of one of the biggest and most important yeshivas in North America, a setting has been created to help Haredi society maintain the separation of yeshiva and college studies and make the adjustments necessary to enable kolel students to support themselves decently after they terminate their full-time religious studies. Be this as it may, enrollment in the vocational and academic training programs in Lakewood is somewhat limited. Only about 100 out of the more than 3,000 students who attend the yeshiva have attended the training programs offered by the local PMES in the past two years. Many yeshiva graduates go into family businesses or find positions in education and rabbinical services. However, for the few who wish to acquire vocational and academic training that will enable them to enter the labor market, an appropriate setting on the fringes of the yeshiva world is available.

Separation of Men and Women

Another obvious condition for the existence of a Haredi vocational-training institute is the separation of men and women, not only in separate classes but also on separate days and, if possible, in separate buildings. This is a basic rule of life in Haredi society. Education systems for both sexes in this society, and in parts of Modern Orthodox society as well, are separated at all levels and at all ages. College-level studies at Yeshiva University are also conducted on separate campuses, one for men and one for women, in different parts of Manhattan. Separate academic facilities for women and men were widespread in American education for many generations. Women's colleges still exist in the U.S., even where no significant religious bias is evident. In other words, the pattern is not alien to American society and is therefore not perceived as

particularly aberrant when it comes to a scholastic facility designed for a population group that has a unique religious culture, such as Haredi society.

Machon L’Parnassa in Boro Park, Brooklyn, spares no effort to implement the principle of sex segregation. It operates in two separate buildings and even has separate administrative systems. Vocational-training classes at the PMES offices in Lakewood are conducted separately - for yeshiva students and for their wives. Monroe and Monsey - Haredi suburbs north of New York City - offer a wide variety of vocational-training settings for the Haredi population that assure strict separation of women and men.

Project COPE in Manhattan also had sex-segregated classes initially, as demanded by the rabbis of Agudath Israel of America in their resolution founding the institute. However, the arrangement did not last. As COPE is a licensed institute whose students qualify for government assistance, the separation of the sexes became a legal problem. Indeed, the New York City Commission on Human Rights sued the institute for sex discrimination because of its ban on coeducational frameworks. COPE suffered a series of setbacks in an exhausting legal process and, since then, has refrained from blatant violations of official American mores. The tenacity of public and legal bodies eventually induced the Haredi institute to bend to state-imposed laws and regulations. While I found coeducational classes there, COPE attempts to maintain separate classes or settings wherever possible. COPE found a way to maintain a certain degree of sex segregation without violating the principles set forth by the authorities. When the number of students signing up for a given course exceeds a certain limit, it is divided into two or three classes and a measure of separation between the sexes is thereby achieved. Haredi students also seem to have learned to accept the absence of complete separation. Here is what one of them had to say:

“They [the directors of COPE] try as hard as they can. There’s no way around it. The government gives support and they have to follow the rules. We don’t pay attention to the women. We sit separately in the classroom and also in the laboratory. There’s no choice, we do our best, we choose the lesser of two evils.”

And so it is. As I strolled around during study and laboratory sessions, I usually found coed classes in which Haredi men congregated in one part of the classroom. The separation was maintained during breaks. The most significant fact is that the need to comply with the presence of women in some classes did

not disturb the ongoing existence of this Haredi Institution. The Haredi students keep attending COPE, with the kind of compromise that it had to follow.

The Shift to Computer Occupations

Having opted for vocational training as their route to the labor market, yeshiva students must choose the occupation they wish to acquire. I found that computer-related occupations have become popular among this group, just as they have among other American Jewish and non-Jewish groups. While Haredi leaders unequivocally disapprove of the Internet, they do not frown upon the computer itself, insofar as the technology and not the content is involved, and allow Haredi men to enter the computer field, going along with the general feeling that this is where the money is. Several factors would seem to underlie the invasion of the computer into American Haredi society. Above, we noted the general features of computer work. Computer programming as an occupation has several additional important advantages: it is essentially a technical occupation and does not require knowledge that is problematic from the standpoint of the Haredi worldview, it is considered a well-paying occupation and a sophisticated trade that befits a master religious scholar.

I asked a group of current and former kolel students about the factors that led them to take up computer programming. One chose it on the advice of his father, his friends, and his father-in-law, who had attended a vocational-training institute when he was younger. Another student had heard from the rabbi of his yeshiva that whoever wished to enter the labor market should study programming; not only did his rabbi recommend this course of action but other students had also heard about programming as a suitable occupation for former kolel men. A third student had asked a rabbi in his neighborhood, who told him, "Go into computers." A fourth student, with an Israeli background, took a seven-month programming course because "other possibilities, including university, take lots of time and cost lots of money, while here you study for a short time and afterwards get work easily." A fifth student tried his hand at sales, "and it didn't work, because it's not for me, so I tried computer programming." A sixth student, a Bobov Hasid - representing a sect that does not shut itself off from economic life - knew from the outset that sales had nothing to offer him: "I knew I had to choose a field that I could

make a living in. I wasn't interested in going into trade, because there I'd stay at the same low level without moving up. Here [in programming] I can get a job with big companies if I have the credentials they need, I can look forward to a good starting salary, and if I do well at work I can move up and earn more." A seventh student, a twenty-two-year-old Belzer Hasid, decided that after two years in the kolel, "I had to work in a nice environment and didn't want to do simple jobs at a grocery store, a stockroom, or as a messenger, but instead to use my head and get a nice salary at a nice place of work." An eighth student went a different route: After eight years in Israel as an immigrant, including military service, and after returning to a yeshiva in New York and trying his hand at unskilled labor for a year, "I took aptitude tests to find out what direction to choose and I was referred to computer programming."

Many routes lead to computer-related occupations. Undoubtedly the message about computer programming as a respectable and well-paying occupation that is also "clean and easy," as befits a Torah-true Jew, circulates in the yeshiva world and throughout Haredi society and helps point yeshiva students who intend to join the labor force in the direction of programming and other computer-related occupations. One kolel student chose programming after vacillating between rabbinical services and medicine during several years of full-time religious study. His personal story is representative of the standing of the new occupation of programming on the Jews' scale of occupational values. Today, Jewish mothers apparently point at their young sons and tell their neighbors, bursting with pride, that, "When he grows up, he'll be a computer programmer."

Another occupation studied within the expanding framework of computer-related occupations is networking. Networking is an outgrowth of technical services and reflects the sharp increase in the use of computer networks in businesses and public organizations. The number of people who wish to work in this field has been growing in recent years and, in response, so has the quantity of courses offered by vocational-training institutes. Since this occupation requires less proficiency in mathematics and involves a less theoretical approach than programming, it attracts yeshiva students who do not possess these skills. Therefore, Hasidic men are inclined to go into this field while Lithuanians are more strongly attracted to programming. However, the difference between these two vocational tracks is also reflected in future levels of income. Programming pays more and allows more rapid advancement on

the wage scale than networking usually does. This is another example of the abiding and widening occupational and economic gap between the Hasidic and Lithuanian groups. Such feedback has penetrated into Hasidic circles, particularly among parents with children in the Hasidic school systems. Parents are dissatisfied with the situation and are pressing community leaders to revise the format of general studies and the quality of teaching in Haredi schools, especially in the schools of such Haredi sects as Satmar, which has habitually kept the teaching of general subjects to a minimum.

There are computer-related occupations other than programming and networking, such as computer graphics and web site management, but relatively few yeshiva students go into these fields. Accounting is also perceived today as a field that requires computer skills. On the whole, a growing number of yeshiva students are learning computer-related occupations, which are thought to be in high demand and to pay rather well. When I asked a Satmar Hasid who works at B&H why he chose computer graphics, he answered - in the typical low-key manner of young yeshiva students in this Hasidic community - "Because I heard it's a hot occupation." As a result, yeshiva students who have long ago forgotten the meager arithmetic skills they acquired in primary school rush to vocational-training institutes to achieve the incomes they believe computer people make. Yeshiva students circulate stories about people who learned computer programming and quickly landed high-paying jobs. "I heard about someone who learned programming and is getting \$64,000 a year and another \$10,000 as a bonus, and his employer pays his life and health insurance - so I was told by former yeshiva students and others who were still in kolels." Another story has as its hero a yeshiva student who learned a computer-related occupation involving securities on his own and now has a six-figure annual income. These examples of economic success steer students to vocational-training institutes and inspire them to make strenuous efforts to finish their studies quickly, so that they can "join the fun." The B&H store, which puts many employees to work at simple jobs at a starting salary of \$400-\$500 a week, has a high turnover of personnel because more and more of its workers turn to vocational training in computer-related fields. "It's hard to find workers today because they go to work in computer trades. Some study computers even while they're in yeshiva or kolel. Some go straight to work for Prudential and AT&T, and others work independently or try to initiate a start-up venture." This is what a personnel director at B&H told me. He was proud of the professional and economic ambitions surfacing in Haredi society, even though they make it more difficult

for him to fill unskilled positions at the warehouse or at certain stations in his assembly line sales setup. He and his fellow managers at B&H have an additional explanation for the headlong rush into high-paying computer-related occupations: “With the big income, they can work less and have more time to learn in the *beit midrash* and bring up the kids at home.”

Computer-related occupations - including bookkeeping and accounting, which today are integrally related to the use of computer skills - have some cultural implications, especially when it comes to minorities, including the Haredi population. As one of America’s “visible minorities,” members of Haredi population, because of their distinct dress, have various access disabilities at an especially high level of intensity. A Haredi man would find it difficult to work as a clerk in a bank or a large commercial enterprise where the American cultural majority is dominant. Cultural affiliation, patterns of social behavior, and socio-economic status still serve, to some extent, as tacit criteria in hiring. In the computer trades, however, these criteria are less important - at least in the perception of my Haredi interviewees. “A good programmer who knows how to work can find work anywhere. No one cares how he’s dressed, if he has a beard and sidelocks. The main thing is that he knows how to do what he is told,” I was advised by one of my interviewees, a man who was about to finish up his studies and had familiarized himself with the labor market through friends and acquaintances. A job-placement officer working in Haredi society added, “Haredi men are stable employees. They stay in their communities and do not hop around from company to company, from city to city, and from state to state, as many computer workers do. The computer industry is noted for rapid employee turnover, to the distress of employers who pay the price of losing their investment in training workers who go somewhere else. Haredi workers reduce the damage that employers suffer because of the rapid turnover of personnel.” Banks, insurance companies, communication firms, and public services have no second thoughts about hiring Haredi programmers. They are looking for ability and diligence, and this is what they find among Haredi workers who have acquired computer trades.

Even though Haredi graduates of vocational-training institutes have chosen relatively short-term programs in order to join the labor market quickly, they will still have to compete with graduates of college programs, especially in computer programming, a much favored field at colleges in the New York area today. To meet the competition, various courses of action are taken. The director of COPE aims to train top-notch programmers who can compete with

the finest college graduates. This explains COPE's stiff entrance exams - administered by an outside company - and the high dropout rate among candidates for admission. In this way, COPE makes sure that its graduates will be among the best and will be able to compete for vacancies in big companies, the ones that look for top programmers and are willing to pay commensurably.

Graduates of COPE sometimes come back to take a supplementary course, as reported by a student who completed the basic programming course and returned for a short course in JAVA programming in order to master the latest Internet programming skills: "I'd rather work for a small company, preferably a Jewish company. Any small company that hires me will give me experience. A big company demands a master's degree in computers and a few years of experience, and I don't even have a BA. But once I get experience, I can compete with college graduates." This programmer has indeed worked out his future in minute detail, for the sole purpose of prevailing in the competition between graduates of vocational-training institutes and college graduates. At Touro College, where one can obtain an undergraduate degree in computer programming, I met a student who had the opposite strategy. He had heard about COPE but chose Touro College because people with college degrees have an edge over others when job promotions are given out.

Placement in Skilled Jobs

Vocational-training frameworks not only provide training but also try to place graduates in jobs. Each institute that I surveyed is active in job placement. COPE in Manhattan has a department with several employees engaged solely in locating jobs and attempting to fill them with graduates. Machon L'Parnassa in Boro Park, Brooklyn, opened about two years ago, also has a job-placement service. The PMES office in Lakewood makes strenuous efforts to assure employment for yeshiva graduates in Lakewood itself. The forte of these institutes is their ramified network of connections with employers and their reputation for training Haredi students. The liaisons are Jews who hold key positions in various companies in the New York area; they provide information about vacant positions and bring influence to bear on those who presumably make the hiring decisions. These institutes have earned their reputations by training workers who were found suitable for their jobs. "Employers, even if they were religious Jews, thought at first that the yeshiva

people in Lakewood could not make a contribution to the work process,” I was told at the local PMES office. The image of yeshiva students as potential employees was rather poor. However, employers soon discovered that the population of yeshiva students included talented and qualified individuals who could compete successfully with other candidates. Jewish-owned companies are familiar with the Haredi vocational-training institutes in the New York area and contact them when they need workers.

At the same time, many graduates of the big Lithuanian yeshivas rely on personal and family acquaintances to find work and do not avail themselves of a formal job-placement agency. Yeshiva students whose families own businesses also bypass such services by going directly into the family business. Graduates of Lithuanian yeshivas also benefit from the solidarity among yeshiva alumni who have established businesses of their own and fill positions by recruiting young yeshiva students. Mir Yeshiva, for example, has no formal job-placement service; it relies mainly on the aforementioned solidarity and the network of informal relations within the Haredi population.

7 The Academic Route

The American Haredi population is divided into three groups in regard to attitudes toward academic degree studies. Some, mainly the Hasidic group, oppose such studies categorically. Rigid Lithuanians oppose college attendance while studying at a yeshiva but do not oppose it after the completion of yeshiva studies. Flexible Lithuanians tolerate simultaneous yeshiva and college studies.

The problem with Machon L’Parnassa in Williamsburg described above illustrates the prevalent opposition of Hasidic rabbis to studies at an academic institution and even at a facility affiliated with one. This opposition is broad-based and absolute in Hasidic communities. This population group attributes no importance to theoretical study even in the context of religious studies in the yeshiva and kolel, let alone general studies at a college. From the standpoint of Hasidic leaders the ordinary college represents the foreign “goyish” culture and should be eschewed. In contrast, both Lithuanian streams are for academic degree studies in principle, especially those leading to liberal or technological professions. However, the two Lithuanian streams clash over the proper time for such studies. As stated, the lenient approach allows students to attend college during yeshiva studies; some who take the lenient view only allow college attendance after the completion of several years of religious studies. This is not the case with yeshiva heads in the rigid Lithuanian camp. They do not allow their students to combine yeshiva studies with college studies in the evenings under any circumstances. The Lithuanian yeshivas waver between these two approaches. In recent years, the strict view with its opposition to simultaneous college and religious studies has become more popular, in contrast to the past. “Today,” one of the cognoscenti told me, “these yeshiva heads tolerate college studies for lack of choice,” but, he says, they would rather see less of them.

The Yeshiva as a College

Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood is the trendsetter of the rigid Lithuanian yeshivas, carrying considerable weight. In the 1999/2000 school year, it was attended by more than 3,000 students, which represents the biggest concentration of students under the aegis of a single yeshiva. Beth Midrash Govoha also attracts the cream of the crop; many students only come there after attending a series of progressively more demanding yeshivas. The yeshiva in Lakewood aims to be the hub of a process turning out the Haredi elite among religious scholars, who will assume leadership positions in the Haredi world, supply a new generation of yeshiva teachers and heads, and educate the lay leaders of American Haredi society. Staff and students at Beth Midrash Govoha call their institution the “Harvard of yeshivas” and do in fact regard themselves as the elite of Haredi society. To prove their point, they mention the fact that sons of heads of yeshivas where combined religious and college studies are permitted and sons of rectors at Yeshiva University, which straddles the border between the Haredi and Modern Orthodox worlds, attend Beth Midrash Govoha.

Even though the Lakewood yeshiva opposes combined programs of religious and college studies, its heads do not object to subsequent studies beyond the college level, namely, at graduate school. To ease the transition to graduate studies after the termination of full-time religious studies at the yeshiva, the Lakewood yeshiva has itself obtained accreditation as a college, recognized by the relevant official national body, the Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools (AARTS). Since 1971, it has been recognized by the Office of Higher Education of the State of New Jersey. Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore has a similar standing in Maryland and is also recognized by AARTS. In contrast, the New York State Board of Regents does not recognize yeshivas in the state as academic institutions. The federal government recognizes yeshivas that are recognized by AARTS, but mainly for the purpose of financial assistance.

Graduates of Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood receive a B.T.L. (Bachelor of Talmudic Law) degree, which allows them to enter graduate school. In this manner, Beth Midrash Govoha has taken some of the sting out of the conflict between religious and general studies at rigid Lithuanian yeshivas. Yeshiva study does not preclude the possibility of attending an academic program that

leads to a master's degree. Those who attend the kolel for several years can earn an M.T.L. (Master of Talmudic Law) degree.

The undergraduate degree awarded by Beth Midrash Govoha has practical value if the graduates wish to go on to graduate studies. After receiving the degree and passing the requisite entrance exams they can enroll in master's programs in several disciplines. In some fields, supplementary studies are necessary. The law schools of many major American universities admit recipients of the B.T.L. degree who pass the LSAT, as they do any other undergraduate degree recipient who wishes to attend law school. Medical schools require several make-up courses in the natural sciences in addition to the standard MCAT. To enroll in accounting programs, candidates must take a series of courses before they take the CPA tests. The key to admission in these professional academic graduate programs is high grades, especially on the entrance examinations, which are used to weed out the unqualified in the competition for the limited places in these programs.

Combining Yeshiva and College Studies

Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore is a leader among the yeshivas allowing students to combine religious and academic studies. It attracts students from far and wide, including foreign countries. I encountered students from Latin America and Israel. In the summer of 2000, it had an enrollment of 350 in the yeshiva and 180 in the kolel (plus 220 yeshiva high school students on the same campus, in a northern suburb of Baltimore). Many of the men devote the daytime hours to yeshiva study and the evenings to degree or professional certification courses at one of the many colleges and universities in the Baltimore area. According to one estimate, at least three-fourths of students at this yeshiva combine college studies with their religious studies. They spend most of their time in religious studies and crowd their college studies into two or three evenings of the week. The most popular academic fields among students at Ner Israel are computer science, pre-law, accounting, business administration, and pre-med.

Some Haredi men who wish to combine yeshiva and college studies do so under the auspices of Yeshiva University, the academic and religious-school bastion of Modern Orthodoxy. Yeshiva University offers several programs

where religious studies play an increasing part. The yeshiva program allows students to combine day studies at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva, which is a part of Yeshiva University, and university studies proper. The integration is effected under a single roof, that of Yeshiva University. In recent years, the nature of the yeshiva program at Yeshiva University has taken a “rightward” turn in religious terms. Quite a few students who share the Haredi worldview attend the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva of this academic institution. When I visited Yeshiva University, I found them studying Talmud in the *beit midrash*. In my conversations with them, I found it hard to distinguish between them and Haredi yeshiva students. Many of them, it seems, had received a Modern Orthodox upbringing. When they reached adulthood, they were swept up by the “rightward” swing of Modern Orthodoxy, but not to the extent of entering Haredi yeshivas. In the course of conversations with several of them, I realized that their parents were unwilling to pay for studies at a Haredi yeshiva. For these students, it suffices that studies at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Yeshiva, at least at the individual level, are no different in any respect from study at a Haredi yeshiva. The walls that separate Modern Orthodoxy from Haredi Judaism seem to be individually though not institutionally porous. Be this as it may, one gets the impression that a university that offers religious and general studies in a single framework is not very attractive to Haredi students. Indeed, most of the Haredi population considers Yeshiva University off limits. The main reasons are the single facility that religious and general studies share and the teaching of subjects at Yeshiva University that the Haredi worldview does not abide.

A Yeshiva-Compatible Haredi College

The B.T.L. degree allows graduates of the Lakewood yeshiva to skip college and go directly into graduate school. This has several advantages from the standpoint of Haredi society. It protects the young Haredi from contact with the cultural environment of an ordinary college, where coeducation is the norm. Moreover, many regular colleges have a core curriculum that includes philosophy, the arts, and literature, whose content is anathema to yeshiva heads and rabbis. Haredi society also remembers distinctly the atmosphere at colleges in the late 1960s and in the 1970s, the heyday of the “flower generation” and the 1968 student rebellion. “How does a Jew who went to college back then end up? Like Abbie Hoffman? Is that what there is to look

forward to?” - this indignant question was put to me three decades after the fact, as if all this were happening today. As one may recall, Abbie Hoffman, a young American Jew, was one of the leading figures of the “flower generation.” Indeed, the events in American colleges at the time seem to be one more factor in the upswing in American yeshiva enrollment from the early 1970s on, as several interviewees stated. Much of Haredi society declared colleges “non grata” and yeshivas began to enjoy a rebirth. Even old-time flexible yeshivas that had regularly allowed students to enroll in college on a night school basis were put off by the new situation that had developed on campuses.

Into this void stepped Touro College established by the Touro system in 1977 in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn. It catered from its start to Haredi students, most of whom attended yeshivas during the day. The creation of this institution gave the academic constellation in the New York area a new component, one that allowed Haredi men to continue integrating yeshiva and college studies without the risk of exposure to a cultural atmosphere that might traumatize them. It also avoided the imposition of the typical core curriculum of many regular colleges, including Brooklyn College, which is located in the heart of the largest Haredi population center in the United States. Touro College in Flatbush caused yeshiva heads to change their attitude to the combination of yeshiva studies and general college studies geared to professional advancement.

At the Flatbush campus of Touro College, men and women are separated. They attend classes at different times of the week. Studies take place in the evenings only and do not interfere with the yeshiva routine. Jewish studies are not taught; thus, the college does not draw upon a body of knowledge that may come into conflict with what is taught in the yeshivas. Subjects like art, philosophy, and history are also not taught. Most teachers and staff members are Orthodox themselves if not Haredi. Generally speaking, an effort is made to maintain the atmosphere of a Haredi institution. Lithuanian rabbis and yeshiva heads were thus confronted with an institution that conforms to their views as best it can and does not oppose it. From a certain point of view, they seemed glad to see the college come into being. It offers an alternative that yeshiva heads find more palatable than a regular college. This is said with special reference to Brooklyn College, which tenaciously imposes its core curriculum despite requests from Haredi circles to exempt Haredi students from it. At Touro College, Haredi students are given the opportunity to gear

themselves up for the labor market by entering degree programs during their yeshiva studies.

The Haredi-compatible Touro College went a long way since its foundation in 1977. Nineteen students studying at yeshivas during the day were in the first freshman class. Two years later, a separate program was established for women who attended a Beth Jacob seminary during the day and wanted to get a full academic degree. Twelve women enrolled in the first group. The program began in classrooms rented for the evenings at a Haredi high school in Flatbush. Eventually the new Touro College moved into a seven-story building with thirty classrooms and office space. The 1,030 students enrolled in 1999/2000, about 80 percent of whom came from the New York area, were equally divided between the sexes and came from various yeshivas and women's seminaries in the New York area. About 260 students completed their program of studies during the latter academic year and earned undergraduate degrees. In the beginning, only a single degree program - business administration - was offered. Today there are many, including - in addition to business administration, which remains the biggest program in terms of enrollment - computer science, pre-med studies, health science, pre-law studies, special education, and psychology.

College Credits for Yeshiva Studies

Each year, several hundred students at Touro College go to Israel for yeshiva study, with the college's approval and under its administrative auspices. The integration of studies at Touro College with yeshiva study is reflected in the curriculum. Yeshiva studies - in Israel and the United States - confer credits toward an undergraduate degree at Touro College. Students attending yeshiva may accrue up to thirty-six credits (weekly hours per semester) out of the 120 credits they need in their four years of study at Touro College. This arrangement, which recognizes the academic content and validity of yeshiva study, goes a long way toward easing the load for students who wish to combine yeshiva and college studies. It also affects the time frame of the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace, since students can complete their studies at Touro in four years without giving up yeshiva study.

Touro College is not the only institution that allows students to transfer credits from yeshivas. A number of regular colleges also offer this option. These colleges have a small percentage of Haredi students who combine studies at two separate institutions: religious studies at a yeshiva and academic degree studies at the college. Brooklyn College, for example, has a relatively large enrollment of this kind and allows students to get credit for some of their yeshiva studies. It awards thirty credits for yeshiva studies, out of the 120 credits required in four years of undergraduate study. In other words, it “saves” students the equivalent of one year out of the four years of study in the regular program. If the student attends a yeshiva in the United States, these credits must be spread over his four years of college attendance. However, Brooklyn College has taken the additional step of allowing students who spend a year in Israel for yeshiva study to accumulate these credits in one year only. The usual sequence among Haredi students who utilize this option is as follows: the student applies for admission to Brooklyn College and to a yeshiva, is accepted, and goes to Israel for yeshiva studies. When he returns, he brings a transcript of his records. A professor at the college examines the document to determine what can be approved for credit and what cannot. In recent years, the professor in charge has become familiar with yeshivas in the U.S. and Israel and the quality of their programs so as to be able to block the transfer of credits for blatantly non-academic work, but to approve studies of Talmud or of Rambam (Maimonides) which are considered “credit-worthy.” This transfer arrangement is also available to women who attend Haredi institutions of higher learning. Many women who combine studies at Brooklyn College with enrollment in a Haredi institution in New York City also attend a corresponding institution in Israel for a year or more.

Although other academic institutions use this method of transferring credits from yeshivas, there is no absolute guideline in the matter. The New York State High Education Commission's Board of Regents allows the transfer of credits only from academic institutions that it has accredited. However, college boards will sometimes review requests for transfers of credit for yeshiva studies on their own merits. Though several lecturers on the Brooklyn College faculty board opposed the proposal to accept credits for yeshiva study in the belief that such study is not equivalent to college study, the board approved the proposal anyway. Colleges in the Baltimore area give credits for yeshiva studies at Ner Israel Rabbinical College. York University in Toronto allows yeshiva students to apply credits toward an undergraduate degree in order to establish parity between students who reach the university from yeshivas and

those who arrive from Christian theological seminaries. Students from such seminaries have long been allowed to transfer credits to York University. I did not make a comprehensive survey of colleges that allow credit transfers from yeshivas, but it appears that a tendency to allow such transfers exists in urban centers with sizable Haredi populations. Haredi students are generally known for their very good if not outstanding academic achievements, even if they do not meet the full quota of hours. Because of the competition in the higher education “industry,” colleges in the New York area whose applicants are mainly from among the lower social strata, recent immigrants, or their children have an interest in admitting Haredi students who raise the average considerably and help boost these institutions’ “shares” in the market. In autumn 1998, there were fifty-eight requests for the transfer of credits from yeshivas to Brooklyn College. In spring 1999, there were eighty-five such requests; about three-fourths of them came from men and women who had attended yeshivas or women’s Haredi colleges in Israel. Brooklyn College sees the recent increase in the number of yeshiva students at the college requesting the transfer of credits as a welcome development; it means that Haredi men and women wish to attend Brooklyn College despite the competition from nearby Touro College. These students wish to do so even though Touro College lets them transfer more credits than Brooklyn College and even though Touro provides a Haredi atmosphere and rules of behavior especially attuned to the Haredi culture, including the omission of core studies such as philosophy, art, and history. However, part of the explanation for the increase in Haredi applications for the transfer of credits at Brooklyn College is apparently related to the fact that nearly half the applicants in spring 1999 were women who had attended Haredi women’s colleges in Israel. The number of Haredi men who asked to transfer credits for yeshiva studies declined significantly. It is also worth bearing in mind that some see the Haredi students at Brooklyn College as belonging to the more flexible camp or as something other than “real Haredi,” as one of the lecturers at the college who knows these students put it. Members of the stricter Haredi camp would not attend Brooklyn College. It is inconceivable that the rigid Lithuanian yeshivas would send a transcript to Brooklyn College to help students in a course of action, which they vehemently disapprove of. Indeed, none of the applicants for credit transfers in spring 1999 came from Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood or from Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn.

Fields of Academic Studies

Haredi students opting for degree studies tend to favor several fields. Pre-law and pre-med studies are popular among Lithuanians but have lost some of their preeminence. Among Haredi men, they have two main competitors today: management and computers. In the field of management, the focus is on finance and accounting. In the field of computers, students prefer programming. These fields are apparently perceived as the most likely to provide work and a livelihood. Haredi students are no different from any others in this respect, but the trend is particularly marked among them. Other fields are popular among Haredi women who go to college. Education is of course popular among Haredi and non-Haredi women, not to mention non-Jewish women. Other fields favored by Haredi women are related to health. Nutrition and therapy - especially speech therapy - attract Haredi women because they lend themselves to work at home. Thus women can raise their children without leaving home, work part time, and make good money on an hourly basis.

Government Assistance

The United States has a financial-aid system that provides grants and loans for higher education and vocational training in accordance with the economic circumstances and size of a family and number of college students it supports. Financial aid for tuition is available both at the federal level (the PEL program) and at the state level. Federal aid is available for four years and was limited to \$3,300 a year, in 2000. The upper limit of financial aid in the state program was \$5,000. The two sums may be combined and applied not only to tuition but also to other study-related expenses such as rent, food and textbooks. These items are taken into account in calculating the financial aid that a student will receive. In addition to grants, students may apply for up to \$17,000 a year in loans while at school. The amounts increase from year to year, provided the student makes demonstrable progress toward attaining an undergraduate degree. At Touro College in Flatbush about half of the students received government assistance in the year 2000. Touro College, like many other colleges and institutes, employs personnel whose principal duty is to help students fill out application forms properly and prepare the complex documentation that must be submitted to prove eligibility. Students in yeshivas

considered institutes of higher education can also obtain assistance under the regular eligibility terms, but through the federal program alone. Government assistance is also available for those studying in vocational-training institutes. A student can use such assistance only once for a period of four years. Those who use it to pay for their yeshiva studies and only later decide to go to college or vocational training institutes are sometime at great financial difficulty to pay for education they need in order to find their place in the labor market.

8 Geographical Patterns

The demands of Haredi religious culture play a part in the geographical distribution of workplaces preferred by yeshiva students. Yeshiva students prefer to work in an environment that honors these demands in both the immediate and broader surroundings. Consequently, Haredi workers tend to gather in workplaces that accept their demands.

Working at Home

Many Haredi workers in the New York area clearly favor occupations that allow them to work at home. Haredi women are in the forefront in regard to this tendency. By working at home, they can enter the labor market while maintaining households and raising children. This is reflected in the type of work they choose to do. Health-care and computer-related occupations lend themselves to the preferred pattern. Men also look for ways to work at home. For them, working at home has a number of advantages. It allows them to remain in the Haredi neighborhood and spare themselves the encounter with an unfamiliar environment full of cultural risks for young Haredi men; it frees them from demands in the workplace that may clash with the demands of Haredi culture; and it enables them to work at several jobs concurrently and thereby diversify and increase their sources of income when full-time job opportunities are lacking. Since work at home does not involve a rigid schedule, it allows greater integration between breadwinning and religious study. One can work at home part time and thereby keep up the connection with one's yeshiva more easily. Work at home also reinforces the apparent desire of Haredi men to be a part of the local Haredi economy. This tendency to work at home serves to increase the demand for computer-related

occupations, as computers entail a relatively small investment and makes it possible to develop a home worksite that can support its owner.

A Haredi Labor Niche

In the New York area, I found many examples of concentrations of Haredi employees in certain plants or businesses, usually Haredi-owned. The main reason is the access factor: one gains access to such businesses by knowing long-time Haredi employees or the Haredi management of the concern. The Haredi grapevine passes on information about any workplace staffed by Haredi employees. Moreover, the fact that over a period of time most workers at a given workplace are Haredi indicates that the workplace honors the religio-cultural demands of Haredi society; an environment of Haredi employees, owners, or managers alleviates concern about the dangers that lurk in the outside world.

All these advantages, which are especially important to those first entering the labor market, have led to a rather widespread phenomenon in New York Haredi society – Haredi establishments that serve as labor niches, so to speak, for Haredi employees. The greater the concern about the outside world and the stronger the reliance on internal solidarity, the more evident is the pattern of such concentration. This is the case among Hasidic groups, especially the most reclusive ones like the big Satmar sect. The big photo and optics store on 34th Street, in addition to being a suitable address for yeshiva students without general education and vocational training, also attracts them because of its Haredi ambiance. The owners are Haredi, the management is Haredi, and most employees are Haredi, a large majority of them Hasidic men, including many from the Satmar community. Working here, in the heart of Manhattan, alleviates the fear of the outside world of non-Haredi public space with its attendant dangers. It is this fear that leads Haredi society to put up cultural, social, and spatial walls and create its own public space as best it can. Working in large numbers in a given enterprise is one of the manifestations of this creation of Haredi space. Haredi neighborhoods in Brooklyn, where Haredi residents account for much of the local population, also have plants or business enterprises where Haredi employees congregate. But this phenomenon is especially evident outside these neighborhoods, where such

establishments are vital in creating a protective and supportive niche within a strange and dangerous space.

Concentrating in Haredi Neighborhoods

As we have said, many Haredi men entering the labor market wish to avoid leaving the familiar Haredi world and the cultural protection it offers them, and thus look for work in a Haredi environment. They expect their neighborhoods to provide workplaces conforming to the cultural prerequisites of Haredi society. To find work in such establishments, they resort to information they have acquired and a support system of personal and family contacts. Many Haredi employers tend to set up their businesses in neighborhoods with large Haredi populations. They also tend to employ Haredi workers and serve a Haredi clientele. Haredi employers and employees thus earn their livings in the local economies of their own neighborhoods, so that many yeshiva students who live in Boro Park, Brooklyn, also work there. I came across former yeshiva students working as sales clerks in many of the stores that fill the streets of this neighborhood. Appliance, houseware, furniture, and clothing outlets attract large numbers of job-seeking yeshiva students. Grocery and food stores are also important targets for yeshiva students who do not go the vocational-training route. Others distribute goods to stores or provide various services. Most jobs in Haredi neighborhoods are in the traditional areas of trade and services and crafts. Owing to the Haredi preference for work in local neighborhoods, yeshiva students gravitate to traditional occupations requiring few skills and also paying rather poorly.

Here again, however, a distinction must be made between Hasidic and Lithuanian men. Those who rely heavily on the local Haredi economy are Hasidic men who lack basic skills and, for the most part have not undergone vocational training. In contrast, a large number of Lithuanians participate in the larger urban economy rather than cloistering themselves within the narrow confines of the local economy of Brooklyn Haredi neighborhoods. Lithuanian workers are the ones who find their way to big companies spread throughout the city as programmers, accountants, lawyers, and practitioners of other academic occupations. Lithuanian workers are more fully immersed than Hasidic ones in the civilization of modern America because a sizable number

of them have the benefit of full secondary schooling if not undergraduate or master's degrees.

Very few Haredi men live in Manhattan and many of them, especially Hasidic ones, avoid working there. The sights and sounds of Manhattan are offensive to Haredi eyes and ears, thus violating an important principle of this society: maintaining “the sanctity of one’s eyes” - a principle based on Numbers 15:39 (“Seek not after your own heart and your own eyes after which ye use to go a'whoring”). I was told in one interview that the Stolin-Karlin Hasidic rebbe forbids his followers to work in Manhattan. Members of the Skver Hasidic sect are not allowed to work in Manhattan for two years after they marry, their rebbe believing that it takes them that long to steel themselves to survive in this culturally alien environment. Even in the workplaces themselves, there is an attempt to create a sheltered cultural environment for Haredi workers, insofar as job-discrimination laws permit. Thus one finds in various parts of New York, including the commercial and business centers of Manhattan, workplaces where owners, managers, and an overwhelming majority of employees are former yeshiva students. However, since most Hasidic sects do not encourage adherents to work outside Haredi neighborhoods, most former yeshiva students (and especially of the Satmar Hasidic community) find jobs in Haredi neighborhoods or nearby.

Building a Haredi Economy in the Suburbs

Haredi households have been moving to several of New York’s suburbs for a few decades now (Heilman, 1999; Shilhav, 1998: 28-31) and the process is taking hold in other North American cities as well. Haredi households who move to the suburbs have two choices: to rely on the city for a living or to build an economic base for themselves in the suburb itself. Both patterns can be seen among Haredi suburbanites. Some commute to work in the city. Every morning, buses take numerous Haredi commuters from such Haredi suburbs as Monroe, Monsey, New Square, and Kiryas Joel to the Haredi employment centers of Manhattan and Brooklyn. These bus lines are especially designed to serve the Haredi population. They go directly to the diamond center on 47th Street in Manhattan and to Williamsburg and Boro Park in Brooklyn. Other Haredi suburbanites choose to work locally, where Haredi businesses are

coming into being. Rabbis, rebbes, and lay community leaders are acting to bring jobs to the Haredi suburbs.

Over the years many Haredi families have flocked to Lakewood, a distant New Jersey suburb in the New York area and where Beth Midrash Govoha is located. Some of these families were started by students who came to Lakewood to attend its important yeshiva and were sufficiently attracted by its cultural environment to settle there. Others came for the Haredi environment itself. In recent years, many kollel students in Lakewood who opted for the labor force continue to live in the town and commute to work in New York or Philadelphia, both of which are an hour ride away. Others choose to work in the Haredi cultural milieu that has blossomed in Lakewood in the past few decades. Moreover, Haredi leaders in Lakewood are working to attract businesses to their town and to get new ones started. Entrepreneurs are being encouraged to take advantage of the skilled manpower that is burgeoning with the town's Haredi population. These residents have become magnets for businesses looking for skilled and stable workers.

9 Lessons for Israel

The situation among the Haredi population in the New York area, as portrayed in this study, shows that, in the absence of compulsory military service, Haredi men do not stay out of the job market for long. The norm of religious study, while firmly entrenched in America, does not cause Haredi men to reject the norm of breadwinning out of hand. A balance is struck between religious study and work. In Israel, too, one could assume that many Haredi men would choose a career in the workplace instead of at the yeshiva if men over a certain age after terminating full-time yeshiva study were exempted from full military service. Haredi men in the United States do think so. A senior official in Agudath Israel of America who is well acquainted with the state of affairs in Israel told me that he considered military service the main reason for the lengthy stay in yeshivas. He added that if a legal arrangement to exempt yeshiva students from military service in the spirit of the Tal Commission's recommendations were to be found, a high percentage of Haredi men would leave the exclusive framework of yeshiva study and enter the labor market on a full- or part-time basis. A Haredi man employed in the diamond center on 47th Street in Manhattan told me that if the Israelis worked out an arrangement for military service along the lines of the Tal Commission's recommendations, masses of Israeli yeshiva students would enter the labor market. "I spent two years in yeshivas in Israel," he said. "I know the people there and I spoke with them. Lots of them told me that if there were no military service in Israel they would not continue to sit in yeshivas." The two informants and many others whom I spoke to were obviously guided not only by their familiarity with the situation of Haredi men in Israel but also by the American Haredi experience.

In other words, one can expect, based on the American Haredi experience, that if a substantive change is instituted in Israel - mainly in the matter of military service for yeshiva students, but also in the norms pertaining to full-time religious study and the duty of making a living, as well as in the rules applying to state economic support of yeshiva students and their families - Haredi men

will make a perceptible though gradual transition from the yeshiva to the workplace. Furthermore, the findings of the present survey on the situation among Haredi men in the New York area suggest that different Haredi groups will make the transition in different ways. The rate of transition may also vary among Haredi groups differentiated by age and socio-economic status - status being determined largely by family connections on the parents' and in-laws' sides. Several major lessons for Israel set forth below, follow from the findings of the survey of the Haredi transition from the yeshiva to the workplace in the New York area.

Consent of Rabbis and Yeshiva Heads

The findings of the survey show that rabbis and yeshiva heads in the New York area realize that many yeshiva students must cut down their religious studies in order to support their families. Although these clerics and educators expend great efforts to make full-time religious study possible and encourage talented students to immerse themselves in religious study to the maximum possible extent, they do not press students who wish to become breadwinners not to do so. They understand that married students must fulfill the duty of supporting their families. They understand people who have lost their taste for full-time study. They also understand that a Haredi society with a flourishing yeshiva life, where genuinely superior scholars are given every opportunity to continue studying and rise to positions of social leadership, should have a solid stratum of "householders" capable not only of supporting their families honorably but also constituting a base of economic support for the Haredi society's institutions, especially its yeshivas.

In Israel, too, rabbis and yeshiva heads will presumably remain an important source of authority in implementing the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace. They were involved behind the scenes in the Tal Commission's deliberations. However, a situation may develop in which individuals will not ask their personal rabbis for permission, lest it be withheld, as shown in the Gallup Israel study for the JDC (Tal Commission, 2000: Volume B-2, 274, 282). In my estimation, some yeshiva students will monitor the public statements of leading rabbis on the subject and select a course of action from among the range of views expressed. Recent reports in the Israeli press indicate that there is no consensus of opinion among the Haredi rabbinical

leadership about the legal arrangement the Tal Commission has proposed. The lack of consensus shows that the Israeli rabbis and yeshiva heads do not have a monolithic view. For this reason, significant differences of opinion may exist between those who favor the arrangement proposed by the Tal Commission, or some other state-sponsored arrangement, and those who will not tolerate government interference in issues that are central to Haredi life. Full-time religious study has indeed become one of the supreme cultural issues in the Haredi world. The absence of rabbinical consensus will find expression among yeshiva students. Some will follow the lead of those who favor an arrangement; others will side with its opponents. The ultimate strength of each camp is difficult to estimate at the present time.

The findings of the survey also point to the deep involvement of rabbis and yeshiva heads in guiding yeshiva students in the New York area with respect to vocational training and higher education. Rabbis express their views on these matters intensively and continuously. Their decisions to ban such study or to lend it their tacit consent are tantamount to commandments for many members of the Haredi community. The rabbis and yeshiva heads do seem to be alive to the community's needs and wishes. The range of vocational training and higher education facilities in the United States gives them some maneuvering space among the possibilities and thus allows them to maintain their positions of authority in the process that leads to the labor market. Therefore, to regulate this process, it seems very important to maintain the authority of yeshiva heads and rabbis and allow them to play a role in the transition of students from the yeshiva to the workplace. Any direct or indirect challenge to the rabbis' authority could cause them to oppose the process.

Whoever wishes to encourage yeshiva students to join the labor force should therefore make sure that the process is not seen as a challenge to the authority of yeshiva heads and rabbis. This authority is a bedrock of Haredi culture, be it in New York or Jerusalem and Bene Beraq. A mechanism is needed to ease yeshiva students toward a working life. Those who devise the mechanism must be sensitive to the views of yeshiva heads, not only to the extent of paying lip service to their public pronouncements but also when it comes to letting them become personally involved whenever a yeshiva student wishes to join the labor force. Rabbis are an important factor in individual decision-making in Haredi society and will presumably be so whenever a yeshiva student has to decide where he is heading. People who set up in Israel vocational-training institutes for yeshiva students, such as the Haredi Center for Vocational

Training, act in accordance with this principal when they make their plans. They make sure they set the approval of rabbis who are sympathetic to the idea of steering yeshiva men who are unqualified or unable to persevere in full-time religious studies toward the labor force; at the same time, they avoid arousing the opposition of other rabbis. They have in fact been all the more cautious given the budding controversy in Israeli Haredi society over the recommendations of the Tal Commission. Since the rabbis do not agree in the matter, it is difficult to achieve a broad consensus in Haredi public circles. Therefore, it would seem that the establishment of vocational-training institutes or job-placement agencies for yeshiva students who wish to join the labor force, let alone arrangements that facilitate academic studies, should be undertaken very delicately, especially at the outset of the process. Tacit consent is an accepted practice among rabbis, as long as silence is maintained all around.

Who Will Join the Labor Market, and When?

The questions of who will join the labor market and at what point in their lives are basic issues that should be explored by anyone wishing to examine the components of the process of transition from the yeshiva to the workplace in Israel. The findings of the New York area survey point to several possible answers.

Differences between Hasidic and Lithuanian Men

The survey found considerable differences between the Hasidic and Lithuanian groups in the New York area with respect to the process of moving from the yeshiva to the workplace. These differences are linked to social and cultural differences between these two main components of American Haredi society. Hasidic men do not engage in full-time yeshiva and kollel study for long; they go to work soon after they marry. Lithuanians continue their full-time religious studies even beyond marriage and are showing an increasing inclination to spend additional years in a kollel in order to “strengthen themselves.” Lithuanians also pursue academic studies and become professionals. Some get their professional training while studying at the yeshiva; others first complete a period of religious studies that they have determined for themselves. These differences between Hasidic and Lithuanian

men are rooted in the outlooks of the two groups vis-à-vis the importance of both religious and academic study. They also reflect class differences between the two population groups. Hasidic men act like working-class people, satisfied with jobs that provide a living and no more; Lithuanians behave like members of the middle class, seeking social prestige and professional interest in their work. As a result of these differences, the two population groups reveal perceptibly different educational and occupational structures. Most Hasidic men join the labor market directly, generally without vocational training, and eschew academic studies. Lithuanians, by contrast, prefer to receive training before entering the labor market. Few settle for snap courses; instead, they choose intensive training. Many enroll in institutions awarding degrees and go on to graduate school. The Lithuanian population group continues as in the past to turn out typical American-Jewish professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants, augmented today by specialists in computer programming, business administration, and finance.

These differences in the occupational profiles of Hasidic and Lithuanian men in the new York area lead one to ask if things will develop similarly in Israel. In other words, will Hasidic men enter the labor market more massively than Lithuanians if and when yeshiva students are exempted from full military service? Today, with compulsory military service in effect, Hasidic men also spend many years in yeshivas and kolels, though common knowledge and media reports indicate that many kolel students, and not only Hasidic men, participate in the labor force in ways that are not reflected in official or other statistics. However, if one goes by the situation among American Haredi men, one may expect more Hasidic than Lithuanian men in Israel to join the labor force if and when a new draft arrangement is worked out for yeshiva students. Not only long-term Hasidic kolel students are likely to view the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace in a very positive light; young kolel students who have been married for a year or so may also do so. A qualitative research study on the employment of Haredi men produced by Gallup Israel for the JDC (published in April 1999; Tal Commission, 2000: Volume B-2, 273, 281) underscored this point. Young Lithuanian kolel students, on the otherhand, will probably avoid the labor market, since they are too young to have completed the normative “quota” of religious study in the yeshiva and kolel.

In view of the anticipated massive move of Hasidic men from the yeshiva to the workplace, efforts should be made to assure that these men do not follow

the example of their counterparts in the New York area. In other words, steps should be taken to provide them with vocational training before they enter the labor market. There is a correlation between vocational training and future income. Enhancing the earning power of the Haredi population is part of the unwritten agenda of the Tal Commission, but the mass direct entry of Hasidic men into the labor market, without acquiring work skills, will not achieve this result. Such men will not only be forced to engage in trades that do not pay well; they will also have to compete for jobs with the unskilled, the unemployed, Palestinians, and the foreign workers who have been flocking to Israel in search of work. The competition for jobs will become especially fierce within Haredi society, since the Hasidic men, given the norm of cultural and geographical seclusion that operates among them even more strongly than among the Lithuanians, will tend to confine their job search to the Haredi space itself. Therefore, low wages will be the rule and the goal of improving the Hasidic population's dire economic circumstances will not be achieved. With little hope for good jobs, many Hasidic men may decide to stay in the yeshiva to continue to qualify for the government and other payments they regularly receive under current arrangements in Israel. Others will continue to combine yeshiva study with part-time work not reflected in official labor and income statistics.

Differences in Level of Income

Differences in the income levels of parents were found to be related to the duration of yeshiva studies among the Haredi population of the United States. The men who left the yeshiva early were the ones whose parents and in-laws could not support them and their young families. In other words, income level is another factor in the difference between Hasidic and Lithuanian men in the timing of their entry into the labor market. However, there are perceptible differences in the income levels of parents and in-laws among the Lithuanians themselves, which produce a further differentiation in the duration of full-time religious studies. Therefore, Lithuanians in Israel too may enter the labor market at a varying rate. In other words, since the prestige of a yeshiva sometimes corresponds to its social make-up, students at important yeshivas, which attract young people from affluent families, and those at yeshivas that attract students from less affluent families may join the labor force to varying extents. In this sense, there may also be differences between Lithuanian and Sephardi yeshivas. Both use the same educational methods and give equal weight to religious studies, but the Sephardi yeshivas cater to a less affluent

population as a consequence of Israel's socio-historical circumstances. Thus, the proportion of students who join the labor force may turn out to be higher at Sephardi yeshivas than at Lithuanian yeshivas.

However, yeshiva students and their families in Israel have access to a broader array of economic support mechanisms than in the United States. Therefore, the effect of differences in income level may not be as important in Israel as it is in the U.S.

Age Differences

The initial findings of the New York survey lead one to believe that in Israel, too, if and when the induction system is changed, the first Lithuanian yeshiva students to join the labor force will be the older ones - those who have met their commitment to full-time religious study and have raised families too large to permit them to evade the burden of breadwinning. Younger kolel students, including those with two or three children, may remain in the kolel until such time as they believe they have given enough to full-time yeshiva study and material pressures intensify. This might mean that Lithuanians might not use the possibility of leaving their full-time studies at the age of 23, as the Tal Bill suggests, but a few years later.

Hasidic kolel students, in contrast, who marry at an early age and are not inclined to study full time for many years, will be prepared to join the labor force at the relatively early age of twenty-one or so. This leads to the conclusion that Hasidic men should be given the possibility of joining the labor force at a younger age than 23. A proposal in this spirit appeared in the press, though not out of consideration for the Hasidic way of life (Ilan, 2000). Since the Hasidic component accounts for much of the Haredi population, one might expect a sizable exit from the yeshivas at this point in life.

If the proposal to permit yeshiva students to join the labor force at various ages, starting at the age of twenty-one becomes a reality, some Lithuanian yeshiva students may opt for it. This option may also be suitable for those who discover that full-time religious study beyond the five years or so they have already invested in a yeshiva is not for them. Currently, these young Haredi young men do not really study full time but hang on in the yeshiva or kolel to dodge the draft.

Different Quotas of Full-Time Study

Today, the number of years Israeli Haredi men spend at yeshiva study is determined not by choice or social norms but by the ins and outs of draft deferment. However, if yeshiva students are given an in to the labor market, Haredi men in Israel may evolve “quotas” for full-time religious study similar to those among American Haredi men. It is difficult today to say what these “quotas” will be, though the situation in the New York area can give some indication. The size of the quota will certainly vary from one Haredi group to another. Lithuanian men will opt for a big quota and Hasidic men will settle for a more modest one; affluent parents will set a higher quota than poorer parents; those intending to become educators or rabbis will spend more years in kollel than those intent on other jobs in the labor market. Differences based on factors not discussed in this inquiry may come to the fore. The idea of a differentiated quota, so common in various areas of social life, could well gain force among Haredi men in Israel once the threat of army induction is removed.

How to Encourage Haredi Men to Join the Labor Market

The American experience indicates that the transition of Haredi men from the yeshiva to the workplace in Israel should be addressed while taking into consideration the cultural attributes and the social characteristics of this population group and its various components. A system of policy measures should be developed and applied so as to encourage and facilitate the entry into the labor market by Haredi men. A discussion of these measures follows. Some of these measures relate to these men as members of a culturally unique population group, others are intended to assist them as part of a socially disadvantaged segment of the Israeli population.

Separate Haredi Training Facilities

The American experience shows that Haredi men, as well as Haredi women, prefer to function in their own environments, even when it comes to activities that have no Haredi content. Thus, even though computer studies have no Haredi content, Haredi students prefer a Haredi setting under Haredi management. Such segregation assures them that the institutional milieu will exude the appropriate atmosphere and not clash with Haredi mores. Separate

settings spare Haredi students from contact with other cultures and thus preclude exposure to alien influences. Haredi vocational-training facilities attract Haredi students willing to commute large distances for no reason other than to study in a Haredi environment that respects their social customs. In Israel too, the first separate vocational training and educational facilities for Haredi men have come into being. Whoever wishes to see these institutions accommodate a greater number of yeshiva students looking to acquire training for the labor market should give some thought to expanding them.

One of the precepts of Haredi culture is the separation of men and women in various public settings, including schools. In the United States and Israel, Haredi schools are sex-segregated. One reason for the success of Haredi vocational-training institutes in the New York area is their conformity to this principle. This is a *sine qua non*, especially among the Hasidic group. It can be brought about in various ways: separate buildings, separate classes in a single building, or separate times in a single building. It is true that a number of Haredi men have received vocational training at institutes that do not respect Haredi mores and are coeducational, but they are few in number and operated before Haredi vocational-training settings came into being. Once the new sex-segregated programs became available, Haredi men and women found it easier to accept vocational training. In Israel, the first steps in the direction of vocational training for Haredi men and women illustrate the basic importance of such segregation. It is also an essential condition for the consent of rabbis and yeshiva heads.

Reinforcement of Basic Skills

The prevailing situation in American Hasidic schools in terms of the teaching of general studies seems to be typical of a large majority of Haredi schools in Israel, including those of the Shas educational system. Therefore, to prepare students for the vocational training and even degree studies required for entry into the labor market after several years in a yeshiva, the teaching of basic skills in Haredi schools should be revised. In fact, a restructuring of the Haredi education systems in Israel is needed. This will require substantial government funding. It will be necessary to invest in training and paying the salaries of suitable teachers, in creating a system of counseling and supervision, and in installing and maintaining teaching resources. As the Gallup Israel survey for the JDC showed (Tal Commission, 2000: Volume B-2, p. 286), until such restructuring takes place yeshiva graduates will find it difficult to take the vocational and academic training routes into the labor market. Consequently,

yeshiva students will be forced into jobs that do not enable them to earn a decent living.

Even if Haredi education is restructured, the lack of basic skills among older yeshiva students, the ones currently enrolled in yeshivas and kolels, will remain an unsolved problem. To move them into the labor market effectively, agencies equipping them with the requisite skills will be needed. The market has such agencies today: privately operated courses and schools that prepare students for matriculation or college admission exams. If yeshiva students do begin to enter the labor market in large numbers, special efforts will have to be made to endow existing agencies and establish new ones.

The Hebrew language skills of Haredi men joining the labor market should be examined; if they fall short of the level routinely accepted in the workaday world, something will have to be done. Problems in oral and written communication may also arise because of the cultural background of Ashkenazi Haredi men, raised as they were in an environment in which Yiddish was commonly used as the vernacular. These Haredi men acquired their proficiency in Hebrew in the course of religious studies (in the main) and in the street, and not necessarily in school. Language difficulty is also evident among other underprivileged population groups in Israel (recent immigrants and Arabs, for example) and places all of them at a comparative disadvantage in the labor market. In addition to the language problem, the Haredi education systems are deficient in providing basic knowledge in various fields, especially mathematics and science. Therefore, as efforts are made to encourage kolel students to join the labor force, the problems of language skills and basic knowledge should be corrected, insofar as this is possible. All vocational-training programs preparing kolel students for the labor market in Israel should tackle these basic problems before teaching the specific skills of a given occupation.

One way to deal with the lack of basic skills among yeshiva students who will want to join the labor force is to create a series of preparatory courses. These courses may operate along the lines of the *ulpan* system of teaching Hebrew that has proven itself for newcomers in the country: recent immigrants, members of minority groups, and people lacking basic schooling. Yeshiva students wishing to join the labor force should indeed be considered newcomers.

Another way is restructuring Haredi education. The Haredi society will have to bring the curriculum of its schools into line with the curriculum in the state educational system, so that graduates will not lack basic skills when they enter the labor market. Lithuanian schools in the United States did this several generations ago. Their graduates are equipped with basic skills and pass the SAT exams with flying colors. When they enroll in vocational training institutes and colleges, they have all the basic skills needed for further study. The Hasidic schools in the United States have avoided this course of action for years, and the structural result is a concentration of Hasidic men at the bottom of the occupational and income scales. Recently, largely as a result of pressure from parents who want to improve their children's prospects in the labor market, a growing number of Hasidic sects have begun to restructure the curriculum in their schools for boys, so as to better prepare them for the labor market.

Accelerated and Phased Training

The American experience illustrates with greater clarity the need to take account of the sense of urgency kolel students experience when they join the labor force. They do not have the time for protracted training and want to start as soon as possible. Hasidic men marry and have children at an early age and have to support their families. Lithuanians attend yeshivas and kolels for years; by the time they are ready to enter the labor market, they are also married and have children. Neither group has much time for training. The lesson, then, is to offer highly focused, intensive training that will prepare students quickly for a working life. However, to preclude Haredi concentration in jobs that require limited training and pay poorly, it is desirable to offer concurrently phased training which Haredi men may undergo while holding down jobs and supporting their families. American vocational-training and academic systems have this option, taking into account the needs of population groups that, for economic and social reasons, cannot complete the full standard program. The higher-education system even offers a partial undergraduate degree (associate of arts) after two years of study at a community college. Vocational-training institutes have devised a phased curriculum that can be completed incrementally while the student is at work.

Night School

Vocational-training institutes and colleges in the New York area offer evening classes so that students can continue working during the day. This type of scheduling was and still is meant for all and sundry and especially for the numerous immigrants who have continued to pour into the area since New York became a great city and a magnet for people and businesses. The designers of the college systems of New York and other American cities tailored them to the needs of a country of immigrants and a society that wished to encourage upward socio-economic mobility. The key to this mobility is schooling for anyone who wants it, even if he has to work during the day and cannot fall back on parental income or accumulated family wealth. Israeli society has not followed the wise American example, even though to this day its situation as a country of immigrants is similar.

American Haredi men use the night school system for their own purposes. Some use it when they work in trade or services; others to combine yeshiva studies with vocational or degree studies. For young Haredi men who wish to become breadwinners, the combination of vocational and religious studies eases the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace. It spares them the feeling of having betrayed their cultural code, as religious studies still remain an integral part of their lives.

Therefore, when vocational-training institutes for Haredi men are established in Israel, the emphasis should be on scheduling most classes in the evenings. This will help yeshiva students to continue attending a kolel or working to support their families during the day and train for skilled jobs in the evenings. Evening classes can also serve the needs of yeshiva students who, while not yet on the move toward the labor market, wish to learn a trade or acquire an education which will help them become breadwinners, in due course. Several new vocational-training programs for yeshiva students in Israel are already allowing this to happen. They schedule their classes in the evenings, after the regular yeshiva day. The Gallup Israel survey for the JDC (Tal Commission, 2000: Volume B-2, p. 278) also pointed to a preference for evening or afternoon hours.

Financial Assistance

Yeshiva students wishing to acquire skills before joining the labor force will have to pay tuition fees. The United States has ramified programs of financial

assistance and recipients include yeshiva students. Since most of Israel's Haredi population is short on financial resources, a system of tuition support like the American one should be developed. Yeshiva students entering the labor market should be given the opportunity to acquire job skills, otherwise, they will gravitate to occupations that do not require special skills and whose wages hardly exceed the social-welfare payments they can get without joining in the labor force. The existence of a financial-assistance program could prompt many of the yeshiva students who are heading for the labor market to acquire skills in high-demand occupations and thus boost their income and enable them to make a greater contribution to the Israeli economy. Legislation along the lines of the Tal Commission's recommendations will not in itself ensure that yeshiva students join the labor force in occupations that entail high-level skills. Inability to pay tuition fees is liable to thwart the process. The first wave of new workers will flood industries that require unskilled labor. The feedback from these workers could deter the next wave of jobseekers. Consequently, the actual rate at which kollel students leave for the labor market will certainly be quite low. Therefore, establishing the legal basis of military service for yeshiva students should be regarded as only one step in a package of requisite policy measures. It is also important to create conditions that will allow yeshiva students who wish to join the labor force to make the most of their potential.

Financial aid will also be needed to pay for on-the-job training. The American experience shows that many Haredi men, especially among the Hasidic population, enter the labor market directly, with no stopover at a vocational-training institute. In many cases, the requisite skills are acquired in the workplace itself. Employers should be encouraged to train new workers on the job by means of partial wage subsidies for a fixed period of time, as is done in the case of the unemployed and the disabled. Such aid would be especially useful in promoting the employment of Haredi workers, whose occupational disadvantages are especially great and who tend to go to work without training. If Haredi kollel students enter the labor market directly and fail to acquire on-the-job training, they may end up at the bottom of the income scale and continue to develop as a group in permanent economic distress. As a result, Haredi men will not perceptibly alter their socio-economic position by going to work. The Tal Commission, elaborating on its recommendations for a new draft arrangement for yeshiva students, cited the need to reduce the "alienation and social distance of the Haredi population in Israel from other population groups." The Commission focused on the

alienation and social distance that result from its avoidance of military service (Tal Commission, 2000: Volume A, p. 2 of letter to the Prime Minister). However, estrangement and social distance are also the products of a socio-economic gap linked to cultural distance; as evidence of this, one need only consider Oriental Jews and the Arab population in Israel. To forestall the perpetuation of the chronic socio-economic distress of the Haredi population, it is not enough to legislate terms of military service in the spirit of the Tal Commission's recommendations. Along with these terms, there should be mechanisms that encourage members of this population group to join the labor force in jobs that benefit both themselves and the economy. In the absence of all these conditions, the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace will remain a change over from one kind of hardship to another.

Vocational Guidance and Job Placement

Yeshiva students in the process of joining the labor force are unfamiliar with the workaday world, unacquainted with society at large, afraid to leave their yeshivas and enter a world that could very well treat them with hostility, lack prior job experience, and have acquired their skills overnight. They need help when taking their first steps in the labor market. Vocational guidance by people familiar with the Haredi mores and needs is one of a number of important services that should be available to yeshiva students to help them choose a specific vocational track. Job placement is another service that should be considered for yeshiva students heading for the labor market. In the New York area, one can find several examples of job-placement services run by Haredi professionals for Haredi workers. All these placement services find jobs that fit the credentials of Haredi graduates or jobseekers. Graduates of vocational-training institutes can use these placement services again if they lose their previous job. If significant movement from the yeshiva to the workplace occurs, many people will presumably move from job to job for a period of several years in a process of trial and error. The jobs in which they are placed may prove unsuitable, the occupation acquired may be ill-suited to the individual or not in demand, or relations between the former yeshiva student and his colleagues at work may not be smooth. All these eventualities underscore the need for a job-placement agency geared to former yeshiva students.

Part-Time Work during Yeshiva Studies

Working for a living while studying is common among yeshiva and kolel students in the New York area, much as it is among college and university students. It takes the form of part-time jobs during study breaks. Breaks during the day are called *bein ha-sedarim*, i.e., recesses between morning, afternoon, and evening study sessions. There are odd jobs that can be squeezed into the schedule. At Beth Midrash Govoha in Lakewood, I heard of long-time students, now in the kolel, tutoring young pupils. Others clean offices, fill in as sales clerks, etc. The lack of data makes it difficult to estimate the extent of this activity, but apparently students without adequate support from home or some other source try their best to line up such *bein ha-sedarim* jobs. In yeshivas and kolels, as in colleges and universities, it is customary to work during vacations, known in the yeshiva world as *bein ha-zemanim* (“between semesters”). Some work as counselors in summer camps; others find temporary jobs in businesses and services.

My interviewees affirmed that working for a living during yeshiva and kolel studies is quite common. They said that it is common in Israel too, but noted that in Israel it is illegal to work while studying at a yeshiva under a draft deferment and not everyone is willing to risk his deferment for the sake of a part-time job. This concern notwithstanding, many yeshiva students in Israel do part-time work between periods and semesters. Such work allows students to contribute to their upkeep, augmenting parental or (in some cases) welfare support, and habituates them to a working life and responsibility for covering part of their living and study expenses.

The purview of the Tal Commission did not include the subject of work during yeshiva studies and thus it did not address itself to it. It is therefore desirable to consider this issue and weigh the possibility of allowing yeshiva students to work part time to some extent. If it is desired to attract yeshiva students to the workaday world, as the Tal Commission’s recommendations envision at the age of twenty-three, then it may make sense to let them do some work while still devoting most of their time to religious studies. It is true that this kind of arrangement would discriminate against soldiers, as they are neither available nor permitted to work during their military service. However, since the endless deferment of yeshiva students creates discrimination in any case, and since the Tal Commission’s recommendations would permit yeshiva students to go to work without doing full military service, allowing them to work part time would not constitute a deviation from the reality of the evolving situation. The

correct approach might be to limit part-time work to some form of community service, for pay or for a scholarship, along the lines of Project Perakh (a tutoring project in Israeli universities and colleges). The Haredi population can serve society in many places - among its own and among pupils, adults, the elderly, and immigrants. If some yeshiva students were to prove willing to step outside the narrow confines of the Haredi world, it would be a welcome development.

Routes of Entry into the Labor Market

My inquiry among the Haredi population in the New York area reveals that individuals follow several routes into the labor market. Each has its own patterns and teaches its own lessons with regard to the possibility of a large-scale movement of Haredi men from the yeshiva to the workplace.

Direct Entry to Trade and Services

If yeshiva students in Israel begin to move into the labor market in large numbers, many of them may well emulate some of their American counterparts by entering it directly, without any institutional training and by taking up low-paying jobs. Under these circumstances, the challenge is to ensure that many Haredi men improve their skills *after* they begin working in order to help them climb the job and wage ladder, as well as to encourage others to start their own businesses. It is particularly important to encourage business entrepreneurship in light of the great potential for it in the Haredi population, as found in the New York survey. Strong institutional support for yeshiva students wishing to go directly into business should be considered. Such students should be prepared, counseled, and supported by entrepreneurship-promotion centers, common in some Israeli cities and known as MATI, designed especially for them. The nature of a given group's entrepreneurial activity is greatly affected by its cultural patterns and social circumstances. The entrepreneurship-promotion establishment in Israel is cognizant of this fact and has set up special entrepreneurship-promotion centers for the immigrant and Arab populations. Both groups, as well as the Haredi one, may find themselves in a new and unfamiliar social environment when they try their luck as business entrepreneurs - an environment whose rules are unfamiliar to them because they lack business experience or

experience relevant to the conditions prevailing in Israel. These groups, including the Haredi one on the way from the yeshiva to the workplace, stand in need of counseling services tailored to their own circumstances and skills.

Another issue related to the cultural exclusivity of entrepreneurship-promotion centers is their location. Entrepreneurship-promotion centers for Haredi men and women, like other institutions, can encourage the transition from the yeshiva to the business world if they are located in Haredi population centers in Israel. Along with establishing special entrepreneurship-promotion centers for Haredi trainees, the possibility of using existing centers that serve all Israeli population groups should be explored. These could suffice given certain adjustments. The adaptation of existing centers and the establishment of new ones exclusively for would-be Haredi entrepreneurs will require an appropriate budget base. Budgets and practical steps in this direction for new Haredi clients are part of the support system that should be created to accompany the expected move from yeshivas and kolels to the labor market.

What kinds of businesses should we expect those making this move to establish? According to the findings of this inquiry, personal business niches such as small-scale real estate brokerage and travel agency work may develop in the first phases of the transition.

Vocational Training

Vocational training has much to offer to the Haredi population in Israel. There are recent indications that many are beginning to look toward some form of vocational training. Haredi leaders and businessmen are creating an increasing number of diverse settings aimed at bringing vocational training to the Haredi population. These, however, have not yet made a name for themselves among the Haredi population at large, since the lack of clarity surrounding rabbinical consent has caused them to maintain a low profile. Some rabbis favor the idea of teaching yeshiva students a trade; others do not. Hardliners sometimes gain prominence through their opposition, but as long as the vocational-training agencies that operate among the Haredi population in Israel do so discreetly, opposition will remain muted and advocates of vocational training will not be forced to back down. However, there is no assurance that advocates of vocational training will continue to support it if rabbinical opposition becomes vocal.

Some lessons can be learned from the experience of the Haredi population in the New York area for building a system of vocational training settings. One such lesson is that vocational-training settings that equip yeshiva men with occupational skills form a hierarchy. At the bottom are small and somewhat improvised settings that enable students to join the labor force quickly. They should be given encouragement because of their ability to deliver a considerable number of people to the labor market easily and rapidly. They operate within the Haredi community and are run by community members. The teachers are only two or three steps ahead of the students, and this is their advantage. Though they cannot impart great knowledge and substantial skills, they can equip students with basic capabilities and, most importantly, serve as living examples of members of the community who have successfully acquired and used these skills. Since yeshiva men have little time to spare and wish to become breadwinners immediately, it is advantageous to have a large reservoir of such teachers who, like tour guides, can escort kolel men down the bumpy path of vocational training.

One rung above the improvised settings are vocational-training institutes. They specialize in training not based on deep knowledge or scientific or theoretical study. Students at these institutes are trained in technical or service occupations such as photography, printing, and services in laboratories and the fields of electricity and electronics as technicians. They are run like vocational schools but, because of the kolel students' age, operate in different time frames. Yeshiva students at these institutes are not severely handicapped by the limited general schooling that they bring with them from the Haredi education system. The skills required are mainly manual and are acquired more by practical experience than by theoretical study. The occupations are mastered through on-the-job apprenticeship and not necessarily in classrooms. This has the further advantage of expediting the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace, an important condition for many participants.

At the top of the vocational-training hierarchy are institutes that focus on theoretical and sophisticated occupational skills, teaching a more practical and applied version of subjects that are studied in academic programs. These institutes require knowledge of mathematics, science, and English. Computer programming, business administration, accounting, and practical engineering in building and electronics are notable examples of occupations that these institutes teach. They offer an alternative to universities and colleges and are perceived by Haredi students as a way to circumvent the academic institutes

that Haredi society in Israel, unlike much of Lithuanian Haredi society in the United States, shuns.

The American experience indicates that Hasidic and Lithuanian men will probably occupy different positions in the hierarchy of vocational-training settings. Hasidic men will gather at the bottom; Lithuanians will congregate at the top. This conclusion still requires elucidation. In the New York area, the difference can be traced to disparities in the educational background of the two cultural groups. Lithuanian men pass through primary and secondary education systems that provide substantial general schooling, chiefly in science, math, and English. Hasidic men get much less out of their general schooling. In Israel, the education systems of Hasidic and Lithuanian groups are less clearly differentiated to affect the distribution of jobseekers across the three levels of the hierarchy of vocational-training settings. On the surface, it would seem that in Israel there are no such clear-cut differences.

The Haredi population in Israel, as in the United States, prefers all-Haredi vocational-training institutions. Exclusivity is reflected in the all-Haredi student body, separation of men and women, and an atmosphere and way of doing things in keeping with Haredi culture. Because the draft-deferment arrangement rules out work for self-declared “professional religious scholars,” Haredi men cloister themselves in yeshivas for lengthy periods of time. Today, Haredi men are sensitive to anything that could remove individuals from the Haredi orbit. This sensitivity explains the great importance they attach to the exclusivity of vocational-training institutions. They, their families, and their leaders may perceive joining the labor force as a source of religious and cultural danger to young Haredi men. If the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace is tightly controlled, the sense of danger will diminish. One way to mitigate the perceived danger is to channel activities onto special all-Haredi tracks. Special vocational-training institutions for Haredi students, with some guidance from, or at least the consent of, the Haredi leadership, are a way to reduce the menace, at least in the view of those in control.

Be this as it may, we found that the consent of Lithuanian rabbis and Hasidic rebbes is essential to the successful operation of a vocational-training institute. Without it, such an institute would be hard-pressed to continue operating. A banned institute cannot operate among the Haredi population. The rabbis’ and rebbes’ consent, however, need not be explicit; it may be tacit, as in the case of Machon L’Parnassa in Boro Park. In Israel, too, the existence of a vocational-training institute for Haredi students requires rabbinical consent.

The Haredi Center for Vocational Training, established in Jerusalem and Bene Beraq in 1997, and later branched out to additional localities, including Ashdod and Qiryat Sefer, obtained the consent of leading rabbis (Sheleg, 1999: 153-154). The rabbis' consent is conditional on limiting enrollment to married kollel students who support themselves. The Haredi Center for Vocational Training in Jerusalem is sex-segregated. Studies for both sexes take place in the same building but at different times of the day: women in the morning and men in the evening, after a full day of kollel study. The sex-segregation principle is a *sine qua non* in any effort to expand the vocational-training system that serves the Haredi population in Israel.

Academic Education

In the United States, a substantial proportion of Lithuanians but very few Hasidic men follow the academic route. Haredi society in Israel shuns academic studies, even at Bar-Ilan University, which is run by religious circles. Israeli universities do not separate men and women and the curriculum includes material unacceptable to Haredi society. For this reason, even in the United States, many young Haredi men and women do not regard academic studies as a feasible option. However, since Touro College was established in Flatbush as a degree-awarding institution conforming with Haredi mores (separation of the sexes, practical studies only, and a Haredi atmosphere), the obstacles that keep yeshiva students from academic studies, have been removed.

Since Israel has no Haredi college to date, the Haredi response to such an institution is hard to assess. There has recently been talk about establishing a Haredi college, in the Shas movement. The example of Touro College particularly, and the American Haredi experience with vocational training generally, may prompt Israeli Haredi businessmen and leaders to reexamine the prevailing avoidance of academic studies. Moreover, civil service regulations, requiring applicants for senior positions to have degrees, as well as the requirements of the private sector, could generate a demand for academic studies among Haredi men, including those leaving the yeshiva world.

What makes American yeshivas unique in the context of combined yeshiva and college studies is the academic credit that students can earn for their yeshiva studies. At certain colleges, in accordance with their terms, these studies can be applied toward an undergraduate degree. Religious studies earn

credits of up to a quarter of degree requirements. In this respect, Touro College in Flatbush is more liberal than the other colleges in the New York area. The transfer of credits makes it easier for Haredi students to bear the burden of studying at two institutions concurrently. If a Haredi college does come into being in Israel, the question of credit transfers from yeshivas may arise. The American system can serve as an example. Touro College would certainly be able to adopt its practices to Israel without great difficulty, since it is a degree-awarding institution that follows the rules of the game in New York State. One way or another, the academic establishment will have to deal with this issue in any case, so that policymakers would do well to consider it beforehand and explore the advantages and disadvantages of permitting the transfer of credits from yeshivas to universities or colleges.

In the future, Haredi men may acquire an academic education not only at academic institutions specially designed for them, but also in existing institutions provided they are adjusted to the needs of Haredi students. Separate classes for men and women are one way to enable yeshiva students to enroll in degree programs in locations outside large Haredi population centers, where the economic base for a separate Haredi college does not exist. Another way is to include fields of study that do not clash with Haredi culture. A third way is to offer practical degree programs linked directly to job possibilities. This link is extremely important to yeshiva students, as the survey in the New York area shows. The creation of settings tailored to the needs of Haredi students, especially in the peripheral areas of Israel, should be considered. The Haredi population in these areas is too small to justify, in economic terms, the existence of a separate institution for this group.

Separate Haredi Workplaces

The Haredi population prefers to carve out a living space of its own, where it can maintain its way of life and reduce outside influence. This explains the creation of separate Haredi neighborhoods, towns, and education systems. In the New York area survey, I found that with respect to work, some Haredi men, especially Hasidic, also tend to congregate in workplaces where a majority of the employees are Haredi. Quite a few Haredi workers are employed in Haredi-owned businesses; many work in businesses in Haredi neighborhoods. Therefore, a similar phenomenon of concentration in

Haredi-run workplaces will probably occur when yeshiva students enter the labor market in Israel. The Gallup Israel survey for the JDC noted this (Tal Commission, 2000: Volume B-2, p. 277) pointing to concerns about feeling out of place and encounters with women at an ordinary place of work (*ibid.*, p. 288). The phenomenon is neither new to Israel nor limited to the Haredi population.

A large-scale movement from the yeshiva to the workplace is unlikely to be uniform across the spectrum of workplaces. Some will take in former yeshiva students; in others, the process will have no perceptible effect. In geographic terms, too, many of these workplaces may be concentrated in Haredi residential centers. Former yeshiva students will prefer establishments located in these centers or nearby. Businessmen who understand this population group may relocate to be closer to Haredi centers.

The Relationship between Place of Residence and Place of Work

Until recently, the Haredi population in Israel has tended to upgrade its places of residence without reference to work. Many young families have moved to old Haredi neighborhoods, to new Haredi neighborhoods next to them, to Haredi neighborhoods on the outskirts of towns, and to new Haredi cities quite far, but within reasonable distances from the large Haredi cores in Jerusalem and Bene Beraq. The main considerations of these families were Haredi surroundings, price, and proximity to suitable educational facilities (for both young fathers and small children). Many of the commuters from Qiryat Sefer (near Modi'in) to Jerusalem and Bene Beraq study at yeshivas and kolels in these Haredi centers. Will these residential patterns change after large numbers of young Haredi men join the labor force? Will yeshiva students who have already joined the labor force change their place of residence to be closer to jobs that are not necessarily located in Jerusalem and Bene Beraq? Will the move from the yeshiva to the workplace precipitate migration from the Haredi core towns to centers of employment in central Israel? Will the increase in the number of yeshiva students joining the labor force arrest migration from Bene Beraq and Jerusalem, given the fact that these two cities also have a large concentration of jobs for Haredi workers? Will yeshiva students entering the labor market choose to move to be closer to jobs that are economically and professionally optimal and consequently leave the Haredi population centers?

Or will the opposite occur: will new members of the labor force be forced to seek housing in localities outside these centers, because of the fierce competition for jobs within them? If this happens, will Haredi families be found in residential areas where they are not to be found at present, areas near jobs that Haredi men tend to choose? And a general question: will joining the labor force have a perceptible effect on the geographic patterns of distribution of the Haredi population? Will it change these patterns?

The American experience indicates several eventualities. Two diametrically opposed developments have occurred in the Haredi suburbs that have grown up around New York. One is linked to the preference for traditional workplaces in New York. Despite the great distance, a mode of commuting from the suburbs to the city has evolved. Special buses carrying only residents of Haredi suburbs make their way to Manhattan and Brooklyn every morning and take the workers back to their homes in the evening. The second is the planned development of workplaces in Haredi suburbs. Local Haredi businessmen set up their own enterprises in these suburbs or entice other establishments to move there. A similar proliferation of workplaces could take place in distant Israeli suburbs such as Betar Illit, southwest of Jerusalem. Local leaders are already making a perceptible effort to initiate economic activity in this locality. If and when the move from the yeshiva to the workplace gains momentum, residents of distant suburbs may increase the demand for local jobs, which will serve to reduce dependence on jobs in the big cities. Haredi men and women would profit in several ways from working in their own backyards: fewer travel expenses, less exposure to the outside world, and more time in the mornings and evenings for religious study in the *beit midrash*.

Overview

Haredi society in the United States points the way to a possible middle path between full-time religious study and a life of work. The large majority of Haredi men in the New York area become breadwinners after completing a given period of religious study. The proliferation of new occupations related to new technologies, many associated with computers, has created a sizable movement of young Haredi men into these occupations. Their families are all for this and rabbis and yeshiva heads give their consent and at times offer their encouragement. The absence of compulsory military service as a factor helps considerably. In this respect, the American example is very different from the situation in Israel, so that one must ask whether it is relevant to Israel. If legislation is eventually passed that substantially reduces military service for yeshiva students, then the modes of behavior of Haredi men in the United States could become relevant for even a larger number of Haredi men in Israel. However, it should be emphasized that the American example may only be relevant after Haredi society in Israel undergoes a normative change in regard to the balance between full-time religious study and breadwinning. It is only then that those who obtain exemptions from military service will begin to move into the labor market. Today, only a small proportion of those exempted from military service do so and often make the move with little or no job skills, thus barely being able to support their families, let alone contribute to the national economy.

The American example shows that the transition from the yeshiva to the workplace should be based on a system of supports. Culturally-appropriate settings for vocational training and academic schooling are key elements in ensuring that yeshiva students acquire training in occupations that are in demand and provide a decent living. Financial assistance is an important condition. It is also of the utmost importance to include general studies in the curriculum of Haredi school systems. Vocational guidance and job-placement services are also needed. This support system entails adequate funding, the training of professional personnel, and the establishment of institutions and services. Legislation in Israel aimed only at regulating military service for yeshiva students is not enough to ascertain that Haredi men will indeed move from the yeshiva and kolel to the workplace. A variety of measures that accompany such legislation should be considered.

References

Hebrew:

Ilan, Shazar, 2000, "To Create Another Escape Hatch from Yeshivas - at the Age of 21," *Ha'aretz*, July 9.

Tal Commission (Commission for the Formulation of an Optimum Arrangement for the Induction of Yeshiva Students), 2000, *Report*, Volumes A–B, April.

Katz, Jacob, 1963, *Tradition in Crisis*, Jerusalem: Bialik Institute.

Friedman, Menachem, 1991, *Haredi Society: Origins, Trends, and Processes*, Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies.

Sheleg, Yair, 2000, *The New Religious: An Up-To-Date Glance at Orthodox Society in Israel*, Jerusalem: Keter.

English:

Berman, Eli and Ruth Klinov, 1997, *Human Capital Investment and Nonparticipation: Evidence from Sample with Infinite Horizons (or Jewish Father Stops Going to Work)*, Jerusalem: The Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research in Israel, Discussion Paper Series No. 97.05.

Berman, Eli, 1998, *Sect, Subsidy and Sacrifice: An Economist's View of Ultra-Orthodox Jews*, Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and The Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research in Israel.

Heilman, Samuel C., 1995, *Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the 20th Century*, Seattle: University of Washington.

Heilman, Samuel C., 1999, "People of the City: Jews and the Urban Challenge," in: Mendelsohn, Ezra, ed., *Studies in Contemporary Jewry XI*, The Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 19–34.

Helmreich, William B., 1999, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry*, New York: The Free Press.

Mayer, Egon, 1979, *From Suburb to Shtetl: The Jews of Boro Park*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Shilhav Yosseph, 1998, *Ultra-Orthodoxy in Urban Governance*, Jerusalem: The Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies.