

## Rabbi Daniel Siegel's Introduction to the Inaugural Ordination of Dayanim in the Integral Halachah Institute (January 2017, Boulder, CO):

Many years ago, Reb Zalman said to me that he wanted to see a kind of *beit din* for ALEPH. At that time, he thought that a triumvirate made up of me, David Wolfe-Blank and Aryeh Hirschfield would be the right beginning, since all of us had Orthodox backgrounds. Then we lost Reb David and Reb Aryeh, deaths which both shook and, in a way, paralyzed us.

Then, about 12 years ago, Reb Zalman said that he wanted to give me a second *semicha* as *dayan* because of my mediation training. I thanked him and added that, since he had been asking for some people to really learn *Gittin*, I would undertake that study, primarily in the practical sense of learning how to write a *get*, before accepting his offer. This I did and, ten years ago, at one of the early OHALAH conferences at the Boulderado, he gave me a *t'udah*, a simple certificate. Since then, I have been ALEPH's only *dayan* which, I will admit, has not made me significantly busier.

At the same time, I haven't wanted to carry this alone. While I'm not sure about the lasting significance of this *semicha*, I also didn't want to be the only person to make that decision. So I proposed to Reb Zalman that we ordain three more *dayanim* and I gave him the names of the three we will ordain in just a moment. He agreed, but for various reasons, we didn't move forward on the idea while he was still with us.

So today I fulfill the promise I made to myself and to Reb Zalman. I bring these individuals forward because they have all been my students, because each has a unique perspective on the halachic process which does not duplicate my own but complements it. I bring them forward not to establish a *beit din*, an arbitration panel (though that could happen in a particular instance if the parties request it), but rather as a group of in-house consultants on matters where backwards compatibility and seven generations forward are central to the resolution of the question at hand.

סנהדרין ה'

רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: הדין - בשלשה, ופשרה - בשנים. ויפה כח פשרה מכח הדין.  
ששנים שדנו - בעלי דינין יכולין לחזור בהן, ושנים שעשו פשרה - אין בעלי דינין יכולין לחזור בהן.  
(רש"י: שהרי נתרצו, ועל פיהם עשו)

Sanhedrin 5b:

Rabban Shim'on ben Gamli'el says: Judgement – [requires] three, compromise [between the litigants] – [requires only] two. Compromise is to be preferred over judgement. If a judgement is rendered by only two judges, the litigants can renege on the decision [and request a new trial in front of a "full" court], but if two arrive at a negotiated settlement – then the litigants have no further recourse (since, according to Rashi, they themselves arrived at the agreement and it wasn't imposed on them).

I bring them forward not to create a new in-group but as the seeds of a *chevre* which enjoys the challenge of applying the classical halachic process along with our addition of the psycho-halachic process, of Integral Halachah, to the questions of our time. In this unique transition to a new paradigm, how do we relate to unprecedented questions in ways that retain a connection to our past while continuing to move us toward actualizing our messianic vision. With this simple ceremony, we also invite others who are attracted to the halachic discourse to come forward, to commit to further

learning, and become part of this *chevre*. This, too, was Reb Zalman's hope, that there be opportunities for further study and exploration of how we actualize the principles which lie at the heart of our movement.

In the order in which they each received their first semicha:

Rabbi Sara Leya Schley began her rabbinic studies as a true beginner. I watched as she began a love affair with traditional practice and texts. During her time in the program, she became able to read, decipher, and interpret classical texts in their original. Like me, she wrestles with her attraction to traditional practice while wanting to be present to this time of shifting paradigm. Unlike me, she brings a background in science and medicine to the analysis of current questions, balanced her personal practice with that of being the rabbi of a progressive community, and continues to explore the relationship between her Judaism and other spiritual disciplines from which she also derives meaning.

Rabbi Simcha Daniel Burstyn wrote the only student *teshuvah* so far to deal specifically with agriculture and the juxtaposition of biblical principles with contemporary, sustainable farming and their application in Israel. He continues to explore the relationship between a spiritual world view and the daily needs of a kibbutz focused on education and farming, both as the person responsible for landscaping which translates into water pipe repair and other such hands-on tasks and as his community's representative to the largely secular regional council.

Rabbi Hannah Dresner, like me, brought with her a deep comfort with halachah and tradition from her family of origin, allowing her to innovate without the fear of losing touch. Unlike me, she has spent much of her life on the cutting edge of the art world, a place of innovation and of looking forward. Combined with her love of hassidic texts, her consciousness bridges the hassidic why with the halachic how, thus manifesting the connection between transcending vision and practice, expressing it in a poetic language both unusual and needed in a renewed language of halachic *teshuvot*.

לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא  
וּשְׂכִינְתָא  
עַל נְעֻת הַמְּקוֹם וְעַל נְעֻת הָעֵדִים שְׁלָכֶם  
אָנוּ מְסַמְּכִים אֶתְכֶם כְּדֵינִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְבַרְר דִּין אֱמֶת לְתִיקוּן הַשְּׂכִינָה  
בְּזִמְן הַזֶּה  
וּתְהִי מַעֲשֵׂה בֵּית דִּינְכֶם  
כְּמַעֲשֵׂה בֵּית דִּינָנוּ  
וּסְמוּכִים אֶתְּם לָנוּ  
לְעִזּוֹר לְמִצּוֹא אֶת הַדֶּרֶךְ שְׁנַלְךְ  
וְאֵת הָעֲבוּדָה שֶׁהַשֵּׁם שׁוֹאֵל מֵאֲתָנוּ  
כְּנֶדַת מֹשֶׁה, מְרִים וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

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