

THE FIRST DAY

By SHAMMAI PASSOW

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Sde Boker

*RISE and shine, O world,
for you are soon to see,
your dreams are not in sombre sleep,
but in the undeniable fact of reality.*

*With knowledge we acquire never to part,
we speak of things we feel in our heart,
peace and tranquillity become the order of the day,
as we fall back in our beds and hear a voice say,
today is the first day of the rest of your life.*

*And on that day,
man recreated the heavens and the earth,
and it was good.*

The thoughts of youth

By RAJA A. SHIHADAH (18)
Ramallah

IF we measured the strength of humans by the determination of their wills and by the inspirations of their spirits, then man is strongest in his teens. At that age the uninvolved youth can afford to dream and to plan schemes by which he will conquer all evil and improve society. His dreams then are not hindered by the obstacles and the practical limitations that society places on man.

At times he is so obsessed by these schemes that he is inspired to write and to draw. If the youth can depict and express his ideas well, then his work is highly acclaimed. Since he writes or paints to ease the tension obsessing him, his ideas are fresh and unexhausted.

Sometimes, the final work appears to be very clear and true even to the adult reader. It even gets the youth was able to express common thoughts. The secret is that the romantic youth has just discovered new thoughts. Thus, when he is exposed to them for the first time, he does not allow them to pass away unconsidered. He adopts them and analyses them carefully, trying all the time to find an answer to the millions of questions that continually vex him. He is very determined to find a meaning to his life, and to find satisfying explanations to why people behave in the way they do, why things have to be the way they are.

He thinks that it is a human weakness to resort to human nature as an excuse for man's shortcomings. "Why should we accept wrongs, because it is our nature to do wrong?" he asks. Therefore, he observes more closely, and he analyses. In his writings, he tries to discuss his conclusions because this helps him to understand them more.

All this thinking puts the youngster in a very critical situation: he questions thoughts that he accepted only a few years ago. He fears to abandon them completely, lest he will make his own youth seem to be ridiculous. Therefore, in spite of himself he tries to stick to them, while he questions them.

Thus a conflict arises between nature and the youth. While nature and time work against keeping the youth a child, the youth both wants to grow up but doesn't know how to acquire new ways. He actually resists acquiring anything before he completely understands it. So he spends much of his time trying to analyse and to be certain that he is doing the correct thing. The urge to be exceptional, to conquer all evil, and not to be different is very strong. This trend to be non-conformist is followed by a reaction. His new aim now is to be accepted in the society, and he starts to imitate the ways of other men, without wondering why man is pretentious at

times or why he carries on his life in the way he does.

While the young people ponder about the meaning of life and at its secrets, and ask millions of questions every day, the adults either ridicule their efforts or are completely oblivious of the way the youth acts. This makes one wonder: since the adults are not obsessed by these questions any more, and yet it is clear that they did not find out the answers, what did happen to them? Did they learn to accept the defeat, or did they realize that it is wiser not to think of such questions any more?

A land of milk, honey and strikes

By RAPHAEL VAGO, student,
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ALTHOUGH we are so tiny a country, we are the holders of several world records. Besides being the world champion in defeating enemies, we lead in the field in accidents, thefts, bank robberies, and strikes.

A glance at the newspapers for a week gives us a clear picture of the situation. We have to start of course with Tuesday's papers because on Sunday there was the printers' strike against the editors, who retaliated with a quick strike on Monday. Starting from Tuesday, several cooling departments in the heavens started a protest strike against leading angels, so the Holy Land was a bit hotter than usual, inducing additional heat in the already hot labour-management relations. The headlines reported the complete breakdown of all Histadrut activities, following the shameful strike of the tea waiters and personnel in charge of boiling the tea, who demanded a higher share in policy-making bodies of the Histadrut. After all, they argue, they are always present at the most secret meetings! Several kindergartens started a strike, and the five-year-olds paraded the streets with placards like: "We demand more candy and shorter hours!"

We must remember also the strike of the seventh-graders who objected to being in the same building with ninth-graders, while the ninth-graders struck against being with the seventh-graders. The teachers struck against the principals, the principals against the teachers. English classes struck against too much Shakespeare and too little Rolling Stones.

Tuesday's papers failed to report the continuing strike of the postmen as this strike was accepted as a normal part of Israel's day of life. Wednesday was the big day of the port-workers as they threw all the big bosses into the harbours, sunk the ships, and started fishing in the cool waters of Haifa, Eilat and Ashdod. Also in the Wednesday papers



I gave up cigarette smoking because of the danger of cancer.
(Photo by Judith Zurakov)

The English gentleman

By ENA ELMAN (Grade 12)
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THE English gentleman is a traditional figure. In the course of the centuries he has come to be a world-wide symbol of refinement and elegance. He is tastefully conservative in dress, reserved in manner, and distinguished by his "fine" accent. This Englishman too behaves in a distinctive manner. He follows many customs which are not found elsewhere in the world. His way of life is markedly different from that of the Frenchman or the Israeli.

The Englishman will commence his day by awakening at a comparatively late hour. A servant will greet him with a hot cup of tea, well sweetened, even though he fears for his figure. That cup of tea will be repeated frequently throughout the next 24 hours.

To the English gentleman, his outward appearance is very important, and he will spend considerable time in washing, shaving and dressing himself in his traditional garb. If he has business in the City, he will put on his black jacket and striped trousers, and, after breakfasting exceedingly well, will don his bowler hat, will take his tightly folded umbrella, and, with his newspaper neatly folded under his arm, will saunter forth. Whatever the weather, the uniform is always the same, though in bad weather he may wear his elegant top-coat.

Disdaining transport (provided he does not live too far away) he will walk, pipe in mouth, to the station, and will take his place, with many others like him, in the train which takes him to business. After coolly greeting his companions, he will settle down to read "The Times," that profound and grave London daily paper which all civilized and intelligent "top" people read — or pretend to read.

By the time he has read his business mail, made a few telephone calls, drunk a cup of tea, and had a chat with his colleagues on the events of the day, lunchtime has arrived. Accompanied by one or two cronies, he will make his way to a favourite pub to have a snack of delicate sandwiches and a tot of whisky or a glass of ale. During the lunch he will also chat with friends who frequent the same pub.

It is now 2 p.m., and he will return to his office to finish off some necessary business, dictate and sign a few letters, and have another cup of tea. By 4.30 or 5 p.m. he is ready to leave for home. Upon arriving home at between 6 and 6.30 p.m. he will have a glass of whisky and a bath. He will change into evening dress, ready to proceed with his wife to the theatre, and, after that, to go for a late dinner to a restaurant, where the menu will be characteristic: soup, juicy steak, with fried potatoes and vegetables, a sweet — all punctuated by drinking the appropriate wines with each course, followed by cheese and biscuits with coffee topped with a brandy or liqueur and cigars.

Upon returning from the theatre and dinner, in the early hours of the morning, he may have a short stroll with his favourite dog and with a last puff at his pipe, and possibly another brandy. He will proceed at last to bed with the thought, no doubt, that God's in his Heaven and all's right with the world.

But, if the truth be told, this English gentleman is now — and probably always has been — only a figure of fiction, a myth.

UPWARDS

By ORNA FIEGEL (11)
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*When I lie down on the grass
And across my face the wind
does pass
The sky above is a deep deep blue.
One of the nicest things I do
is let the wind blow
Across my face
And let the bold mountains show
With all their grace,
Their snow.*

*When I look up to the sky
And see the clouds passing by
The sky looks a different way
Every minute of the day
Then passes a ball of light,
Travelling at tremendous height
What we humans call the sun
And gave us life since earth
began.*