

SI'AH LOHAMIM:
BETWEEN REFLECTIVE DISCOURSE AND PASTORAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract

The appearance of the new edition of *Si'ah Loḥamim* (English title: *The Seventh Day*) is an important moment for an analysis of Israeli collective consciousness and thought. An important addition to the new edition is the conversation of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav in Jerusalem. This inclusion allows us to reassess the conflict between two types of consciousness and two modes of discourse. In the main part of the book the kind of conversation conducted may be labeled “normal discourse,” as opposed to that of Yeshivat Merkaz Harav, which is to be labeled as “pastoral discourse.” Normal discourse is concerned with the actual experience of the combatants—their misgivings, doubts, hesitant speech, and efforts to incorporate the experience of war into their everyday lives. Pastoral discourse is conducted within a sanctified space—Yeshivat Merkaz Harav and it is uninterested in the concrete experience of the combatants. Their self-perception is that they are the bearers of the divine redeeming tidings, and their discourse is designed for this purpose. This essay, in detail, traces the dialectical tension between these conflicting consciousnesses and shows that they both exceeded the discourse boundaries concerning the war and became the discourse that has shaped the underlying tension in the Israeli public sphere.