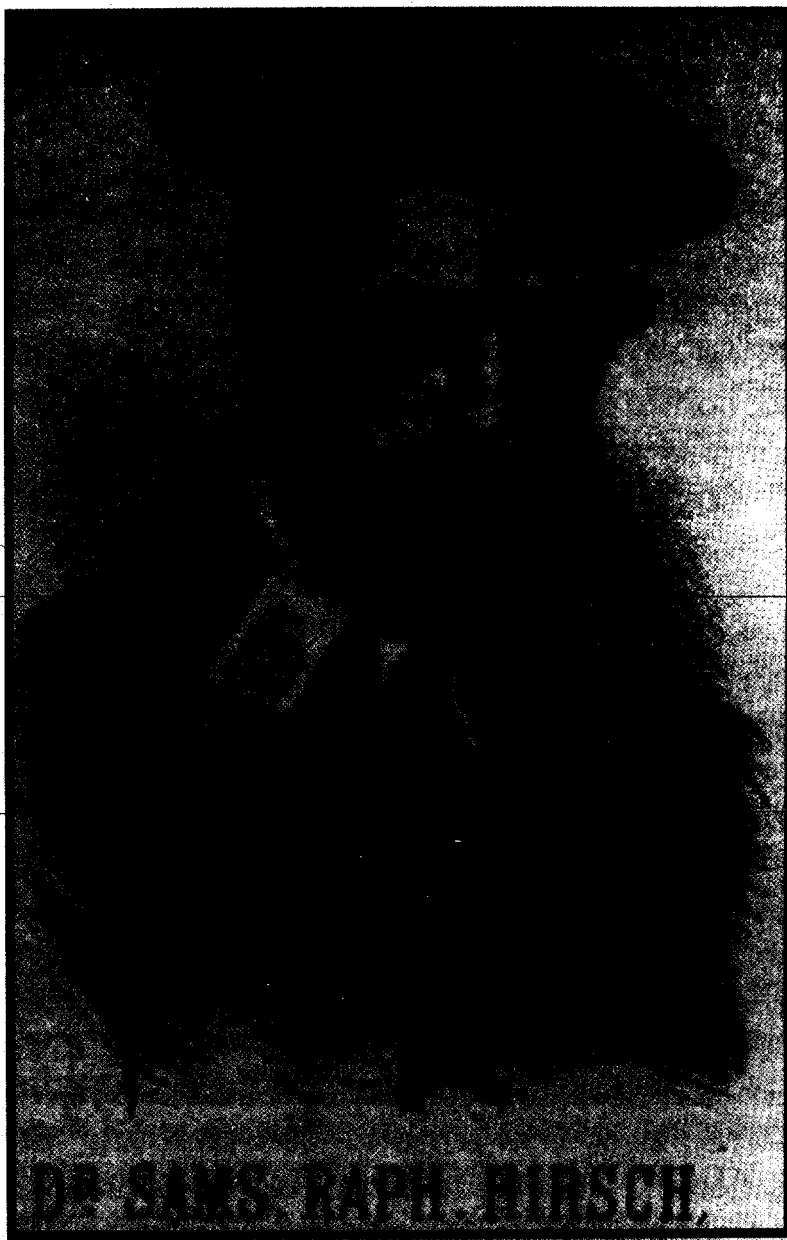


HAMEVASER

Volume 35, number 1
Fishert 5756

קול מבשר מבשר ואומר



The Rise and Fall of German Fundamentalism

HAMEVASER

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Too much of a good thing?

As we begin a new year we can't help noticing that there are a lot more of us than there ever were in years past. We have enrolled in record numbers in both Yeshiva College and Stern, fulfilling a long-time dream of the Yeshiva University administration. However with many new students come many new challenges and opportunities, of which we've only seen the beginning.

In the past, Yeshiva University has prided itself on the accessibility of its professors and Rabbeim. Shunning the lecture-hall type classrooms of larger universities, Yeshiva University has always maintained an extremely favorable teacher-to-student ratio in its classes. In order not to jeopardize this delicate balance, increased enrollment should result in an enhanced number of course offerings, thereby assuring that quantity will only lead to quality.

The Beit Midrash has particularly felt the influx of students, as both the Main Beit Midrash as well as the auxiliary Batei Midrash are quickly being filled past capacity. Additionally, there are shiurim that are quite literally bursting at the seams. Both a more equitable assignment of Talmidim as well as real determination to either expand existing Batei Midrash or create new Batei Midrash (perhaps in the Morgenstern shul or in Schottenstein Hall, both of which are empty for much of the day) would go a long way to improving quality of life in Yeshiva.

The new year has also seen a noticeable improvement in the attendance at student-run activities. The Student Councils have seen marked success in their Shabbat enhancement efforts, with the first few Shabbatot drawing a record number of participants (not to mention the cholent at the tish). However, as we reap the benefits of capacity-filled events, a larger student body also increases the chances for individuals to fall through the cracks. As a result, we must redouble our efforts to reach out to the apathetic student.

Lastly, we hope that the banishment of RIETS students from the dormitories to overcrowded apartments only reflect temporary hang-ups in Yeshiva University's ability to fully implement its absorption and integration of new students rather than a significant change in its perception of the Semicha program and its importance to both campus life as well as to the true mission of Yeshiva University.

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500 West 185th Street, New York, NY 10033

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Psalm 102 : Tormented Man Calling Unto Lofty, Eternal God

by **Han Haber**

At first glance Psalm 102 seems to present simply a highly poetic portrait of an oppressed individual praying for divine succor from his troubles. The psalm begins with a number of metaphorically graphic descriptions of the narrator's suffering, moving on to an anticipation of the restoration of Zion, only to once again return to the narrator's predicament.

Both Da'at Mikra and traditional commensophical material to a peripheral status. The narrator, beset by unrelenting trouble, directly contrasts a lofty eternal God with humanity, His fragile ephemeral creation. This contrast, resonating in numerous ways throughout the psalm, stirs up complex discussion concerning the nature of God's providential relationship with mankind. The psalm's poetic language, in partnership with its philosophic overtones, masterfully plays out the experience of overcoming the intellectual difficulty involved in reaching out to a distant, eternal God.

The first section of the psalm, clearly marked off by the tri-clausal structure of the 3rd verse, injects the narrative with a palpable sense of urgency. The individual is presenting his *tefillah* while "ya'atef", which, according to Rashi, represents the soul enwrapped in a state of distress (verse 1). He is not satisfied with an eventual response, but rather desires that "ba-yom," that very day of his troubles, God should heed his call (verse 3). Similarly, he implores that God should answer his troubles "maher" (verse 3). Thus, the narrator not only requests for direct divine providence, but also wishes that it should come immediately.

The narrator couches this urgent call for divine aid in language that echoes uncertainty concerning God's ability or will to reply. In verse 2, while the first clause, "Hashem shimah tefillati,"

The psalm's poetic language, in partnership with its philosophic overtones, masterfully plays out the experience of overcoming the intellectual difficulty involved in reaching out to a distant, eternal God.

reflects the hope that God "hearkens" calls that at least reach Him, the second clause of "veshav'ati elecha tavo," does not take for granted that the narrator's prayers will even reach God. Verse 3 continues, "al taster panekha mi-meni," employing language that invokes a state in which God removes His providential protection over His

people. The verse then proceeds, "chatac alay a-nekha projecting an image in which God must actively incline His ear, straining to heed the pleas of those that call Him.

The second portion of the psalm provides numerous metaphors that elaborate on the extent of the narrator's suffering. The poetically colorful images, besides instilling the psalm with a highly emotional charge, also convey a palpable ephemeral quality. In verse 4 the narrator describes his days as being "kalu bi-ushan,"

that would seem to imply a state of being intensely consumed, implying his condition: "Who would God pay attention to let alone and the painful fate of the narrator?"

However, just at this point when the narrator moves against direct Divine Providence, we find instead its ultimate affirmation. Verse 4's *ushan* references to God as eternal, serves as a transition between the section lamenting the narrator's ephemeral nature and a new section in which God restores Zion. Even though, in verse 14 God was in the static state of "shei." He acknowledges the desires and aspirations of Bnei-Nation, and in verse 14 becomes "lumi" in His mercy directed toward Zion. In verse 16 the psalm tells us that once God rebuilds Zion "the nations will hear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth [His] glory." This is followed by a verse which writes that "[God] has turned to the prayer of those who cried out, and He did not despise their prayer." The psalm implies that the glorification of God comes as a result of His turning toward the prayer of the oppressed. Logic as expressed within the psalm would seem to dictate that God in His eternal glory should ignore an imperfect, fleeting mankind. But instead we find that the true glory of God rests within His disregard of His lofty status in generously caring for His mortal underlings.

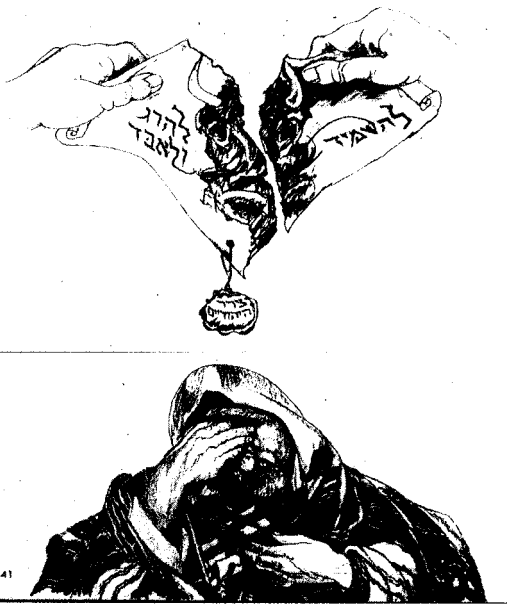
This is what in verse 19 should be written down for later generations so that an *am nivrahi* should praise God. Verse 20 and 21 explain that "[God] has looked down from His holy height; the Lord looked from heaven to earth to hear the cry of the prisoner, to loose the sons of the dying nation." Those individuals who live in later generations will not have witnessed the revelation of Divine Providence that took place through the salvation of the troubled, and as a result might logically come to doubt God's direct care for His nation. Surely God, from "His holy height" in heaven would not choose to pay attention to the lowly happenings on earth. Therefore, the salvation must be recorded in order to preserve the memory of God's interaction with the world.

The ultimate revelation expressed in the psalm has not yet taken place, and in verse 24 the narrator returns to his immediate suffering. In doing so he prays that his vision of Divine Providence is realized and that God "whose years endure throughout all generations," should not "remove [him] in the middle of [his] days" (verse 25). Following along with the psalm's spirit of vacillation, the narrator in verses 26-28 once again returns to a distancing of God and the world. The world, the creation of God will "rot away like a garment," while God Himself will endure (verse 27). Yet, in an ingenious twist to end the psalm, the narrator exhorts that "the children of [God's] servants will dwell, and their seed will be established before [Him]" (verse 29). This added prophecy for better times reaffirms God's special care for His nation. But, as a result of God's direct intervention in the fate of His people, they are also imbued with an element of eternity and permanence. It is within this affirmation of his own eternal worth that the narrator takes faith, and psychologically transcends his immediate context of precarious suffering.

being consumed or disappearing like smoke. Similarly, in verse 12, he compares his days to a "tzel natu i," a lengthening shadow. Both images emphasize the substanceless, precarious character of the narrator's existence. In verse 5 and 12 he likens his lifetime to dried out grass. This reference to grass is used elsewhere in Tanakh and Tehillim in order to emphasize the frail, mortal side of an individual. For example Psalm 92 emphasizes the grass-like nature of evil-doers, who only blossom briefly before they disperse or perish. This is compared to the more permanent cedar-like quality of the righteous.

The other metaphors in this section of Psalm 102 also convey a sense of impermanence and lack of structure in the narrator's life. In verse 7 he describes himself as a bird of the desert and wasteland, an image which evokes an element of wandering homelessness. In verse 5 we find that the narrator could not sustain himself properly, "forgetting" his bread. Similarly, in verse 10 the narrator eats ashes and drinks tears in place of food and drink.

In conclusion of this section, the narrator, with all his frailty and existential uncertainty, contrasts himself with God "who will be enthroned forever," and whose "mention is to all generations" (verse 13). By emphasizing God's loftiness and eternal nature, the narrator establishes a distance between himself and his creator



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Rav Hirsch and his K'hal Adas Jeshurun: The Emergence and Recession of Ger- man Fundamentalism



DR SAMS. RAPH. HIRSCH.

by
**Stephen M.
Tolany**

To learn about the original educational philosophy behind the motto *Torah im derekh eretz*, we must first hear the story of its inception in the nineteenth century, at a time when the emancipatory currents running through all of Europe were breaking down the walls of the Jewish ghetto in Germany. Jews were constructing religious communities with regulations and taxes that the German government recognized as legitimate and binding. We can trace the roots of *Torah im derekh eretz* to one of those communities, the famous Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.

In 1849 eleven strictly observant, or "Orthodox," dissidents founded the "Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft." They saw the need to establish this association, which they called "K'hal Adas Jeshurun," after the new "reform" Judaism swept up a majority of Frankfurt's Jewish population and control of its institutions. The unique intellectual atmosphere of Germany, perhaps more ideological than that of other European nations, had spawned reform Judaism, which differed from traditional Judaism in that it denied the divinity of the Bible and consequently the validity of legal Judaism as outlined in the Talmud. Almost entirely a response to the new opportunities that emancipation presented to the Jews, this doctrine only outwardly resembled traditional Judaism. It sought to create a "civilized," Protestant-like faith that would enable Jews to maintain some ethnic identification while advancing in secular German society. The reform movement had been exerting so much pressure on traditionalist dissidents, that organized Orthodox Judaism had all but disappeared from the German map over the course of half a century.

Since the law prohibited secession from a community of coreligionists, the German government would not recognize the Orthodox Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft as an autonomous body, requiring its members to pay taxes to the larger reform-controlled Frankfurt Jewish *Gemeinde*, or community. Nevertheless, K'hal Adas Jeshurun of Frankfurt retained some degree of independence, growing to one hundred members by 1851. At that point they obtained the services of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, who had made a name for himself in Germany and Austria-Hungary as a defender of Orthodoxy. He aimed to prove to the world that an uncompromising traditional Judaism could survive, even thrive, in a modern Western Europe.

R. Hirsch demanded faultless religious integrity from his community. Fiercely ideological, he abhorred contributing to the coffers of the Frankfurt *Gemeinde*, a community led by "apostates" and "heretics." He wanted no less than to secede along with his entire congregation. Although the law left him powerless, he never ceased to protest the plight of his community. In an essay written in 1863, R. Hirsch assumed the fictional identity of a craftsman to fume about what he saw as a fundamentally immoral arrangement:

"By what right and under what law should I...be compelled to make financial contributions to a community and its institutions...whose principles and objectives I feel duty-bound to fight with my heart's blood? I believe that to accord formal recognition to the legitimacy of these principles and objectives by contributing even a penny for their perpetuation would be a most grievous sin on my part, an open denial and mockery of all that is sacred to me. Such a sin would weigh heavily on my conscience forever." (*The Collected Writings*, vol VI:89)

R. Hirsch's opportunity came in 1873, when Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of Prussia, pressed the Prussian parliament to pass the "Law of Communal Secession," which curbed the power of the Catholic Church in Germany. With the help of Eduard Lasker, a highly placed Jewish legislator, R. Hirsch had the privilege of secession, or *Austritt*, extended to Jewish communities.

Not all Orthodox rabbinical authorities saw eye to eye with R. Hirsch on the need for *Austritt*. After the leaders of the Frankfurt *Gemeinde* offered to exempt the Orthodox population from supporting its religious institutions if only they would stay in the community, many criti-

cized R. Hirsch, who opposed any rapprochement on principle. In a public letter, Rav Seligmann Baer Bamberger, the chief rabbi of Würzburg and a renowned Talmud scholar, coolly and dispassionately tried to convince R. Hirsch that Jewish law did not necessitate such zealotry. R. Hirsch responded with self-righteous fury in another public letter, attempting to prove that R. Bamberger had reached an incorrect legal conclusion, that he had misunderstood the situation in Frankfurt, and that, above all, he had no right to contradict R. Hirsch's ruling in his own city. In the end, R. Hirsch convinced 80 out of 350 of his congregants to secede with him. In 1878, the German government recognized the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft as a completely independent *Gemeinde*. Throughout Germany other Orthodox minorities followed suit: In addition to Frankfurt, Jewish "secession communities" chose *Austritt* in Berlin, Karlsruhe, Darmstadt, Wiesbaden, Giessen, Köln, Bingen, and Strassburg.

To adapt Orthodox Judaism to the new social realities of Western Europe, R. Hirsch did much more than pioneer a "foreign policy" for Orthodox communities i.e., a way for religious Jews to treat their non-observant brethren. The main corpus of his thought lay in a vision of Orthodox Jews taking full advantage of their emancipation: by contributing to the well-being of the nations in which they found themselves and by imbibing the very best of what secular culture had to offer.

R. Hirsch saw no conflict between Orthodoxy and the sentiments of humanism and universalism so popular in Europe at that time. His ideal Jew in the post-Emancipation era, the "Israel-Man" (*Israel-Mensch*), would uphold the letter and spirit of Jewish law, while at the same time serving as a model citizen, an enlightened, educated, patriotic pillar of society in a new Europe that had just begun to welcome his active participation in its affairs. Therefore, R. Hirsch took his most important step early on, building the *realschule*, an elementary school and high school wherein he disseminated his ideal of a Western-European Orthodox Jewish lifestyle. While the *realschule* maintained a rigorous Jewish studies program, training the youth to observe every jot and tittle of Halakha, the curriculum also incorporated all secular subjects, even a full classical education. The brightest students, who matriculated almost invariably continued on to the finest universities in Germany to study medicine, science, philosophy, and law without abandoning their beliefs and strict Orthodox Jewish practices. On the school's banner, R. Hirsch inscribed the Hebrew words, "*ya'feh talמוד torah im derekh eretz*," an excerpt from the following Talmudic saying (*Avot*:2:2), "Torah study is good together with the way of the world, for the exertion of them both makes sin forgotten."

Many on the Orthodox rabbinical right attacked R. Hirsch's progressive educational methods, seeing in them a de-emphasis of Torah study. Moreover, they feared that such policies would poison the minds of the youth with heresy. Over the course of his prolific writing career, however, R. Hirsch tirelessly defended his fusion of secular studies with Torah scholarship, stressing that it would not de-emphasize Torah but enhance it:

"...give your children a well-balanced education in all subjects... For the field of Jewish learning is not...isolated from nature, history, or real life. On the contrary -- it invites its disciples to the contemplation of heaven and earth, to the survey of historical events and of the physical, spiritual, moral, and social life of man... These two components of education do not, therefore, impede or impair each other, but rather strengthen and support each other." (quoted in I. Grunfeld's *Three Generations*)

As to the danger of heresy, R. Hirsch, an incorrigible optimist, argued that every Jew can -- and must -- hold each facet of secular culture up to the light of the Torah to discover which ideas and patterns of behavior he can immediately adopt, which he must first perfect, and which he must utterly reject:

"...the Jew will not frown upon any art, any science, any culture provided only that it is found to be true and edifying, and really to promote the welfare of

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mankind. He has to taste everything by the unimpeachable touchstone of his divine-law; whatever does not stand this test for him does not exist. But...the more fully he is penetrated with the consciousness of his own Judaism, the more ready will he be to accept and gratefully appropriate whatever is true and good in other sources according to Jewish standards... Nowhere will he sacrifice a single thread of his Judaism or trim his Judaism to the needs of the time." (from *Judaism Eternal*)

Once again R. Hirsch encountered staunch opposition: combining Torah study with the pursuit of secular culture horrified the heads of the world-famous yeshivas of Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania, Talmudic academies that were upholding a tradition of excellence in scholarship millennia old. These rabbinical leaders of Eastern European Orthodoxy disapproved of "compromising" with secular society in any way. Only an appreciation for R. Hirsch's successes in fighting reform and "regenerating" authentic Judaism in Germany prevented them from more

Hirsch had established. R. Solomon Breuer set up an advanced yeshiva in Frankfurt. In perfect keeping with *Torah im derekh erez*, its students generally proceeded to university after receiving rabbinical ordination. When the Jewish position in Germany grew precarious in the late 1930s, Rav Dr. Joseph Breuer, the second oldest son of R. Solomon Breuer and a grandson of R. Hirsch, emigrated to the United States -- together with dozens of members of the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft -- to re-establish K'hal Adas Jeshurun in Washington Heights. Just as in Frankfurt, where K'hal Adas Jeshurun included all the community's institutions, the new K'hal Adas Jeshurun of Washington Heights maintained far more than a synagogue. R. Joseph Breuer attempted to replicate the old communal institutions of Frankfurt, founding a full schooling system for boys and girls, a teachers' seminary for women, a small yeshiva for men, a *mikvah*, and a rabbinical organization that would become famous for maintaining the highest standards in kashruth certification. The community even pur-

suadably moved to the extreme right along with the "Kollelim." Today their institutions no longer provide the high secular studies that were de rigueur in Germany. A large proportion of the young men completely forego a college education and study definitively in Kollelim, such as Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, New Jersey. The modern-day dean of K'hal Adas Jeshurun's seminary for women discourages, by student, from studying anything other than accounting and computer science in college and from marrying young men who do not plan on remaining in Kollelim. For much of the community, the mission of *Torah im derekh erez*, though still a popular and much lauded aphorism, has lost all practical meaning.

Three trends account for the modern-day decay of *Torah im derekh erez* among German Orthodox Jews. One group seeks to engage in history of revisionism, or else does it unwittingly, denying that R. Hirsch actually believed in the lasting relevance of *Torah im derekh erez*. Another camp displays total apathy, openly admitting that R. Hirsch means nothing to them. Yet a third outlier, from complete ignorance: their leaders have buried the original ideology under mounds of rhetoric.

Many modern-day yeshiva students unknowingly comprise the majority of the school of historical revisionism: they insist that R. Hirsch, like any other rabbinical authority of his generation, strongly disapproved of secular studies. They argue that Germany's educational legislation gave the *realschule* no choice, but to assume several hours a day for general subjects. Also, since craftsmen and farmers found it nearly impossible to keep the Sabbath, Jews of that epoch needed a superior secular education in order to do business and conduct trade on a higher international scale.

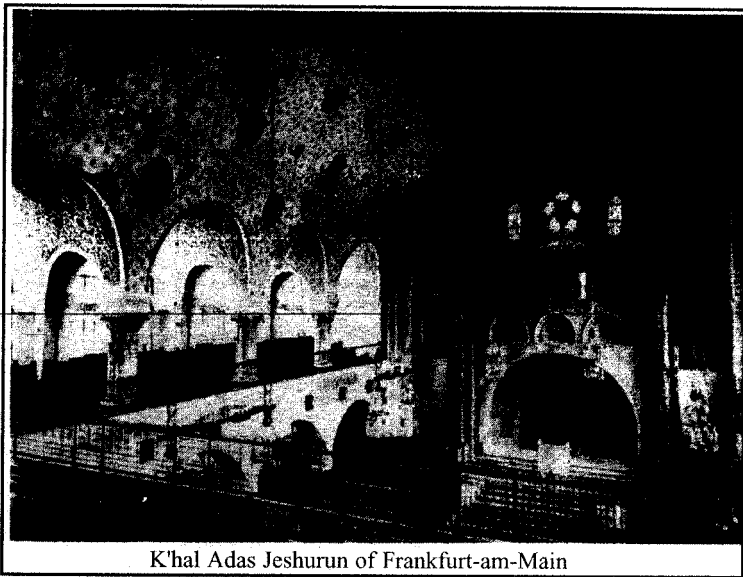
The most famous distortion claims that R. Hirsch introduced his approach only because he needed to compromise in order to bring the irreligious masses back to authentic Judaism. Thus, R. Hirsch intended the best of *Torah im derekh erez* only as a concession against the onslaught of the *haskala* and its offspring, the reform movement. As soon as Orthodoxy re-established itself in the context of Western European society, the need for any compromise would vanish. Although all those who have been promulgating this last explanation lack historical proof, they can rely on the authority of the illustrious Rav Baruch Ber Leibowitz, who lectured in the famous Lithuanian yeshivas of Slobodka and Kaminetz. R. Leibowitz, whose Talmudic *novellae* appear on the shelves of any modern-day yeshiva, advanced just this approach explicitly in a *responsum*. After R. Schwab wrote him in 1934 to find out whether the Torah forbade secular studies, Rav Leibowitz replied the following:

"...however, the truth is that, according to the Torah, every Rav is obligated to announce [the following]: God forbid that one should think that, according to the holy Torah, the Jewish people should send their children to *Gymnasiums*. [i.e. European high schools] Moreover, the genius, the righteous one, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, may his memory be a blessing, did this only because he observed the destructive and poisonous seduction of the *haskala*. It is most certain that the intention of the righteous one was that, through this, they would completely repent over the course of time: when they sampled the taste of the Torah, and understood on their own to exchange the activity of "outside" studies for loving the holy Torah..." (Bircat Shmuel: Kiddushin: 38)

He argues that *Torah im derekh erez* fell under the formal rubric of *hora'at shai'ah*, a rabbinical ruling that applies to a temporary crisis only. In such a case, the rabbinical authority does not even need to rescind his ruling; when the crisis passes, it becomes null and void automatically.

R. Leibowitz obviously did not have access to

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K'hal Adas Jeshurun of Frankfurt-am-Main

openly protesting his means to achieve that end.

Despite his many detractors, R. Hirsch built up the culture and *weltanschauung* of a "modern" Orthodox community that formed the paradigm for many others in Western Europe. In time the motto he had inscribed upon the *realschule*, *Torah im derekh erez*, came to stand for two inseparable principles: secular studies and *Austritt*. Secular studies addressed the importance of adjusting to and deriving benefit from gentile culture, while *Austritt* stressed the urgency of "seceding," striving for complete disassociation from any situation, behavior, or belief that would compromise the Torah. *Austritt* brought *Torah im derekh erez* down to earth, from the sphere of pure thought to the realm of human behavior, to a creed that taught that a Jew could sanctify all mundane actions by performing them in a fashion consistent with the Torah. It showed that the innovation of *Torah im derekh erez* lay in inventing not a new intellectual synthesis, but a new Orthodox lifestyle. It conceived of a new God-fearing super-citizen who took full advantage of anything at his disposal -- even that which stood outside Torah tradition -- in order to observe the letter and spirit of the divine law all the better.

The educational philosophy of *Torah im derekh erez* did not die with R. Hirsch. His son-in-law, Rav Dr. Solomon Z. Breuer, assumed leadership of K'hal Adas Jeshurun in 1890. Besides maintaining the institutions R.

chased a plot of land in New Jersey to serve as the official cemetery for members of the congregation. Other facsimiles of Frankfurt's secessionist Orthodox community popped up around the globe (including the modern-day Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft of Zurich, Switzerland, founded in the 1890s), but the most prominent offspring remains K'hal Adas Jeshurun, or "KAJ," of Washington Heights. Rav Shimon Schwab, a former disciple of R. Joseph Breuer, assumed its leadership after his mentor's death in 1980. R. Schwab, born and bred in Frankfurt, had studied in the Telz and Mir yeshivas during the 1920s. From R. Hirsch through R. Schwab, the secessionist community of Frankfurt and its descendants have been priding themselves on meticulous adherence to tradition.

But, without them fully realizing it, the community had allowed something to change. Over one hundred years ago, the ideological legacy of R. Samson Raphael Hirsch began to melt into the culture of the Lithuanian yeshiva world. Here in America the process continued as the members of K'hal Adas Jeshurun came to adopt an ultra-right-wing lifestyle and outlook. Although many Orthodox Jews of German extraction have "moved to the left" and joined the modern-Orthodox community, those individuals were almost invariably the ones who ceased to identify with the German community of Washington Heights. Those who chose to remain rigorously Orthodox

HAMEVASER

Rationale and the Rishonim :

Ta'amei Ha-Mitzvot in the Writings of Rambam and Ramban

by Leah Safran

Are we bound to keep God's commandments because the commandments themselves are intrinsically beneficial or does the value of the *variegated mitzvot* rest solely on the fact that they were prescribed by God?

Major Jewish philosophers have grappled with this issue: some insisting that a rationale must be sought out, and some forbidding the search for the rationale behind *mitzvot*, viewing it as a product of flawed faith. While both Rambam and Ramban flouraged the endeavor of delving into *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*, each has a distinct perspective on the issue, stemming from their overall philosophical positions, and more specifically, their conceptions of God and Godliness.

Rambam conceives of God as a Unity of the intellect: "He is the Knower and He is the Known and He is the Knowledge itself, it is all one, and this thing is not in the mouth to say it and not in the ear to hear it" (Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah 2:10). Accordingly, when investigating the reasons for various *mitzvot*, which stem from the Divine wisdom, he identifies the rational explanation for the commandment.

Ramban, on the other hand, focuses on God as a dynamic being. He depicts God as being intimately and constantly involved in every aspect of Creation. Thus, when dealing with *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*, he strives to identify the way in which God reveals Himself in the commandments of the Torah. According to Ramban, the person performing the prescribed act is in some way activating the Divine powers in this world, allowing the Divine Presence to dwell in it.

For Rambam, the reason behind any particular commandment, while important to know, is a fairly peripheral issue and not directly tied to its proper observance. For Ramban, on the other hand, the *ta'am*, the motivating force behind performance of any commandment, is a crucial factor in its performance. While Rambam sees the connection between *ta'am* and *mitzvah* as almost incidental, Ramban, in his discussion of the commandments, explores both the physical and spiritual realms of the *mitzvah*, which, according to him, are intertwined on the most intimate and basic of levels with its *ta'am*.

This fundamental distinction between these two very different approaches is elucidated further by an examination of the respective writings of Rambam and Ramban on the subject.

Rambam on Ta'amei Ha-Mitzvot

In his *Moreh Nevukhim*, Rambam discusses man's limited knowledge and how little it is actually possible for man to know of God and the machinations of His world. He discourages the widespread belief that man is in any way the *raison d'être* of God's creation. He stresses that all aspects of Creation, both physical and metaphysical, exist independent of man, and that he would be making a fundamental error if he assumed that it was created for his benefit. Contrary to what he may naturally assume, man is not the crowning glory of creation; in fact, there are many spheres of existence that are less physical, and therefore more elevated, than his own (*Moreh Nevukhim* 3:13). Indeed, as far as man

may probe into God's ultimate plan, he will never come up with an answer more satisfying than that the will of God dictated the reality he encounters.

Several chapters later, in *Moreh Nevukhim*, Rambam elaborates on the fact that it is impossible for humans to know God. He stresses the fact that there is no room for comparison between our knowledge and the Divine knowledge, between our existence, steeped in physicality, and His own, which is infinitely sublime and spiritual. Invoking a verse from Isaiah (55:8-9), "For your thoughts are not my thoughts and your ways are not my ways... As high as the heavens are from the earth, so are

mans. This difficulty is compounded by Rambam's statements in the next chapter of the *Moreh*. He states clearly that the Torah has not only one purpose, but two, namely to achieve perfection of both body and of soul. In Chapter 31, he goes so far as to condemn those who will not assign rationales to the commandments as diseased souls ("*cholei nefesh*"), since they think that only their actions have rational motivations and not God's. In this spirit, Rambam spends much of the remainder of the *Moreh* investigating the rationale behind various commandments and aspects of the Torah and organizing its laws into logical categories.

The Divine Track and the Human Track

As shown, several problems arise with Rambam's presentation of his approach to *mitzvot* and the rationale behind them, or lack thereof. On the one hand, he declares that God's intentions are inscrutable and that it would be ridiculous to attempt to discover them. On the other hand, he harshly criticizes those who do not seek out *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*.

In order to resolve this apparent contradiction, Yonah Ben-Sasson utilizes the tools that the author himself provided in order to decipher internal contradictions within the *Moreh*. Rambam wrote in his introduction that he would be speaking on many different levels and that he would create deliberate contradictions in order to facilitate more thorough learning and understanding, and in order to shield the fragile and delicate truth from the uneducated masses who would misunderstand and distort it. He uses the metaphor of "*tappuchei zahav be-maski'ot kesef*" ("golden apples inside filigrees of silver") to illustrate the ways in which he will disguise the real truth so that it is more difficult to pinpoint.

In order to clarify the matter, Rambam's statements are divided into an anthropocentric track and a theocentric track — one directed toward man and one toward God.

The latter chapters in the *Guide* which deal with *ta'amei ha-mitzvot* focus on the human, individualistic aspect of the commandments. It is this track which delineates a program for the achievement of physical and spiritual growth. (Obviously, the two are not equal, rather, physical development is used as a means to attain spiritual heights.) A well-run society is organized, hopefully to culminate in intellectual perfection for every individual living within it, through the practice of the *mitzvot* (*Moreh Nevukhim* 3:7).

At the same time, one can not ignore the previous chapters of the *Moreh* which seemed to negate any anthropocentric tendencies one might harbor. When discussing the purpose of Creation, Rambam had emphasized the point that God alone, and not man, contains the purpose of Creation. Man can never know the ultimate purpose of creation because man can never know God.

"And even if everything was because of man and for the purpose of man... to serve God... the question still remains, What is the purpose of his serving?... And if you answer that it is not for His perfection, but [rather] for our perfection... you must ask the question: What is the purpose of our existing with this perfection? You will have to conclude that the purpose is that "This is what God wanted," or "This is what His wisdom dictated" and that is the truth" (*Moreh Nevukhim* 3:3).

In this paragraph, Rambam seems to preclude any chance of the world being anthropocentric in any way. Since all of existence is tied up in God, as much as man may be able to understand, a point will always be reached at which the answer to his questions will be "It is God's will." Ultimately, the secret and the purpose of the universe lie in God and not in man. We may say that man's purpose is to



my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts," Rambam explains that, perhaps ironically, the key to clarity of outlook is to remember that God operates on a completely separate plane than we do (*Moreh Nevukhim* 3:20), and that we, therefore, will never be able to comprehend Him.

Nevertheless, a few chapters later, in the twenty-sixth chapter of the third book of the *Moreh*, Rambam seems to contradict himself, asserting that on a certain level, it is possible to find a rationale for the commandments. He quotes a statement of the Sages regarding the rationale behind ritual slaughter (*Sanhedrin* 21b): "Does it matter to the Holy One, blessed is He, if one slaughters from the throat or from the nape of the neck? [No, rather] the commandments were given only in order to [purify/test] God's creations."

According to Rambam, the rationale behind the commandments applies only to the general commandment (the *kelal*), while the technical details (the *peratim*) are arbitrary. Thus, Rambam asserts that the reason for the general commandment of ritual slaughter is to spare the animal any pain. However, the details of exactly how the animal is to be slaughtered are chosen quite arbitrarily. It would make no difference to the animal if it were to be slain from the throat or the nape of the neck, but God chose the throat in order to test us, to determine if we will be meticulous in the execution of the letter of the law (the technical details) as well as its spirit (the larger commandment of *shechitah*).

This understanding of *ta'amei ha-mitzvot* seems to be inconsistent with Rambam's previous statement about a rationale for the *mitzvot* being inaccessible to us as hu-

serve God, but without understanding God, our question has not been, and will not be answered.

In the first part of his discussion of *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*, Ramban talks of the unknowability of God and the inscrutability of His Torah, and in the second, he speaks of the rationale behind the commandments. In order to resolve this tension, Ben-Sasson identifies a trend in the latter chapters which would connect them to the first. Ramban, in several places in this latter section of the Moreh, says that the purpose of the Torah and the *mitzvot* is to achieve love and fear of God.

"And know that the acts of all these services, like the reading of the Torah and prayer and doing the rest of the *mitzvot*, their sole purpose is to learn to involve oneself in these commandments and to turn away from the business of the world, and as if you involved yourself in Him, may he be blessed, and you nullified everything except for him." (Moreh Nevuachim 3:52, also see 3:29,51).

This statement, and others like it, are made in the midst of the ostensibly anthropocentric section of Ramban's discussion of *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*. However, they seem to be pointing away from man, and back to God. Thus, in the final reckoning, Ramban's approach is theocentric. Man's purpose is contained within God's purpose. God is at the center of Creation. He contains the purpose of Creation, and man is a factor only inasmuch as he relate to God, through love and fear. Physical proficiency and intellectual perfection are valuable only because they create a more perfect servant of God.

As mentioned previously, Ramban's approach to *ta'amei ha-mitzvot* follows from his greater conception of God. All aspects of reality, including the commandments, stem from God, and will always lead back to him: "The basis of the bases and the pillar of knowledge is to know that there is a first being and he brings every being into existence, and everything in the heavens and the earth and what is between them do not exist except for his existence. And if it would occur to one that He did not exist, nothing else could exist... That is what the prophet said, "And the Lord God is true. He Himself is the Truth and nothing else has truth like he does." (Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah 1:1,2,4)

Man's mandate in this world is to become as close to God as possible through performing His commandments and understanding them via his intellect. That is the ultimate *ta'ama*, the final rationale behind any act that man may be enjoined to do by the Torah. The *mitzvot* are the link between man and his Creator in this world, the only window into the incorporeal which man is provided.

Ramban on Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot

Ramban's rationalistic perception of God reveals itself to be that of a constant, uniform "truth" which exists at the center of the world, and which man must cleave to by attempting to achieve as much of the "truth" as he can. Ramban, as a mystic, sees God and Creation in a very different light.

Central to Ramban's *weltanschauung* is his doctrine of miracles. He believes that Creation has a more primary spontaneous aspect than a static one, and criticizes Ramban for "lessening miracles and strengthening nature. And he says that miracles are not constant, but happen only temporarily, when in fact these are all standing and constant miracles ("Torat Hashem Temimah")... A person has no portion in the Torah of Moses our Teacher until he believes that... everything that happens to us, they are all miracles, there is no nature in them..." (Perush al ha-Torah, Shemot 13:16).

Another example of Ramban's perception of a dynamic God can be found in his understanding of the Divine name Elokim. While Ramban understood Elokim as alluding to the Supreme Judge (Moreh Nevuachim 2:7), who presides over the Heavenly Court, Ramban translates the term as "*ko'ach ha-kochot kulam*," the force of all forces, the ultimate power. Godliness does not express itself in the sedate justice of the image of a courtroom, but rather in the dynamic, unpredictable forces of nature (Perush, Bereshit 1:2).

When discussing the *ta'amei mitzvot*, Ramban focuses on man's performance of the commandments and their desired effects on him. In his world, man is an important and active player. Unlike Ramban, he states as a clear and incontrovertible fact that things were created only in order to serve man, quoting the Talmud in Kidushin that "All these things were created only to serve me and I was created in order to serve my Maker." Man is allowed, indeed required, to make the assumption that the world around him is solely for his use, and that he must utilize it in order to serve God. According to this approach, man is intimately involved in Creation.

The predictability of the cycles of nature seem to be the antithesis of Ramban's miracles or of God's direct and constant intervention. Yet, even these "natural" occurrences should be seen as closely dependent on the will of God, a will which is intimately connected with the actions of man. "...if a man fulfills the commandments, he will reap his reward, and if he transgresses them, he will receive punishment, all as a Heavenly decree." Man fulfills the commandments in order to communicate with God,



Rabbi Meshche ben Nachman, Ramban

who, in turn, communicates with man through his manipulation of nature.

Thus, for Ramban, it is man who is at the fulcrum of God's creation, since, through his actions, he affects even God's behavior. Man's responsibility -- the upkeep of the spiritual welfare of the world through performance of the *mitzvot* -- is thus tremendous.

Ramban is part of a kabbalistic tradition that views the commandments as more than simply actions which are commanded by God but remain external to him. Rather, they are imbued with some greater spiritual significance. This tradition sees the 613 *mitzvot* as having the same vital, charged, organic quality as God and His Creation.

Rabbi Azriel, a noted medieval kabbalist, notes (Perush ha-Agadat) that "although there are lighter *mitzvot* and heavier *mitzvot*, all of the *mitzvot* are *kavod*," and possess an exalted place in the Heavenly Realm. Rabbi Ezra also states that "the *mitzvot* are the *midot*," the seven lower characteristics contained in the Godhead. Ramban explains that performance of the *mitzvot* creates the *or ha-chayyim*, the "light of life," and the performer walks within this light, which nurtures his soul.

Rabbi Menachem Rikanati, influenced by those who preceded him, says that the *mitzvot* connect one directly to the Divine source: "The commandments... are connected to the Heavenly Chariot, every commandment to its own purpose... and each commandment is connected to one section of the Chariot. If so, the Holy One, Blessed is He, has no aspect without the Torah, and the Torah is nothing besides him, and he is nothing without the Torah" (Sefer Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot Larianati). Because of this intensely intimate connection between, indeed equation of, God and his Torah, man is able to cleave to God by fulfilling the mandates of the Torah.

Along the same lines, Ramban sees the Torah as

a sacred collection of the Godly name. Fulfillment of the *mitzvot* thus enhances the perfection of God's name, and the return of God himself. The Divine "spirit" inherent in each individual *mitzva* -- the commandment -- are not just an indirect means of reaching the larger goal of communion with God, but are capsules of Godliness, waiting to be opened by the performer of the commandment.

In his Perush al ha-Torah, Ramban quotes a Midrash (Chemos Rabbah 35:1) "The Holy One, Blessed is He, said to Israel: 'I sold you my Torah and it is as if I was sold with it' (Shemot 24:12). The bond between God and the Torah (i.e. the commandments) is so intimate that they are considered as one by God himself. When Israel acquired the Torah, and performs the *mitzvot*, in some way they internalized God as well.

Ramban was a kabbalist, and his *ta'amei ha-mitzvot* are meta-rational, not to be understood solely on their surface level. The Me'irat Panayim, a kabbalistic work that was influenced by Ramban, explains that "the verses and the words and the letters that a person sees with his eyes are comparable to the clothing of a man which covers his body, and the explanations and commentaries are like a body to them, and the true *kabbalah* and the forces and the great and wonderful secrets which emerge from the Torah are the soul."

This deeply mystical outlook applies not only to the rationale behind the commandments, but to the commandments themselves. For Ramban, carrying out the commandments is more than simply fulfilling the word of God. Each *mitzva* (and conversely every sin) performed stimulates a heavenly reaction which, in turn, affects the physical world in an appropriate manner. Ramban's world is indeed a dynamic place in which reality is constantly being altered depending on human conduct. Performance of the *mitzvot* is part of a historical process in which the world moves closer to perfection, salvation, restoration of the ideal reality which existed prior to Man's Fall in Eden.

We now return to the statement in Sanhedrin concerning the ritual slaughter of an animal: "Does it matter to the Holy One, Blessed is He, if one slaughters from the throat or from the nape of the neck? [No, rather] the commandments were given only in order to [purify test] God's creations." According to Ramban, it does not hurt an animal when it is slaughtered from the throat, and does hurt it when it is slaughtered from the nape of the neck. Thus, according to Ramban, the statement in Sanhedrin seems hard to comprehend since it seems to be implying that it makes no difference where an animal is slaughtered.

Apparently, Ramban is asserting that it makes no difference to God from what point on its body an animal is slaughtered. The commandments are not intended for the benefit of God, but rather for the benefit of the human race. The commandments were given for the moral edification of man. God wished to make us more compassionate, and that is why he commanded us to slaughter an animal in a manner that would be painless for it.

As stated above, man is at the center of Ramban's picture of Creation, and the 613 Commandments are all intended for him. Thus, unlike Ramban, Ramban believes that man fulfills the commandments for his own benefit rather than God's good or even the animal's good. This is in keeping with the fact that, according to Ramban, man is at the control pane of the universe. God's acts being a proportional response to his ethical and spiritual conduct.

Ramban would understand the following passage, concerning the *mitzva* of *shilu'ach ha-kan*, (Berachot 33) in a similar vein: "He who says [while repeating the *amidah* on behalf of a congregation], 'Your mercy reaches to the nest of a bird' should be silenced because he is assigning His commandments to Divine Mercy, when they are really decrees."

Ramban says that Divine Mercy is referring to mercy on the bird, who is not the object of God's attention in this case, the object being the man performing the commandment. The term "decrees" does not refer to orders delivered without any apparent logic. Rather, it refers to a

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national Publisher family of Torah sages because (according to the editor of the series), biographies of *gedolim*, in the true sense of the word, are particularly difficult, if not impossible. Although we are all fully aware that "no one is perfect," reference to such imperfections would surely constitute *lashon ha-ra* and be halachically forbidden... a fictional character can appear more vulnerable, making it easier to apply the lessons of his conduct to our own lives" (The Promised Child p. 11). While not all writers have come to this conclusion, *lashon ha-ra* is surely a consideration to all *charedi* writers.

These considerations are summed up by Rav Shimon Schwab, in an essay titled "Jewish History." In it, Rav Schwab maintains that it is impossible to write Orthodox history, because "History must be truthful, otherwise it does not deserve its name... Since it is supposed to be truth, all it told the way it happened." Rav Schwab points out the gravity of *lashon ha-ra* against the dead, and posits that history is of no importance to the Orthodox community. "Every generation has to put a veil over the human failings of its elders and glorify the rest which is great and beautiful. That means we have to do without a real history book. We can do without. We do not need realism, we need inspiration from our forefathers in order to pass it on to posterity. And Torah-true 'historians' do just that." While not all *charedim* would subscribe to Rav Schwab's radical formulation, in practice *charedi* history does in fact resemble Rav Schwab's appraisal.

While in general these considerations will just cause the *charedi* historian to put a slightly different angle on events, certain historical periods call many of these values into question. The period of the Sabbatian heresy presents just such a challenge to the *charedi* historians, with repeated incidence of rabbinic error and misjudgment, compounded by charges of heresy leveled by *gedolim* against each other. By focusing on Shabbetai Tzevi and the Emden-Eybeschutz controversy, it is possible to gain a clear, albeit extreme, picture of how *charedi* historiography operates.

Following close on the heels of the devastating Cossack pogroms in 1648-9 in Poland, Shabbetai Tzevi's messianic movement captured the minds of Jews world over, including many rabbinic leaders. Shabbetai Tzevi's apostasy to Islam sent shock waves throughout the Jewish world, as Jewish communities realized that they had been taken in by a charlatan. While the historian must indeed examine the roots of this phenomenon, the *charedi* historian is restricted somewhat as one of his primary aims is to exonerate any *rabbanim* involved in the movement.

One approach to this problem is to simply gloss over those involved in the movement, and Avner Gold, author of the aforementioned "Ruach Ami series" does just that. In his introduction to *The Imposter*, a historical novel revolving around Shabbetai Tzevi, Gold informs the reader that he has deleted the names of those Sabbatians who later recanted, "because to publish such information is *loshon hora*." Instead, Rabbi Shloime Pulichever, Gold's fictional protagonist, is portrayed as taking an unsure approach to Shabbetai Tzevi, clearly bothered by Tzevi's violations of Halakha, but at the same time impressed with a man Gold describes as a "phenomenal Talmid Chacham uninterested in

worldly pleasures." In the next book in the series, however, Rabbi Pulichever takes a decisive stance against Shabbetai Tzevi, declaring him a false Messiah, and forbidding the recital of

prayers on his behalf in the community synagogue. When one of the congregants challenges Rabbi Pulichever, he maintains that, regardless of which Talmudists supported Tzevi, his meeting with Shabbetai convinced him that he was an imposter. Certainly, it is not accidental that the most important rabbinic figure in the novels can see through Shabbetai Tzevi's sham. Although the books do acknowledge that rabbis were sucked into the Sabbatian movement, the clear impression made on the reader is that the discerning *rav* could easily denounce Shabbetai Tzevi.

Gold also addresses the theological issue of how *rabbanim* became involved with Shabbetai Tzevi. On the one hand, he ascribes this to Shabbetai Tzevi's "brilliant mind and...magnetic personality." However, he also quotes "sources" who claim that Shabbetai Tzevi was able to "harness the *kochos hatum'ah*, the unclean forces," providing a mystical out for the sages of the seventeenth century. Additionally, Gold suggests that Shabbetai Tzevi's conversion may have been caused by "a feeling of helplessness triggered by the sudden loss of his supernatural powers." (How serious Gold is in advancing these claims is unclear. They are always brought as alternatives to psychological explanations, and are couched in language designed to soften the blow of a seemingly medieval explanation. This is, in all probability, linked to a much larger question of the contemporary *charedi* world's evaluation (or evaluations!) of the supernatural in general.)

A much stronger recourse to the supernatural as an explanation for the success of Shabbetai Tzevi can be found in Y.Y. Hakohen's *Korot Ha-Tzevi*. Dealing specifically with a delegation of *rabbanim*, including grandchildren of the Bach (R. Yoel Sirkes), who gave their support to Shabbetai Tzevi, Hakohen writes, "[I]f the reader must certainly wonder how the grandchildren of the Bach could have been fooled by that sectarian and heretic..." Hakohen retells a story found in *Ko'ach Shor*, a book written by a contemporary of the Baal Shem Tov, about a conversation between the author and the false messiah Yaakov Frank. According to the story, Frank tries to convince the author of the authenticity of his messianic claims by conjuring up the ghosts of the author's dead parents. The author of the *Ko'ach Shor* was able to dispel the apparitions and reveal them for what they were: magicked dog carcasses. "Go and see," concludes Hakohen, "how powerful in impurity and sorcery this evil cult was, and it is no wonder how they succeeded to blind the eyes of multitudes of Jews before his (Shabbetai Tzevi's) abominations were revealed to all." (It is possible that such an explanation would have more credence in the less-secularly educated Israeli *charedi* community.)

Still more difficult for the *charedi* writer to deal with is the Emden-Eybeschutz controversy, in which R. Yaakov Emden denounced R. Yonatan Eybeschutz as a secret Sabbatian, since the historian is forced to, at the very least, incline to one or the other side in this debate. The consequences of this are, in effect, to attack at least one of two figures who remain as part of mainstream Judaism. The majority of *charedi* historians pick the lesser of the two evils, and, rather than denounce R. Eybeschutz as a heretic, consider R. Emden to be well-intentioned but misguided. Rav Wein describes R. Emden as "a prolific author of note and a multifaceted scholar of precision, [but] he was nevertheless embittered and disturbed by human shortcomings, in others and in him-

self." Later, Rav Wein "forgives" R. Yaakov Emden's "strong polemics," explaining that R. Yaakov Emden "suffered a life of sickness and pain, and the tragedy of the deaths of close relatives dogged him throughout his years." The merits of this claim notwithstanding, it is crucial to note that theology imposed an *a priori* restraint on labeling R. Eybeschutz a heretic, irrespective of what evidence could be found.

In Avraham ben Avraham, a novelization of the life of Valentin Potolski, an eighteenth century Polish noble who converted to Judaism, Selig Schachnowitz describes fictional encounters between the convert Avraham and the rabbinic giants of his time. Like R. Wein, Schachnowitz describes R. Yaakov Emden as a pious scholar consumed by his obsessive pursuit of Sabbatianism (which, incidentally, Schachnowitz also uses to explain Emden's correspondence with Moses Mendelssohn.) Indeed, Schachnowitz has Eybeschutz describe Emden as "one of Jewry's chachamim... he has suffered from childhood on. He has never had peace, and he cannot grant it to anyone else" (Schachnowitz 71). While Schachnowitz lived in turn-of-the-century Germany, he is a clear predecessor of the current literature.

One additional theme introduced in the chronicling of the Emden-Eybeschutz controversy is that of the "non-*gedolim*," or the lay followers of the various disputants. R. Wein posits, based on an apocryphal quote attributed to Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook, that if the controversy had been confined to the *rabbanim*, than "there is no doubt (emphasis mine) that the two great antagonists themselves could have resolved the debate;" rather, the involvement of the laity in the dispute exacerbated matters to such a degree as to render the dispute insoluble. This same line of thought is pursued by Schulman in his biography of Rav Yechezkel Landau, where he writes, "the argument between these two giants of Torah was for the sake of truth. There is no doubt (emphasis mine) that if they had the chance, these great rabbis would have settled the argument peacefully. But other people, people who loved controversy, stepped in." This proposition certainly overlooks the tremendous bitterness and rancor with which this debate was conducted.

With the *charedi* approach untenable because of its gross historical distortions, a different approach must be taken. While fully adopting the approach of the historical establishment leaves serious halakhic issues unanswered, undoubtedly many of its suppositions must be adopted if we wish to dwell at all in the past.



קול מבשר מבשר ואומר

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even a small portion of R. Hirsch's voluminous writings in German, which clearly indicate that R. Hirsch took a far more positive attitude towards secular studies. (It might have shocked R. Leibowitz to hear that R. Hirsch delivered a moving speech in K'hal Adas Jeshurun on the centenary of the great German poet Johann Friedrich Schiller!) Indeed, R. Hirsch wrote just the opposite of what R. Leibowitz ascribed to him, even arguing that the importance of a general education went far beyond the necessity for professional training:

"Apart, however, from the immediate preparation for a career, we maintain that a familiarity with all those elements that lie at the root of present-day civilization, and a study of all the subjects required for such an acquaintance, is of the highest necessity for the Jewish youth of our day as it was in fact in all times, and should be looked upon as a religious duty." (quoted in *Three Generations*)

In no uncertain terms, R. Hirsch denied the popular notion that, before the emancipation, observant Jews had always scorned secular studies, since the essential character of Judaism shunned these endeavors. He pointed out that many centuries earlier, educated fully-religious Jews had often mastered disciplines outside the Torah. Only in recent centuries did the miserable Jewish position in Europe narrow their intellectual spectrum. Now, the emancipation would allow them to return to their original way of life:

"Before the period of ghettos and stakes there were centuries during which Jewish scholars, deeply versed in Jewish learning, were at the same time pillars of general learning, and the writings that were treasured in ghetto dwellings contained evidence on every page of the clearest and most penetrating appreciation of the nature of things and their relationships, of the nature of man and his social development." (quoted in *Three Generations*)

To be sure, those who distort history refuse to question R. Hirsch's great rabbinical stature, insisting that the modern-day German-Jewish community must regard his opinions as binding. (Indeed, the existence of a high regard for R. Hirsch explains why they chose historical revisionism to apologize for their current behavior.) Many even attempt to artificially homogenize the Orthodox Jewish tradition by claiming that none of the Lithuanian rabbinical authorities ever opposed his methods. But by denying the perennial significance of his innovations, they have, *de facto*, betrayed the ideology.

Another group of German Jews, often comprised of elite yeshiva students, has "moved on" from *Torah im derekh erez*. Although they concede that R. Hirsch, a fine scholarly individual, really believed in his ideology, in their minds R. Hirsch stands as a dwarf next to the rabbinic giants of Eastern Europe, the extraordinary Talmudic scholars who almost unanimously, in no uncertain terms, declared that R. Hirsch had erred. Overcome by the intellectual substance of the yeshiva tradition, these students have decided that, whatever the worth of R. Hirsch's ideas, the yeshiva world offers something far more profound.

The last group, totally ignorant, thinks that it is actually still carrying on the tradition of *Torah im derekh erez*. They never met their great-grandparents, who would have told them that the elders of K'hal Adas Jeshurun once encouraged the youth to study Kant and physics at university. Having never read the historical works of Herrmann Schwab and Mordechai Breuer, they would never imagine that Rav Hirsch used to implore all G-d fearing Jews to read the works of Schiller. Moreover, many of their modern-day teachers and leaders, apparently pleased with the decline of the *Torah-im-derekh-erez* philosophy, do not lift a finger to educate their flock.

On the contrary, these leaders employ R. Hirsch's terminology and rhetoric to fight the political battles of Agudath Israel of America and the yeshiva world, in the process further submerging *Torah im derekh erez* beneath a deluge of obscure inconsequential references to R. Hirsch's uncompromising fundamentalism.

In conclusion, we may wonder why *Torah im derekh erez* and R. Hirsch's innovations began to ebb, a way of life among Orthodox Jews of German ancestry. After all, many sincere individuals detest the yeshiva world's repudiation of secular studies, but also abhor the incoherent elements of modern Orthodox culture. Would they not gravitate to such an obviously enabling ideology?

In his classic history of the German Orthodox legacy, Grunfeld offers one solution:

"The hostile attitude to general education and the consequent narrowing down of the intellectual horizon...can easily be explained as a psychological reaction to the ghastly experience of our time which saw the merciless torture and murder of six million in the heart of civilized Europe. Moreover, the fact that the overwhelming majority of the world-famed representatives of German science and university scholarship succumbed so ignominiously to the barbarism of Hitler, was hardly able to impress the contemporary young Jewish generation with the value of secular culture." (*Three Generations*)

Although blaming everything on the Holocaust may appeal to Grunfeld, he ignores a more obvious possibility, that there were inherent weaknesses in Rav Hirsch's *kehillah*.

Indeed, long before the Holocaust, the *Torah-im-derekh-erez* way of life had been ebbing in Frankfurt. In the decades leading up to the second World War, young Jewish men from Germany began to travel to Eastern Europe to study Torah in the great Lithuanian yeshivas. Overwhelmed by an excellence in Talmudic scholarship that towered over anything at home in Germany, many came to repudiate the unique German Orthodox lifestyle they had been taught at home. As the German Jewish historian Herrmann Schwab writes:

"The young men from Frankfurt and Berlin, from Hamburg and Leipzig, easily settled down in their new environment. They studied the Talmud. The Houses of Learning at Slobodka and Telz, at Mir and Baranovich became dear to them...the picture of home became blurred. In comparing and weighing up the past and present, the scale holding their childhood's inheritance became lighter. Some began to doubt its value; others declared that it was

not genuine and tried to begin a new way of life... (from *The History of Orthodox Jewry in Germany*)

R. Hirsch had not possessed spiritual and intellectual scholarship in Germany... (from *Three Generations*)

R. Hirsch's influence on the lay leaders of the Frankfurt Religious Community by ten years before the Frankfurt community was founded to build an advanced yeshiva. (Hirsch himself had achieved an impressive level of Talmudic erudition in his original followers in Frankfurt, and a solid base for the most part professional lay people. Grunfeld admits, "compared with the alumni of the great Lithuanian yeshivas in Eastern Europe the disciples of R. Hirsch, apart from a few exceptions, were not outstanding Talmudic scholars.")

Thus, R. Hirsch had rarely found it necessary to articulate his ideology in a way that would impress or even appeal to the more scholarly element of Orthodoxy. Therefore, *Torah im derekh erez* had to remain, by and large, the intellectual property and rhetoric of lay people *ba'dev batton* who might misinterpret it, distort it and eventually forget it.

Moreover, since Rav Hirsch had failed to establish an advanced yeshiva in Frankfurt during his lifetime, he had not even provided for the training of individuals to carry on his work, to continue spreading his ideas. To be sure, many members of R. Hirsch's family -- among them his famous grandson, P. Isaac Breuer -- rose to the challenge, faithfully and charismatically disseminating his teachings and innovating in his tradition. But they totaled a paltry few, in comparison with the tremendous output of the Jewish educational machine all across Europe, which were producing hundreds of top-notch *rabbimim* who had no interest in *Torah im derekh erez*.

Thus, whenever the idealistic and brilliant among German Orthodox youth went on an intellectual quest, they rarely returned. The tradition they had received from their parents seemed fuzzy, and few remained who could explain it to them in a way that would do it justice. In a few cases, someone who had abandoned his tradition returned to the community in order to spread a foreign ideology among his brethren. In this manner, the legacy of R. Samsom Raphael Hirsch began to recede unobtrusively into Jewish history, allowing many to misrepresent his ideas unopposed.

Lenin, Stalin, Yeltsin
or
Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov

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HERMANN SCHWAB • TORAH IM DEREKH ERETZ • VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

HAMEVASER

The Many Facets of Loving Your Neighbor

by Yaakov Weinstein

"*Ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*" -- "And you should love your neighbor as yourself," says R. Akiva (Torat Kohanim 19:48, Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:4). "This is a great principle of the Torah." The Sefer ha-Chinukh (243) explains that many *mitzvot* are dependent on this idea. For example, one who loves his friend will not steal his money nor commit adultery with his friend's wife.

The Gemara in Shabbat (31a) relates the story of the convert that came to Shammai and then to Hillel with the request, "Teach me the Torah as I stand on one leg." Although the question angered Shammai, Hillel replied, "What you hate, do not do to your friend, the rest is an explanation." (See Rashi who, against all other *rishonim*, explains "friend" as Hashem. See also Keli Yakar on Vayikra 19:17 and the Gemara in Makkot 24a.) These two passages portray *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* as a cornerstone of our religion. It is imperative to understand the essence of the *mitzvah*, what is its rationale, what makes the *mitzvah* tick.

Two questions immediately surface. First, is it really possible to love anyone as you love yourself? After all, we are only human. Since the Torah was not given to the angels, how are we to comply with such an all-inclusive command? Second, there is a seemingly contradictory statement of R. Akiva (Bava Metzia 62a). We are told that if one is with his friend in the desert and has only enough water for himself to survive, he should drink the water himself instead of giving it to his friend because, "*chavekha kodemin*," one's own life comes first. What happened to loving your friend as yourself? What made your life more worthy to be saved?

The second of these questions motivates Tosafot (Sanhedrin 45a, see explanation of R. Yerucham Perlow in the Sefer ha-Mitzvot of R. Saadiah Gaon, Asei 19) to declare that the *mitzvah* of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* does not apply to the living!

However, most *rishonim* follow the lead of Rambam (Vayikra 19:18) who states that one should want for his friend all the good he would want for himself, and not be jealous of his friend's fortune. Similarly, Sefer ha-Chinukh (243) states that a person should treat his friend as he would treat himself, to watch his money and make sure he is not harmed, praise him and not gain honor for himself by embarrassing his friend. (Also see Rambam, Sefer ha-Mitzvot, Asei 206)

The *mitzvah* to love every person in Klal Yisrael as yourself does not apply to an *adam rasha* -- one who is evil (Hagahot Maimoniot, De'ot 6:3). Rashi explains that the Torah, in regard to one who persuades others to worship idols, directs us, "*lo toveh lo*" -- "do not consent to him," (Devorim 13:9) that he is no longer to be included in the general rule of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*.

In fact, we are commanded to hate such a person (Bava Metzia 32b, Rambam in Rotze'ach 13:14). Smak believes that one who hates a *rasha* in his heart, but acts kindly towards him is violating the commandment of "*lo tisna et achikha bi'levavkha*" -- "Do not hate your brother in your heart." One must also actively show his hatred towards such a person! The opposite view is maintained by Meiri (Yoma 75a) who believes that although one may be required to hate someone, he must nevertheless treat him well. Just as Hashem

when he cursed the snake, condemning him to eat the dust of the earth, also showed kindness in the fact that the snake would always have food, we too should attempt to emulate God and act kindly even to someone we must despise.

Much has been written in regard to the non-observant Jews of our time and whether they should fall into such a category. The generally accepted view is based on Rambam (Mamrim 3:3) that the children of those who have strayed from the path are considered children that have been captured and raised forcibly amongst gentiles and are not to be faulted. Thus, the obligation to love them remains steadfast. (For further discussion see *responsa* Binyan Tzion, Chazon Ish, and R. Reuven P. Bulka's article in The Journal of Halakha and Contemporary Society, Number 16.)

Once we have defined the boundaries of the *mitzvah* and seen its importance in the eyes of our sages, we must attempt to grasp the essence of the *mitzvah*. Simple reasoning would tell us that we must treat others kindly because we are all "in this together." To be able to live in a stable society we cannot allow absolute freedom. Therefore, we lay down a number of specific laws regarding relationships between people, and round it off with a general rule that everyone should love everyone else.

Chazal, however, view it differently. The Yerushalmi in Nedarim (9:4) explains that one may not take revenge on a member of Klal Yisrael because, "If one of your hands cut the other, would the injured hand return the blow?" It would be ridiculous! There are a number of explanations of this Gemara through which we can see the true relationship between the members of our people, thus gaining insight into the nature of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*.

The Or ha-Chayyim (Vayikra 19:18), commenting on the fact that the *pasuk* ends with the words "*ani Hashem - I am Hashem*," relates that all of Benei Yisrael are, as it were, "branches" of Hashem as the *pasuk* says, "*ki chelek Hashem amo*" -- "because His nation is part of Him." A similar approach is taken by Korban Edah in the Yerushalmi. Hashem made man in his image. One who hates his fellow man is not just hating an object, he is hating Hashem himself. This is the importance of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*, and this is why we must hate a *rasha*, he is excluding himself from being a creation of Hashem.

Perhaps an even more powerful approach is taken by Tzion Yerushalayim on the Yerushalmi in Nedarim. He proposes that all of Yisrael is really one body with many limbs. In fact "Klal Yisrael" is a misnomer. There is no plural of Yisrael, we are all one. Hating someone else is like hating yourself. This idea is also found in R. Moshe Cordevero's Tomer Devorah in which he states, "All of Yisrael are related to one another, for their souls are united, and in each soul there is a portion of all the others." We must love others as we love ourselves because part of us is in them also.

Using this approach we can explain a number of puzzling Talmudic passages. The gemara in Ketubot (37b) tells us that death penalty by the sword is to be inflicted on the neck, because that is where the least amount of pain will be caused. The gemara in Sanhedrin (45a) relates that the height of the

place where they would perform the death of stoning was twice the height of a person. Although he could also be killed from a lower height, we want to limit his pain via a quicker death. Both of these passages conclude that these procedures follow the command of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*, by assuring the least painful death. At first glance these passages are astounding. After all, those who are to be executed have committed some of the most heinous crimes. They are murderers, kidnappers, and *mechallelei Shabbat*! Surely they, if anyone at all, are the one's excluded from *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*. So why the extraordinary concern with their suffering?

Sometimes, infection or cancer attacks a human body. When this happens it may be necessary to amputate an arm or a leg. Nevertheless, we do not take a chain saw and cut off the limb. We apply anesthesia to make the operation as painless as possible. The same applies when we kill a *rasha*. True, we must hate this nefarious sinner, but he is still part of us! Sadly, we must accept the fact that no more can be done, and perform the operation as painlessly as possible.

"There is a rabbinic positive commandment to visit the sick, to comfort mourners, to escort the dead... to escort guests... to bring happiness to the bride and groom... all of these have no upper boundary and though they are of rabbinic origin they are included in the commandment of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*, anything you would like others to do for you, do for your brother, in Torah and *mitzvot* (Rambam, Avelut 14:1)."

There are two questions that arise in relation to this Halakha. First, what does the Rambam mean when he says these are rabbinic commandments but come under the rule of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*? Are these commandments of rabbinic origin or of Torah origin? In actuality, Behag counts each of these as separate *mitzvot*. Mabit explains that all of the *mitzvot* are actually from the Torah stemming from the principle of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*. The Rabbis simply listed them as distinct requirements.

The second query on the Rambam is much more fundamental. A quick analysis of these *mitzvot* reveals that they are not "ordinary, run-of-the-mill" *mitzvot*. One who fulfills these commandments is "*akhel perotchem ba-alam ha-zeh, ve-ha-keren kayemet le-olam ha-ba*" Rambam goes on to tell us that if one does not visit the sick or escort a guest, it is as if he has killed him. One who brings joy to the bride and groom is worthy of receiving the Torah which

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spiritual mandate assigned by God to man which is meant to elevate him spiritually.

Rambam and Ramban: a Final Conclusion

"Rabbi Yitzchak says 'Why were the reasons of the Torah (i.e. *ta'amei Torah*) not revealed? Because there were two passages whose meanings were revealed, and the greatest person in the world stumbled in them'" (Sanhedrin 21b).

This passage is referring to Shlomo ha-Melech, the wisest man on earth, who sinned gravely at the end of his life. Rabbi Yitzchak attributes his downfall to the fact that he came to understand the rationales behind some of the commandments. Shlomo ha-Melech assumed that since he understood the goal of the commandment, he did not have to keep the commandment itself as long as he could achieve the goal in another fashion. Events proved him wrong, and taught that in carrying out the Torah, the letter of the law is inseparable from the spirit. This passage personifies a problem facing those who seek out the *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*. Both Rambam and Ramban tread a very tenuous line, attempting to balance pure faith and rationale.

In his Code of Law, the Mishneh Torah, Ramban grapples with this issue, emphasizing that man can not dismiss a commandment just because he can not find a reason for it or finds a certain rationale unsatisfying. Torah and *mitzvot* are not like other disciplines which are subject to human scrutiny.

"The *mishpatim* are commandments whose reasons are clear and the good of their performance in the world is obvious... and the *chukim* are commandments whose reasons are not known. The Sages said, 'These *chukim* I established for you and you have no permission to doubt them, and the evil inclination of a person taunts him with them and the nations of the world argue with him'" (Yoma 67b).

Rambam also stresses, however, that despite the awe and respect which man must harbor for all *mitzvot*, he must do his best also to assign a rationale whenever possible. "...the Torah scholars have disgraced if the acts of the Creator follow from His Wisdom or from His arbitrary Will, in which case we should not seek out a purpose. Such

is the disagreement concerning the *mitzvat* which we were commanded. For there is he who will not bow, but a reason, for it at all, and will say that all the commandments follow from a simple and arbitrary Will. There is he who will say that every commandment and prohibition follows from Wisdom and is directed towards a purpose. And we believe that they all possess a reason and purpose. And we do not know the purpose of some of them and we do not know the way of Wisdom that is in them. But all the wise people believe they have a reason, a useful purpose. And that it is hidden from us, because of our limited intelligence or our lack of knowledge." (Mishneh Torah 1:27)

Ramban's approach is similar to that of Rambam in his perception of the Wisdom of God as contained within the commandments. He also attributes any difficulty in comprehending the *mitzvot* to a lack in human understanding. Thus, he also attempts to synthesize faith in tradition and an individual's need to understand for himself. Predictably, however, their views are not identical.

According to the kabbalistic outlook of Ramban Torah is the raw potential for the spiritual heights which the world is able to achieve, and the 613 commandments are considered precious stones which are embedded in it. Ramban says that there are rationales behind the commandments, however, man can never understand them by himself. Rather, he must immerse himself in the kabbalistic tradition which stretches back to Moses on Mount Sinai (Derasha on Kohelet).

Unlike Rambam, Ramban does not believe that man can discover the reasoning behind the commandments independently. He believes that while there indeed is a rationale behind the *mitzvot*, this rationale does not utilize human logic. That is why, in order to understand it, man must study the *kabbalah* in order to be ushered into a separate world, one with its own unique way of thinking. It is in this world that man may begin to understand what Divine motivations lie behind the *ta'amei mitzvot*.

While, according to Rambam, man is able to understand a limited amount of the *ta'amei ha-mitzvot*, Ramban says that rational man cannot really understand the commandments at all until he has been steeped in the thought processes of the *kabbalah*, the building blocks of the *mitzvot*. If he has not, then he must accept them on blind faith, "orders of the king, where there is no reason to the matter" (Perush al ha-Torah, Vayikra 19:19).

was given with five Kolot (Berachot 6b)! And the learning of Torah is halted for the *haknasat kalla* and *levavot haqan!* And yet, all of these spring forth from the rule of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*. What is it about this commandment that makes it so all inclusive and all important?

The previous two approaches begin to reveal the true meaning of loving one's fellow man, however one more ingredient is required. Sefer ha-Chinukh tells us, "One who behaves towards his friend with love, peace, and friendship, and wants the best for them, and rejoices when good occurs to them, on him the *pasuk* says, 'Yisrael asher bekha epa'er' -- 'Israel, that in you I am glorified.' Why this praise? Why through one that performs good towards his fellow man does Hashem say that his name is glorified?"

When a Jew performs an act of kindness, he does more than an action. The behavior of a Jew reflects the attitude of Hashem. "Just as he is merciful, so to you should be merciful. Just as he visits the sick, you also should visit the sick." The behavior of a Jew reflects the behavior of Hashem, and when people see a Jew acting with kindness they recognize Hashem's ways, and through that the name of Hashem is glorified. Now the importance of this *mitzvah* can be understood to its full extent. Not only do we have an obligation to the person we are directing our efforts towards. We have an obligation to Hashem to glorify his name to all around us by showing love and kindness to others.

A number of sources quote the commandment of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* in regards to relating to one's wife. The gemara in Kiddushin (41a) prohibits one from taking a wife without seeing her, lest she not find favor in his eyes and cause him to violate the commandment of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*. Similarly, the gemara in Niddah (17a) prohibits one from cohabiting with his wife during the daytime due to *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*, since he may see something about her that he does not like. The Tosefta in Sotah (5:6) tells that one who marries a girl because he is scared of her brothers violates *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*. And the Baal ha-Turim (Vayikra 19:18) explains the juxtaposition of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* to the prohibition *kil'ayim* as being a hint that one should not have sexual relations with his wife while thinking about another woman, nor should he force her.

At first glance, these sources seem strange. Of course one should love his wife as he loves himself. If there is anybody he could love as much as himself, who should it be but his own wife!? Further inspection may lead one to ask, "Is that all?" Is *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* the only violation? This is his wife, not just some stranger who is also included in the *mitzvah*.

This question can be explained by recognizing that there are different levels of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha*. There is the basic level, the way we must treat everyone, and on a much higher level lies the way we must treat those closest to us, especially a spouse.

While this may be true, it is possible that these sources are trying to teach us a easily forgotten lesson. To behave nicely towards a stranger is relatively simple. You smile, ask "how are you," and say "please" and "thank you." As people become closer to you these things tend to be forgotten. When was the last time you asked your roommate to "please" get off the phone, or to "please" get out of the bathroom? To the one closest to you these things may seem unnecessary. Why should we say "thank-you" to our parents, if they know we mean it even if we do not say it? These sources teach us that this attitude is wrong. To emphasize this point they use the closest human relationship, a husband and wife. Even to one's own spouse common decency cannot be forgotten. One should smile upon seeing him or her, ask how the day has been going, and though words may seem superfluous, in such a relationship it is necessary anyways.

Through the merit of the great *mitzvah* of *ve-ahavta le-re'akha kamokha* in all its manifestations, we should all be *zokhek* to a *ketiva ve-chatima tova* and a good and sweet year.

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White Lies? Charadi Historical Revisionism

by Daniel Yolkut

Since the period of the Second Temple, the writing of history has never been a major part of traditional Jewish literature. *Talmud*, *Halakha*, Biblical exegesis, philosophy, *kabbalah*, and liturgy were the mainstays of scholarship; histories were written "not... for the great scholars who are filled with Torah like pomegranates, but only for ordinary householders" (David Ganz, quoted by Yosef Yerushalmi in *Zakhor* p. 57). In the last thirty years, however, there has been an explosion of historical works written under *charadi* auspices, whether under the guise of history per se, biographies of *gedolim*, or historical fiction.

There are a number of reasons for this phenomenon (many of which run parallel to general sociological trends in the Charedi community, a thorough analysis of which can be found in Dr Haym Solovitchik's "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy", in the Summer 1994 issue of *Tradition*). A sense of history is important in maintaining the feeling that Orthodox Jews are the latest link in a millennia-old tradition. In the past, this may have been easily achieved in a closed community with a strong sense of ancestry, but it must be instilled artificially today. Additionally, the *charadi* community has a pressing need for alternatives to secular literature. Particularly in the genre of children's literature, they require new books both for recreational reading as well as for Yeshiva and Bais Yaakov curriculums. CIS of Lakewood, New Jersey, which publishes the "Ruach Ami" series of historical novels set in seventeenth century Poland, advertises a "Student's Guide" to one of the novels in the series, which "[m]any schools are already using... in their English departments" (advertisement, *The Jewish Observer*, Feb. 1989, p.39). A number of articles printed in the late Eighties in *The Jewish Observer*, an official publication of Agudath Israel of America, decried the use of "classics" in education in *reshivot* and Bais Yaakov schools as introducing the values of a foreign culture. In their place many writers suggested the use of Judaism, and particularly historical novels. *Charadi* historical literature therefore also serves as both in-

spirational literature as well as a vehicle for conveying values to the next generation.

More importantly, though, *charadi* histories exist to prevent the community from turning to secular historians for an understanding of Jewish history. In *Korot ha-Tzevi*, a Hebrew work that details the life and activities of false messiah Shabbetai Tzevi and caters to the extreme Israeli *charadi* community, Y.Y. Hakohen explains his purpose in writing as being a reaction to "the secular historians and particularly the members of the cursed

that the collective memory has a value beyond what he dismisses as "research materials, books, and other 'acceptable' historical evidence," although he does acknowledge that he uses much of this secular material in his work on the book. Nevertheless, the history that the reader receives is still filtered through the discerning Orthodox historian.

And while these *charadi* histories may seem to resemble secular histories in form, in substance the *charadi* community has overwhelmingly rejected contemporary Western historiography. Instead, the *charadi* historian works with an entirely different set of professional values more appropriate to his role vis a vis the *charadi* community, a set of values that accounts for differences that go far beyond a mere distrust of the secular historian. One of these values is *rishonim ke-mal'akhim* (lit. the first ones were like angels), a Talmudic dictum that asserts that the earlier generations, particularly the rabbinic leadership of earlier generations, were on a vastly superior spiritual plane than their own present-day contemporaries. It follows that it would be inappropriate for a historian to judge the actions of an ancient sage from the vantage of hindsight. This phrase finds its way into the introduction of various *charadi* historically based books. A corollary theme is that of *da'at Torah*, or *emunat chachkhamim*. This belief has crystallized in modern times to mean that rabbinic scholars, both past and present, have an intuitive semi-divine understanding of all aspects of reality. (For one suggestion of the evolution of *da'at Torah*, see Lawrence Kaplan's "Daas Torah: A Modern Conception of Rabbinic Authority" in the *Orthodox Forum's* volume on Rabbinic Authority and Personal Autonomy. Particularly interesting is his discussion of the rewriting of history in light of *da'at Torah* in his epilogue, pp. 56-60). As Rav Mordechai Gifter, Rosh Yeshiva of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland and contemporary *charadi* thinker, wrote, "[b]y means of Daas Torah, the great men of Torah actually see what others, at best, know but do not see. The great Torah leaders are granted a "visual sense" from the world of Torah's mystery, the world of eternity, at a time when smaller people understand and feel everything only according to our small world, the revealed world."

Moreover, the *charadi* historian must write while avoiding the prohibitions of *lashon ha-ra*. Since the *issur* may be compounded when the subject is a Torah scholar, Avner Gold, author of the aforementioned "Ruach Ami" series, chose to center his historical novels around the fic-

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haskala...[who wrote extensively on this topic]...and tried to implicate (God forbid!) *gedolim* in Israel as if they had been grabbed by Shabbetai Tzevi...and therefore, it is obligatory to bring the true events to light so that the curious should not (God forbid!) go out to pasture in strange fields and see all of these foolish things." Rav Berel Wein, a modern-day Rosh Yeshiva and pre-eminent lecturer and writer on Jewish history who represents a more modern segment of the *charadi* community, writes in the preface to his *The Triumph of Survival*, "It has truly been noted that history is too important to be left to the historians." Rav Wein goes on to castigate secular historians as having a pointed agenda against "the basic beliefs and true heroes of Jewry over the centuries." Rav Wein also asserts the value of the oral history of the Jewish people, maintaining

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