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## BETWEEN BENNETT AND AMSTERDAM AVENUES: THE COMPLEX AMERICAN LEGACY OF SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH, 1939-2013

On May 6, 1984, Yeshiva University hosted a conference on “The Impact of Samson Raphael Hirsch.” The event featured lectures delivered by noted scholars and the investment of Dr. Sol Roth as the inaugural Samson Raphael Hirsch Professor of Torah and Derekh Eretz. Preceding all of this, President Norman Lamm offered the morning’s initial remarks: “In many ways, this Samson Raphael Hirsch Conference at Yeshiva University is a historic occurrence which is long overdue,” he said. “It is a puzzle to me that Hirsch and his thought were never accorded a full course of study at Yeshiva when, to such a large extent, Yeshiva University is a proud fulfillment of his teachings.”<sup>1</sup> Lamm answered his own question. First, Yeshiva’s founders traced the school’s philosophy to the Talmud scholars of Eastern Europe rather than to Hirsch’s Germany. The men who preceded Lamm spent their formative years studying in yeshivot that emphasized rigorous Talmud study. Hirsch’s educational program, by contrast, stressed a curricular roundedness that elevated Bible study and Jewish philosophy to the same level as Talmud learning. Second, Hirsch’s views were “decidedly anti-Zionist.” Yeshiva’s brand of Jewish and secular studies synthesis, Torah u-Madda, “was much more hospitable to Zionism.”<sup>2</sup>

This is the second of two essays on the migration of the Hirschian legacy to the United States. For the first article, see Zev Eleff, “American Orthodoxy’s Lukewarm Embrace of the Hirschian Legacy, 1850-1939,” *Tradition* 45 (Fall 2012), 35-53. I offer my thanks to Elliot Bondi, Isaac Ehrenberg, Jonathan Sarna, and Shlomo Zuckier for their helpful comments. I am also grateful to the anonymous reviewers of *Tradition*, who helped strengthen this essay.

<sup>1</sup> Norman Lamm, “Torah Im Derekh Eretz: Where Do We Go From Here,” 2. Manuscript obtained from the author.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

Nevertheless, Lamm was confident that the Hirsch conference would improve the relationship between Torah u-Madda and Torah im Derekh Erets. That the originators of both movements did not outline systematic programs for their respective philosophies made it all the more confounding that their intellectual descendants could not settle their differences. In any case, in addition to narrowing the philosophical gulf, Lamm prayed that Yeshiva's reconsideration of the Hirschian legacy might also reconcile tensions within New York's Washington Heights neighborhood. That northern Manhattan area hosted both Yeshiva College and the so-called Breuer's Kehillah. Yeshiva moved its campus from the Lower East Side in 1928. A little more than ten years later, R. Joseph Breuer, Hirsch's grandson, planted his community in Washington Heights a few blocks away. Noting the geographical realities, Lamm wondered aloud whether "if, in the realm of ideas, Frankfurt and Washington Heights are really that close, can Broadway forever remain the 'great divide' between Bennett Avenue and Amsterdam Avenue?"<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, Lamm's optimism was for the most part in vain.<sup>4</sup> In nearly thirty years since his speech, Yeshiva's study halls have remained entrenched in Lithuanian-style Torah study while the dwindling Breuer's Kehillah has departed from its founding principles, specifically insofar as secular knowledge is concerned. Braided together, Hirsch's reception in these communities typifies the complex American legacy of R. Samson Raphael Hirsch over the past seven decades.

The tale of the transplantation of the Frankfurt Kehillah to Washington Heights, though remarkable, has been told elsewhere and need not be reviewed here.<sup>5</sup> It will suffice to state that Joseph Breuer, after escaping Nazi Germany, accepted a call to lead a handful of New York's German Jews. Within months, Breuer and his followers established K'hal Adath Jeshurun on May 11, 1939. When the congregation moved into a new synagogue building in 1952, its membership numbered more than 800 families.<sup>6</sup> In short order, Breuer built a synagogue that boasted all the German Orthodox trappings and melodies, a comprehensive school system for boys and girls, an organization to supervise kashrut, a rabbinic court, and many other institutions necessary to sustain his Jewish enclave

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>4</sup> For one attempt at reconciliation, see Lawrence Kaplan, "Torah U-Madda in the Thought of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch," *BDD* 5 (Summer 1997), 5-31.

<sup>5</sup> See Steven M. Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson: The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 154-62; and David Kranzler and Dovid Landesman, *Rav Breuer: His Life and His Legacy* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Kranzler and Landesman, *Rav Breuer*, 130.

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in America.<sup>7</sup> For Breuer, this was most important, as he drew great satisfaction that his community “considers itself as the successor and bearer of Rav Hirsch’s community and ideology.”<sup>8</sup>

Hirsch’s ideology was most essential to Breuer as he recreated the Frankfurt *gemeinde* in New York. Hirsch’s grandson was an unabashed exponent of Torah im Derekh Erets and rarely deviated from his grandfather’s ritual practice.<sup>9</sup> Some claim that Breuer’s advocacy for secular learning was weaker than the way Hirsch had envisioned it, but in the main Breuer was Torah im Derekh Erets’ greatest advocate in the United States.<sup>10</sup> Breuer, who held a PhD from the University of Strasbourg, regularly preached to his congregants about the importance of combining Torah and secular education. Many of those sermons were committed to writing in his synagogue’s widely disseminated journal.<sup>11</sup>

Breuer’s openness to secular studies placed him at odds with other Orthodox immigrants. Living for the first time in close proximity to Eastern Europeans, Breuer quickly found it difficult to relate to his ultra-Orthodox neighbors on Manhattan’s Lower East Side and across the East River in Brooklyn.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, Breuer had little interest in reversing their opinion. According to his biographers, Breuer was welcomed by some of the Torah-Only community’s rabbinic leaders. On his own accord, however, Breuer did not accept an invitation to join their burgeoning organization, the Agudath Israel of America.

Despite their ideological misgivings for Hirsch and his heirs, America’s rightwing Orthodox leaders never openly flouted Hirsch or his teachings. Instead, they ignored him. Hirsch’s writings against mass settlement of Palestine accorded with these immigrant rabbis’ anti-Zionist rhetoric.

<sup>7</sup> On Breuer’s reconstruction of the Frankfurt Kehillah, see Steven M. Lowenstein, “Separatist Orthodoxy’s Attitudes Toward Community—The Breuer Community in Germany and America,” in *Persistence and Flexibility: Anthropological Perspectives on the American Jewish Experience*, ed. Walter P. Zenner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 208-22.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Breuer, “Rav Hirsch in Eretz Yisrael,” *Mitteilungen* 24 (Oct.-Nov. 1962). Republished in *A Unique Perspective: Rav Breuer’s Essays, 1914-1973* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2010), 472.

<sup>9</sup> See Binyamin Shlomo Hamburger, *Shorshei Minhag Ashkenaz*, vol. I (Bnei Brak: Mekhon Moreshet Ashkenaz, 1995), 306.

<sup>10</sup> For a comparison of Breuer and Hirsch, see A. Leib Scheinbaum, *The World That Was: Ashkenaz, The Legacy of German Jewry, 1843-1945* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 2010), 131-32.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Joseph Breuer, “Our Way,” *Mitteilungen* 15 (Apr-May 1954). Republished in *A Unique Perspective*, 387.

<sup>12</sup> See Shimon Schwab, “Be-Inyan Torah im Derekh Erets,” *Ha-Pardes* 13 (December 1939), 26-28.

Yet, the ultra-Orthodox community simply could not accept the whole of Torah im Derekh Erets. Their leaders therefore selected Eastern European rabbis to fortify their own beliefs, rather than cull from Hirsch's voluminous teachings. No example demonstrates this point better than the well-known ban on Orthodox participation in interdenominational dialogue. In 1956 a group of eleven prominent ultra-Orthodox rabbis, foremost among them Rabbis Moshe Feinstein, Yitzchak Hutner, Yaakov Kaminetsky, and Aharon Kotler, issued a ban against Orthodox participation in the Synagogue Council of America.<sup>13</sup> Although we cannot know whether the authors' decision to omit Hirsch—who was most famous for his stance of Orthodox separatism—in the text of their ban was deliberate, the case can still be made that Hirsch and his legacy were clearly not a part of their political calculus. Even more instructive is the case of the Agudath Israel's *Jewish Observer*. In nearly two dozen articles published in that magazine which called upon the Modern Orthodox community's Rabbinical Council of America to leave the Synagogue Council, just one invoked Hirsch's separatist stance for support.<sup>14</sup> In fact, one of the few figures who mentioned Hirsch when speaking about the Synagogue Council controversy was, quite expectedly, Joseph Breuer.<sup>15</sup> While he was not one of the eleven signatories on the decree, Breuer fully supported the ban. In an essay published in his synagogue's monthly newsletter, Breuer wrote that the rabbinic ruling "follows closely the halachic decision for which Rav Hirsch, his successor and like-minded rabbinical leaders in Germany fought tirelessly in speech and in writing."<sup>16</sup>

Breuer's fierce opposition to Orthodox participation in the Synagogue Council ended an unspoken truce between his community and Yeshiva University. The relationship was manageable but still rather uneasy from the very outset. Shortly after he arrived in the United States, Breuer was invited to teach at Yeshiva University, but turned down an offer from President Bernard Revel to teach there and remained distant

<sup>13</sup> English translation rendered from Louis Bernstein, "The Emergence of the English Speaking Orthodox Rabbinate" (PhD diss.: Yeshiva University, 1977), 556.

<sup>14</sup> Nathan Bulman, "What Price Unity?," *Jewish Observer* 1 (September 1963), 6.

<sup>15</sup> The second was R. Joseph Lookstein, who defended his pluralistic outlook by suggesting that Hirsch's separatism was based on circumstances that were not relevant in the United States. See "Orthodoxy Shouldn't Retreat, States Rabbi Joseph Lookstein," *The Commentator*, April 24, 1956; and Joseph H. Lookstein, "Coalitionism and Separatism in the American Jewish Community," *Tradition* 15 (Spring 1976), 30.

<sup>16</sup> "Organization of Rabbis and Congregations in the United States," *Mitteilungen* 21 (May 1960). Reprinted in Breuer, *A Unique Perspective*, 443.

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from the school and its allied institutions for the rest of his life. According to family tradition, this had less to do with Breuer's opposition to Yeshiva's worldview than his personal discomfort about interacting with R. Moshe Soloveichik and his son and successor, R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik.<sup>17</sup> Still, compatible views on secular learning—as opposed to Zionism—allowed these two cohorts to coexist in the same neighborhood, somewhat graciously and fairly respectfully. Accordingly, at least from the public's view, Breuer harbored no ideological qualms with the school and its Torah u-Madda point of view. Breuer respected Yeshiva's mission, even if he did not agree with all of its tenets.

Breuer's attitude hardened after Yeshiva's second president, Dr. Samuel Belkin, accepted an award from the Synagogue Council in 1961.<sup>18</sup> Convinced that Yeshiva was now a hazard to the Hirschian legacy, Breuer asked: "Is it not ironical, even dangerous, that certain institutions of higher learning, which claim Rav Hirsch as their spiritual guide, are not at all ready to live up to the elementary demands of his ideology?"<sup>19</sup> With that barrier removed, members of the German Kehillah began their assault on Yeshiva with an eye toward appeasing the more insular Orthodox

<sup>17</sup> Kranzler and Landesman, *Rav Breuer*, 115. See also Isaac Breuer, *Tsiyyunei Derekh* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1954), 204-8. Note that the younger Soloveitchik spelled his last name differently than did his father. According to a Breuer family tradition, this resistance stemmed from an episode involving R. Solomon Breuer and R. Hayyim Soloveitchik of Brisk. The two prominent leaders of German and Lithuanian Orthodoxy had met to discuss the possibility of forming a political organization that would represent Orthodox Jews throughout Europe. Holding fast to Hirschian separatism, Breuer asked Soloveitchik to agree that all Orthodox communities that cooperate with Reform groups not be invited to join the proposed party. Soloveitchik agreed at first but was later swayed to reverse his position. For a romanticized account of this, see Isaac Breuer, *Tsiyyunei Derekh* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1954), 204-8. Soloveitchik's act of betrayal apparently cut deep and was the key factor in dissuading R. Joseph Breuer from affiliating with Yeshiva, his Washington Heights neighbor and the home of Rabbis Moshe and Joseph B. Soloveitchik, son and grandson, respectively, of R. Hayyim Soloveitchik. There is also a tradition that some critical remarks issued by Soloveitchik during an Israel Independence Day lecture in 1956 were directed at R. Joseph Breuer's Kehillah. See Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Fate and Destiny: From Holocaust to the State of Israel*, trans. Lawrence Kaplan (Hoboken: Ktav, 2000), 48.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan J. Golden, "From Cooperation to Confrontation: The Rise and Fall of the Synagogue Council of America" (PhD diss.: Brandeis University, 2008), 114-15. See also Victor B. Geller, *Orthodoxy Awakens: The Belkin Era and Yeshiva University* (New York: Urim, 2003), 260-61.

<sup>19</sup> "Organization of Rabbis and Congregations in the United States," *Mitteilungen* 21 (May 1960). Reprinted in Breuer, *A Unique Perspective*, 443.

community.<sup>20</sup> This is certainly the impression imparted by a prominent faculty member of the Mesivta Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in Washington Heights. In an essay, R. Shelomoh Danziger tasked himself with a double assignment. First, he sought to separate his community from the modernists at Yeshiva. Second, he aimed to convince those to the right that while it was sufficient to “reject” Hirsch for their own community, they must not conceive Hirsch’s American followers as “threats” to Orthodoxy. Hirsch, he claimed, as well as his twentieth century adherents, were traditionalist Jews who favored yeshiva learning—not secular studies—above all else.<sup>21</sup> Subsequent articles denigrated those who purportedly conceived Hirsch as “an exponent of ... ideas of the nineteenth century”;<sup>22</sup> used “the term Torah im Derech Eretz to legitimate the watering down of classical Judaism”;<sup>23</sup> “saw him as the champion of Orthodox acculturation to the modern world”;<sup>24</sup> employed his views to discourage kollel life;<sup>25</sup> “interpret his thought in accordance with their particular predilections” and subsequently “ignore his basic approach to Torah life;”<sup>26</sup> and raised “the banner of Torah im Derech Eretz” for their own “brands of combination or synthesis.”<sup>27</sup> These attempts were only moderately successful. The rightwing Orthodox community and the Breuer Kehillah maintained a cool relationship until R. Shimon Schwab emerged as Breuer’s successor in the 1980s.

Breuer was content to operate with minimal allies. Yet, a few partnerships were absolutely indispensable to Breuer in his work to disseminate Hirsch to American Orthodoxy. In partnership with publisher Philipp Feldheim, Breuer founded the Samson Raphael Hirsch Society in 1947 with the expressed aim to fundraise for the production of English translations of Hirsch’s work. Prominent members of New York’s rabbinic

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Jacob Breuer, “Torah im Derech Eretz,” *The Jewish Parent* 14 (June 1963), 6-7, 31.

<sup>21</sup> Shelomoh Eliezer Danziger, “The Relevance of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in Our Time,” *Jewish Observer* 2 (June 1965), 18-20. It should be noted that Danziger was ordained at Yeshiva University.

<sup>22</sup> “Samson Raphael Hirsch on the Psalms,” *Jewish Observer* 3 (September 1966), 23.

<sup>23</sup> Ernst L. Bodenheimer and Nosson Scherman, “Rabbi Joseph Breuer: One Year Since His Passing,” *Jewish Observer* 15 (May, 1981), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Elias, “Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch,” *Jewish Observer* 21 (December 1988): 5.

<sup>25</sup> “Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Torah Im Derech Eretz As a Way of Life: An Editorial Comment,” *Jewish Observer* 22 (June 1989), 30-32.

<sup>26</sup> Eliyahu Meir Klugman, “Eretz Yisroel, Zionism and Medinas Yisroel in the Philosophy of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch,” *Jewish Observer* 23 (February 1990), 20.

<sup>27</sup> Nachman Bulman, “A Healing Sun,” *Jewish Observer* 26 (February 1993), 24.

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community like Rabbis Leo Jung and Herbert S. Goldstein lent their names to the organization out of their personal allegiance to Torah im Derekh Erets.<sup>28</sup> Breuer's son, Jacob, undertook the initial translation projects. Jacob Breuer's command of the English language was something less than perfect, but he did provide English-speaking Jewry with several Hirsch anthologies.<sup>29</sup>

There was still much room to grow. The Breuers surely took note that their translations did not compare favorably to the ones published by more skilled English speakers across the Atlantic. In England, Hirsch's grandson, Isaac Levy, began translating Hirsch's Bible commentary in 1959 and completed his six-volume work in 1966. Though serviceable and extremely popular, Levy's work contained many errors. A far superior Hirschian project was carried out by R. Isadore Grunfeld.<sup>30</sup> A scholar and judge in British Chief Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz's court, Grunfeld edited and translated two volumes of Hirsch's essays in the 1950s.<sup>31</sup> He produced a translation of Hirsch's seminal *Horeb* in 1962.<sup>32</sup>

Competition was good for the Hirschians in New York. Consequently, the Breuers hired the more expert Gertrude Hirschler to undertake future translation projects.<sup>33</sup> Hirschler was a gifted writer, and, just as important, she had studied linguistics at Johns Hopkins University.<sup>34</sup> The Breuers first approached Hirschler to translate Joseph Breuer's short

<sup>28</sup> Hermann Schwab, *The History of Orthodox Jewry in Germany*, trans. Irene R. Birnbaum (London: Mitre Press, 1950), 135, n.34.

<sup>29</sup> See *Introduction to Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's Commentary on the Torah*, trans. Jacob Breuer (New York: Feldheim, 1948); *Timeless Torah: An Anthology of the Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*, ed. Jacob Breuer (New York: Feldheim, 1957); and *Fundamentals of Judaism: Selections from the Works of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Outstanding Torah-True Thinkers*, ed. Jacob Breuer (New York: Feldheim, 1969). In addition, Jacob Breuer revised Drachman's translation of *The Nineteen Letters* in 1960.

<sup>30</sup> On the shortcomings of Levy's translation, see "Hugo Mandelbaum, "The Hirsch Chumosh in English," *Jewish Life* 25 (June 1958), 51-57. Gertrude Hirschler, who translated many of Hirsch's works into English, wrote in a letter to R. Shimon Schwab about the extreme difficulty of Levy's translation. See Gertrude Hirschler to Shimon Schwab, n.d., Gertrude Hirschler Papers, Box 13, Folder 2, Yeshiva University Archives, New York.

<sup>31</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Judaism Eternal: Selected Essays from the Writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch*, vols. I and II, trans. Isadore Grunfeld (London: Soncino Press, 1959).

<sup>32</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observations*, trans. Isadore Grunfeld (London: Soncino Press, 1962).

<sup>33</sup> See Gertrude Hirschler, "Samson Raphael Hirsch: Legitimate Revolutionary: A Translator's Tribute," *Judaica Book News* 17 (Spring/Summer 1987), 67-68.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

work on Jewish marriage in 1953.<sup>35</sup> Her first major translation of Hirsch's own writings was the beginning chapters of his commentary on Psalms, published in English for the first time in 1960.<sup>36</sup> Later on, Hirschler translated Hirsch's prayer commentary and then coedited a Bible commentary into one condensed manageable volume.<sup>37</sup> She continued to contribute English translations of Hirsch's works until her death in 1994.

With the help of Feldheim and Hirschler, Joseph Breuer raised Hirsch's stature well beyond the Kehillah in Washington Heights. Beginning in earnest in the 1960s, English readers could access a wide selection of Hirsch's works.<sup>38</sup> This surge occurred as Orthodox scholarship was on the rise. Accordingly, the emergence of *Torah im Derekh Erets* publications came around the same time as the so-called "golden age" of Modern Orthodoxy.<sup>39</sup> In that decade, a new generation of rabbis and scholars—most trained at Yeshiva University—produced books and articles to justify and clarify their community's viewpoint.<sup>40</sup> Taking note of the new Hirschian publications, many Modern Orthodox thinkers made great use of Hirsch in their own writings. Many, that is, but none who sat at the helm of Yeshiva University.

By the 1960s, Yeshiva University had emerged as Modern Orthodoxy's flagship institution without the aid of Hirsch and his teachings. Yeshiva College's founder, Dr. Bernard Revel, rarely drew from Hirsch when he felt the need to explicate his school's ideologies.<sup>41</sup> After Revel's early demise in 1940, Yeshiva became further entrenched in its Eastern European style of Talmud-dominated learning under the leadership of President Samuel Belkin. There is no trace of Hirsch in any of Belkin's

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Breuer, *The Jewish Marriage: A Source of Sanctity*, trans. Gertrude Hirschler (New York: Feldheim, 1956).

<sup>36</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Psalms: Volume I: Books 1 and 2* (New York: Feldheim, 1960). The second volume was published in 1966. See Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Psalms: Volume II: Books 3, 4, and 5* (New York: Feldheim, 1966).

<sup>37</sup> See Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Siddur: The Order of Prayers for the Whole Year* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1969); and Samson Raphael Hirsch, *T'rumath Tzvi: The Pentateuch* ed. Ephraim Oratz and trans. Gertrude Hirschler (New York: Judaica Press, 1986).

<sup>38</sup> For a quantitative illustration of Hirsch's rising stature in English-language books, see [http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Samson+Raphael+Hirsch&year\\_start=1800&year\\_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=](http://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Samson+Raphael+Hirsch&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=15&smoothing=3&share=)

<sup>39</sup> See Jonathan Sacks, *Future Tense: Jews, Judaism, and Israel in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Schocken Books, 2009), 210.

<sup>40</sup> Intellectual elites helped energize the movement alongside day schools and their young graduates. See Zev Eleff, "'Viva Yeshiva!': The Tale of the Mighty Mites and the College Bowl," *American Jewish History* 96 (December 2010), 287-305.

<sup>41</sup> See Eleff, "American Orthodoxy's Lukewarm Embrace," 48.



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articles or books on Jewish thought. However, he was on one occasion asked to compare Hirsch with the educational philosophy of Yeshiva University, at an open forum held at Stern College for Women on April 6, 1965. Responding to a student's question, Belkin offered a carefully measured response. He characterized Stern College a "combination school" that made available "both religious, and secular studies," as an analogue of Hirsch's Frankfurt model.<sup>42</sup> Yeshiva College, implied Belkin, where male students took part in a traditional yeshiva curriculum until mid-afternoon, owed more of its heritage to the Eastern European Jewish tradition.

Belkin set the administrative tone of the school and was an important voice at Yeshiva. But, in truth, Yeshiva's philosophical and spiritual milieu during the Belkin era was cultivated by R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Beginning in 1941 and stretching over five decades, Soloveitchik served as a spiritual guide for thousands of college and rabbinical students who passed through Yeshiva. In hundreds of public discourses, Soloveitchik rarely cited modern thinkers like Hirsch. If he did reference anyone at all, it was typically his father or his grandfather, R. Hayyim Soloveitchik. However, Soloveitchik—who undoubtedly became familiar with Hirschian ideas during his time as a doctoral candidate at the University of Berlin—made at least three public references to Hirsch. The first took place at a Religious Zionist conference in 1957. There, Soloveitchik contrasted the mission of Yeshiva and, by extension, America's Modern Orthodox Jews, with that of Hirsch. While Soloveitchik acknowledged some parallels between Hirsch's battles with modernity in Frankfurt and his own in America, their respective solutions were very different. "Rabbi Hirsch set as his goal the training of German Jews who would be pious and have universal understanding," explained Soloveitchik. "However, in addition to combining the fear of God with worldly culture, the Yeshiva wants above all to stress the importance of the study of Torah. Our goal is to educate a generation of Torah scholars with secular knowledge. Rabbi Hirsch was satisfied to attract the youth to the synagogue, in which he developed a beautiful and aesthetic Judaism."<sup>43</sup> Over a dozen years later, Soloveitchik returned to this distinction when he spoke at Yeshiva's quadrennial rabbinical graduation convocation. Soloveitchik preferred to think of Yeshiva as the heir to R. Esriel Hildesheimer's *Rabbiner Seminar* in Berlin rather than Hirsch's educational model that sought to bolster

<sup>42</sup> "Kodesh V'chol Explained by Belkin," *The Observer* (May 11, 1965), 1.

<sup>43</sup> Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, *The Rav: The World of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*, vol. II (Hoboken: Ktav, 1999), 227-28.

the Jewish laity instead of developing more adept clergy.<sup>44</sup> While the field of academic Jewish studies was less important to Soloveitchik than it was to Hildesheimer, both agreed on the importance of knowledgeable rabbis to lead Jewish communities. It was also around that time that Soloveitchik, serving as the keynote speaker at an Orthodox Union convention, according to one listener, “attack[ed] the very basis on which Hirsch founded his *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>45</sup> Therefore, while Soloveitchik may have respected Hirsch, he saw more utility in the missions of Hildesheimer and Revel to create learned scholars and teachers than he did in Hirsch, whose focus was on laypeople.

Even more critical of Hirsch was Norman Lamm. Despite his positive comments at the 1984 Hirsch conference, Lamm had already argued against the usefulness of Hirsch’s philosophies as early as 1962. Lamm juxtaposed the philosophies of Hirsch and the famed R. Abraham Isaac Kook. He called his 1960s Orthodoxy “a realization of Hirsch’s vision.” Yet, countered Lamm, for all that the Hirschian ideal may provide, it is “transcended by the Synthesis envisioned by Rav Kook.”<sup>46</sup> In contrast to Hirsch, who Lamm complained only valued secular learning for its cultural rather than intellectual benefits, Kook theorized about the transformation of secular learning into sacred studies. “For a Kook-type Synthesis requires a deepening of scholarship,” wrote Lamm, “the development of singular thinkers who, steeped in Jewish learning, especially Halakhah, will be able to sanctify the profane which they will know with equally thorough scholarship.”<sup>47</sup> Lamm was not through with Hirsch. His essay received a wider readership when he reprinted it in 1972.<sup>48</sup> Later on, the article’s thesis and much of its content served as the basis for an important chapter in Lamm’s *Torah Umadda*, the first book-length treatment of Yeshiva

<sup>44</sup> The lecture was later published in Joseph B. Soloveitchik, “The Idea of a Yeshiva University,” *The Commentator* (March 22, 1994), 8-9. On Hildesheimer and his rabbinical seminary, see David H. Ellenson, *Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer and the Creation of a Modern Jewish Orthodoxy* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

<sup>45</sup> Immanuel Jakobovits, *The Timely and the Timeless: Jews, Judaism and Society in a Storm-tossed Decade* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell and Co., 1977), 256.

<sup>46</sup> Norman Lamm, “Two Versions of ‘Synthesis,’” in *The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume: Essays in his Honor on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, eds. Menahem M. Kasher, Norman Lamm and Leonard Rosenfeld (New York: The Jewish Center, 1962), 153.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Norman Lamm, *Faith and Doubt: Studies in Traditional Jewish Thought* (New York: Ktav, 1972), 69-81.

University's philosophy.<sup>49</sup> There, Lamm once again expressed his preference of other models of synthesis to Hirsch's approach.<sup>50</sup>

On the whole, Yeshiva College students agreed with their teachers' assessment of Hirsch's place within the Torah u-Madda orbit. To be sure, at least one essayist tapped Hirsch as the "spiritual founder of the Day School, the Mesivta High School and Yeshiva University." The writer continued by explaining that "all of these American institutions of Jewish learning attempt to apply the 'synthesis' which Hirsch developed into a functioning educational system."<sup>51</sup> Be that as it may, the more common pieces that ran in the student newspapers drew from the writings of Revel and other Yeshiva personalities—not Hirsch.<sup>52</sup>

Those Modern Orthodox Jews who wished to discuss Hirsch found a more hospitable outlet outside of Yeshiva. In the first nine years of its publication, *Tradition* printed seven articles that focused mainly on Hirsch's teachings.<sup>53</sup> These essays along with others that peripherally dealt with the German ideologue made Hirsch the most written about personality during that journal's heyday.<sup>54</sup> Truth to tell, however, not every one of those articles portrayed Hirsch in a positive light. One author wrote in 1960 that "though

<sup>49</sup> Norman Lamm, *Torah Umadda: The Encounter of Religious Learning and Worldly Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition* (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 1990), 111-125.

<sup>50</sup> In fact, Yeshiva University's *Torah u-Madda Journal*—dedicated to the "interaction between Torah and general culture"—has never published an original article that considers the framework and contemporary application of Hirsch's Torah im Derekh Erets. For two important translations published in that journal, see Marc B. Shapiro, "Torah im Derekh Erez in the Shadow of Hitler," *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 14 (2006-2007), 84-96; and Marc B. Shapiro, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Friedrich von Schiller," *The Torah u-Madda Journal* 15 (2008-2009), 172-87.

<sup>51</sup> Harold Horowitz, "Samson Raphael Hirsch: The Educator," *Hamevaser* (September 30, 1968), 3.

<sup>52</sup> See for example, Eliezer Diamond, "Torah U'Maddah – Then and Now," *Hamevaser* (November 21, 1973), 4. One exception at Yeshiva was R. Ahron Soloveichik who, at least on one occasion, elucidated his vision of Torah u-Madda utilizing the philosophies of Hirsch. See Jonathan Reiss, "Rav Aharon Speaks on Torah U'Mada," *The Commentator* (March 24, 1987), 7.

<sup>53</sup> Outside of *Tradition*, more scholarly Judaica journals did not print articles on Hirsch. For two exceptional cases of American academics who explored the historical personality and philosophies of Hirsch, see Salo W. Baron, "The Revolution of 1848 and Jewish Scholarship: Part II: Austria," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 20 (1951), 1-100; and Bertram Wallace Korn, "German—Jewish Intellectual Influences on American Jewish Life, 1824-1972," in *Tradition and Change in Jewish Experience*, ed. A. Leland Jamison (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1978), 106-40.

<sup>54</sup> Hirsch was also discussed in the Orthodox Union's publications. See Justin Hofmann, "S.R. Hirsch on Education Synthesis," *Jewish Life* 29 (June 1962), 34-42; and Ralph Pelcovitz, "Hirsch For Our Time," *Jewish Life* 30 (October 1962), 55-60.

famous in name, [Hirsch] is now largely unread.” He hoped that recent translations of Hirsch’s work would “mark a definite turning point” for “English-speaking Jewry” but remained skeptical that American Jewry would ever be receptive to Hirsch’s writings that were so steeped in German culture and that resonated with anti-Zionist feelings.<sup>55</sup> Another writer concluded that Hirsch’s supposed de-emphasis of traditional Jewish learning, the condemnation of Zionism, and the harmfulness of contemporary secular thinkers that are “not as congenial to Judaism as were the scientific conceptions of Hirsch’s era,” made the particulars of Hirschian thought unacceptable to the writer and other advocates of Modern Orthodoxy.<sup>56</sup> That particular article “stirred a great deal of controversy,” to use the words of the journal’s editors, “especially among the numerous ardent followers of the Hirschian approach.”<sup>57</sup> Regardless, Hirsch was becoming a point of departure for learned discussions on Modern Orthodoxy.

Meanwhile, growing interest in Hirsch’s writings spurred several writers to produce biographical sketches.<sup>58</sup> Most of these were by and large praiseworthy of their subject’s accomplishments. The one exception was Noah Rosenbloom, whose 1976 biography was extremely critical of Hirsch’s rabbinic career.<sup>59</sup> With neither footnote nor citation, Rosenbloom opined that “[n]either his background nor his mentality qualified [Hirsch] for the leadership of a community of that nature. In the area of Talmud and rabbinics, not only the local rabbis under his jurisdiction but even the laymen towered high above him.”<sup>60</sup> While few scholars adopted Rosenbloom’s

<sup>55</sup> Zvi E. Kurzweil, “Samson Raphael Hirsch: Educationist and Thinker,” *Tradition* 2 (Spring 1960), 286-87.

<sup>56</sup> Howard I. Levine, “Enduring the Transitory Elements in the Philosophy of Samson Raphael Hirsch,” *Tradition* 5 (Spring 1963): 296-97.

<sup>57</sup> See Shelomoh Eliezer Danziger, “Clarification of R. Hirsch’s Concepts – A Rejoinder,” *Tradition* 6 (Spring-Summer 1964), 141-58.

<sup>58</sup> See Joseph Heller, “Samson Raphael Hirsch,” *The Jewish Spectator* 19 (April 1954), 23-25; Steven S. Schwarzschild, “Samson Raphael Hirsch—The Man and His Thought,” *Conservative Judaism* 13 (Winter 1959), 26-45; Edward W. Jelenko, “Samson Raphael Hirsch,” in *Great Jewish Personalities in Modern Times* ed. Simon Noveck (Washington, D.C.: B’nai B’rith, 1960), 69-96; and Joseph L. Blau, *Modern Varieties of Judaism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 60-88. It was also during this time that R. Mordecai Kaplan considered the Orthodox theology of Hirsch. See Mordecai M. Kaplan, *The Greater Judaism in the Making: A Study of the Modern Evolution of Judaism* (New York: The Reconstructionist Press, 1960), 316-41.

<sup>59</sup> As one reviewer put it, Rosenbloom “set out to write a book about a person whom he dislikes intensely.” See Mordechai Breuer, “Books Reviews,” *Tradition* 16 (Summer 1977), 148.

<sup>60</sup> Noah H. Rosenbloom, *Tradition in an Age of Reform: The Religious Philosophy of Samson Raphael Hirsch* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America,

thesis, Modern Orthodox writers still left Hirsch behind in subsequent decades. For example, in 1983 a writer traced the development of women's Torah study. He excluded discussion of Hirsch because his brand of traditional Judaism supposedly only condoned Torah im Derekh Erets as a "temporary accommodation."<sup>61</sup> R. Immanuel Jakobovits, a scholar who led a major Manhattan pulpit before assuming the position as Britain's Chief Rabbi, noticed how Hirsch had faded from the Modern Orthodoxy curriculum. In a lecture delivered in 1971 at London's Jews' College, Jakobovits was cautiously optimistic that the translators of Hirsch's writings would ignite a revival of Torah im Derekh Erets.<sup>62</sup> His hope for a Hirschian revival had all but faded when he returned to the topic fourteen years later. In 1985, he lamented that "Torah im derekh erez, the philosophy of synthesis, of some form of relationship with secular values, studies and pursuits—the humanism of Samson Raphael Hirsch—is extinct." Some claimed to represent the ideas of Torah im Derekh Erets, qualified Jakobovits, but "not as S R Hirsch understood it."<sup>63</sup>

Jakobovits did not identify his culprits, but it would not be farfetched to speculate that he had R. Shimon Schwab in mind.<sup>64</sup> Schwab assumed

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1976), 90. Reviewers of Rosenbloom's work were basically in agreement that he had misread sources. See, for example, Ismar Schorsch, "On the Father of neo-Orthodoxy," *Judaism* 26 (Summer 1977), 381-83.

<sup>61</sup> Abraham N. Zuroff, "Women Cannot Discuss Halachah," *Sh'ma* 13 (September 16, 1983), 116.

<sup>62</sup> Jakobovits, *The Timely and the Timeless*, 251.

<sup>63</sup> Immanuel Jakobovits, *A Collection of Essays and Articles by the Chief Rabbi, Lord Jakobovits, prepared for the Traditional Alternatives Symposium, 21 May, 1989* (London: Jews' College Publications, 1989), 19. There was a limited spike in essays published around the centennial anniversary of Hirsch's death, in 1988. See Sol Roth, "Torah Im Derekh Eretz: An Analysis," *Tradition* 24 (Winter 1989), 123-27; and several articles in *Jewish Action* 49 (Summer 1989). There are a few exceptions to falling interest in Hirsch after the 1970s. One example is R. Emanuel Rackman, who consistently utilized Hirsch to support his own views of Orthodox liberalism. See Emanuel Rackman, "The Bible is a Guide to Mankind, Not to God," *The Jewish Week* (January 7, 1983), 19; "To Survive, Judaism Needs Both Forms and Goals," *The Jewish Week* (April 27, 1984) 27. Mention should also be made of another scholar, Dr. Shnayer Leiman, who wrote a lengthy and widely quoted essay that dealt extensively with Hirsch, among other personalities. See Shnayer Z. Leiman, "Rabbinic Openness to General Culture in the Early Modern Period in Western and Central Europe," in *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?* ed. Jacob J. Schacter, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 143-216.

<sup>64</sup> Walter Wurzbarger used similar veiled language in 1981 to describe the Breuer community's departure from the Hirschian legacy. See *Covenantal Imperatives: Essays by Walter S. Wurzbarger on Jewish Law, Thought and Community*, eds. Eliezer L. Jacobs and Shalom Carmy (Jerusalem: Urim, 2008), 213.

the leadership of the Washington Heights Kehillah after Breuer's death in 1980. As a child, Schwab's parents enrolled him in Hirsch's *Realschule* in Frankfurt. Yet, Schwab was truly a product of Eastern Europe, where he further developed, subsequent to his Frankfurt schooling, as a Talmudist and thinker while studying in the Telshe Yeshiva in Lithuania.<sup>65</sup> Consider *Heimkehr ins Judentum*, a short tract Schwab published when he returned to Germany in 1934.<sup>66</sup> In that work, Schwab railed against "assimilationists" who sought to synthesize Jewish and German cultures. He warned against this, pointing out that there was little within German culture to behold in the wake of Nazism. Most of all, Schwab took issue with those individuals who still held onto Hirsch's vision of Torah im Derekh Erets. He charged that Hirsch's ideology "was not meant to be anything more than a *hora'at sha'ah*, a temporary arrangement, not an ideal state of affairs." Based on the dire situation of his day, Hirsch, Schwab put forward, had no other choice but to champion a "virtue of necessity in order to preserve the claim of the Torah."<sup>67</sup>

The German Orthodox community denounced Schwab's statements and labeled him a traitor to the community that raised him.<sup>68</sup> Schwab's stance changed, however, soon after he immigrated to the United States in 1936. His first position was in Baltimore, as the spiritual leader of Congregation Shearith Israel. As he later recalled about his first years in America, Schwab "woke up" and "found out that [his] notion of the Hirschian philosophy as a mere *hora'as sha'ah* was totally wrong."<sup>69</sup> Breuer's arrival in New York three years later motivated Schwab to participate in Breuer's mission to popularize Hirsch's teachings. In 1951, Schwab translated selections of Hirsch's commentary on Genesis into Hebrew.<sup>70</sup> By the end of that decade, Schwab accepted Breuer's offer to serve as assistant rabbi of K'hal Adath Jeshurun.

Nevertheless, Schwab never could completely embrace Hirsch's worldview. In 1966, he responded, albeit anonymously, to a scathing

<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that some twentieth century Eastern European leaders, like R. Hayyim Ozer Grodzinski, applauded Hirsch's work. See Hayyim Ozer Grodzinski, *Iggerot Rav Hayyim Ozer*, vol. I (Bnei Brak, 2000), 23-27, 328-30.

<sup>66</sup> Shimon Schwab, *Heimkehr ins Judentum* (Frankfurt: Hermon-Verlag, 1934).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. Translation derived from Shimon Schwab, *Heimkehr ins Judentum (Homecoming to Judaism)*, trans. Gertrude Hirschler (New York, 1978), 116.

<sup>68</sup> See Jacob Katz, "Umkehr oder Rückkehr," *Nahalat Tsevi* 5 (1934-1935), 89-96; and Jacob Katz, *With My Own Eyes: The Autobiography of an Historian* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1995), 96.

<sup>69</sup> Shimon Schwab, *Selected Speeches: A Collection of Addresses and Essays on Hashkafah, Contemporary Issues and Jewish History* (New York: CIS Publishers, 1991), 243.

<sup>70</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Sefer Shemesh Marpe*, trans. Shimon Schwab (New York: Feldheim, 1951).

attack on Torah im Derekh Erets unleashed by R. Eliyahu Dessler, a vocal leader in the ultra-Orthodox Ponevezh Yeshiva of Bnei Brak. Dessler criticized the Torah im Derekh Erets philosophy for its failure to produce elite Torah scholars.<sup>71</sup> Schwab found Dessler's assessment patently incorrect and dangerous to the Hirschian legacy. Aside from Hirsch, Schwab listed Rabbis Jacob Ettlinger, Mendel Kargau, and Isaac Bernays as towering Torah scholars who also subscribed to the tenets of Torah im Derekh Erets. Then, with much apologia and deference for Dessler, Schwab staked the claim that "the approach of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch enables us to educate and produce God-fearing and Torah loyal young men, and righteous and valiant young women." Hirsch's is a "tried and tested method" and appropriate in America "at this time, which has much in common with the Haskalah period in Germany during the previous century." Schwab still conceded, though, that the concerns of Hirsch's opponents were reasonable and it would be best to wait for the return of Elijah the Prophet who will "resolve all problems, including this one."<sup>72</sup>

Later that same year, Schwab reentered this debate when he published a pamphlet, this time attaching his name to his writing. Schwab's *These and Those* included an approbation from Breuer that described Schwab as someone "deeply rooted in the principles" of the Washington Heights community. But the author endeavored to remain ambivalent and dispassionate as he simulated a discussion between adherents of Torah im Derekh Erets and supporters of the so-called "Torah-Only" position.<sup>73</sup> In his final analysis, Schwab posited that both schools were legitimate and "indispensable partner[s] of the Torah Nation today." He called on advocates of both schools to recognize that "there are various methods and various avenues of approach" but they "all lead up to the ultimate end."<sup>74</sup> Schwab's even handling of the debate was met with acerbic reaction from members of the Torah-Only community.<sup>75</sup>

Negative reviews notwithstanding, Schwab continued to lend his support to adherents of the insular Orthodox lifestyle, especially after Breuer passed away. Whereas Breuer had little to do with the religiously

<sup>71</sup> Eliyahu Dessler, "On 'Torah im Derech Eretz,'" *ha-Ma'ayan* 4 (Tishrei 1963), 61-64.

<sup>72</sup> "A Letter Regarding the Frankfurt Approach," *ha-Ma'ayan* 6 (Tamuz 1966), 4-7. English rendered from Shnayer Z. Leiman, "R. Shimon Schwab: A Letter Regarding the 'Frankfurt' Approach," *Tradition* 31 (Spring 1997), 75-76.

<sup>73</sup> Shimon Schwab, *These and Those* (New York: Feldheim, 1966), 5.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>75</sup> See Cha'yim Dov Altusky, "These: The Righteous and Those: The Opportunists," *Light* (Av-Elul 1973), 6.

right-wing Agudath Israel, Schwab became an “active and prominent participant” in the organization.<sup>76</sup> Schwab’s indifference for Torah-Only Jews developed into genuine support as his position against college education grew increasingly more militant.<sup>77</sup> Conversely, Schwab made sure to escalate the growing hostility between his community and nearby Yeshiva University.<sup>78</sup> In one case, Schwab publicly denigrated a “modern orthodox” and “centrist” leader at Yeshiva whose Zionist views rendered him a child of “our dark age and a victim of garbled teachings” imparted by “highly controversial role models.”<sup>79</sup> He also referred to the “halachic foolishness” of Modern Orthodox leaders who violate Hirsch’s *Austritt* and “border on heresy” by “flirting with the anti-Torah establishment.”<sup>80</sup> In 1988, on the centennial anniversary of Hirsch’s death, Schwab accused Modern Orthodox leaders of “chang[ing] the image of Hirsch” to one that resembled “a docile, dove-like apologizer for a watered-down version of convenient Judaism.”<sup>81</sup> Several years later, when Schwab republished *These and Those*, he added a chapter to delineate the difference between Hirsch’s Torah im Derekh Erets and Modern Orthodoxy’s Torah u-Madda that maintained open lines with other Jewish denominations. “*Torah im derech erez* without *Austritt*,” Schwab concluded, “is considered *treife lechol hadaios!* Even if you call it *Torah Umadda*.”<sup>82</sup>

By the mid-Nineties, others within the Kehillah took on the responsibility of demarcating Hirschians from adherents of Torah u-Madda.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Kranzler and Landesman, *Rav Breuer*, 186.

<sup>77</sup> Shimon Schwab, *Selected Essays: A Collection of Addresses and Essays on Hashkafah, Jewish History and Contemporary Issues* (New York: CIS Publishing, 1994), 124.

<sup>78</sup> See Chaim I. Waxman, “Dilemmas of Modern Orthodoxy: Sociological and Philosophical,” *Judaism* 42 (Winter 1993), 61; and Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 130.

<sup>79</sup> Shimon Schwab, “He Who Loves Does Not Hate,” *Mitteilungen* 49 (April/May 1989), 2. At the time this essay was published, many within the Washington Heights community believed that Schwab’s crosshairs were focused on Rabbi Hershel Schachter, the prominent Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University’s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, who still lives in that neighborhood. The episode caused a commotion and Schwab reportedly received “a lot of hate mail and nasty calls.” When the essay was collected into a volume of Schwab’s writings, the reference was modified and a postscript was added by Schwab that denied any wrongdoing. See Shimon Schwab, *Selected Speeches*, 79.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Shimon Schwab, “Rav S.R. Hirsch—The Leader and Fighter,” in *Moresbet Zvi: The Living Hirschian Legacy: Essays on “Torah im Derech Eretz” and the Contemporary Hirschian Kehila* (New York: Feldheim, 1988), 73.

<sup>82</sup> Shimon Schwab, *Selected Essays: A Collection of Addresses and Essays on Hashkafah, Jewish History and Contemporary Issues* (New York: CIS Publishers, 1994), 161.

<sup>83</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The World of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch: The Nineteen Letters*, ed. Joseph Elias (New York: Feldheim, 1995), 314-16. For a brief discussion on the



In truth, though, it is rather unclear whether such measures were even necessary. Yeshiva University maintained little contact with their German neighbors and rarely, if at all, responded to their criticisms.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, had Schwab and his followers examined Yeshiva's views more thoroughly, it most certainly would have been clear to them that Hirsch, as Breuer had put it, was not seen as a "spiritual guide" for that institution.

While Schwab surely did not till fertile soil for Torah im Derekh Erets in the United States, he never fully turned his back on Hirsch's ideals, either. In perhaps an attempt to soften the ultra-Orthodox's stance on Hirsch, Schwab encouraged several of the "German Orthodox" writers and editors of the Agudath Israel's *Jewish Observer* to print articles on Hirsch.<sup>85</sup> Further, he assisted in several publication projects, including R. Eliyahu Meir Klugman's collection of Hirsch responsa in 1992.<sup>86</sup> Schwab aided Klugman four years later when the latter published a detailed biography—the most extensive to date—on Hirsch.<sup>87</sup>

Nonetheless, Schwab's sympathy for Eastern European Orthodoxy was highly influential in the Washington Heights Kehillah. For years, Schwab encouraged his congregants and students to seek out advanced Talmud study at America's Lithuanian-style yeshivot. The course Schwab set for the Kehillah became apparent to all more than a dozen years after his death. On June 21, 2008, at a celebration in honor of the bicentennial of Hirsch's birth held at K'hal Adath Jeshurun, Schwab's successor, R. Yisroel Mantel, declared Torah im Derekh Erets unsuitable for his congregation. "Our generation," Mantel said, according to a Jewish weekly, "must follow today's *gedolei HaTorah*." Mantel's comments in favor of the Torah-Only perspective were in response to those made earlier that day

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tensions between the Yeshiva world and Yeshiva vis-à-vis Hirsch, see Mayer Schiller, "Hirschians and Kookians in America: Report on an Endangered Species," *Jewish Action* 47 (Winter 1986-97), 9-15. On the evident biases of Elias's book, see Shlomo E. Danziger, "Rediscovering the Hirschian Legacy," *Jewish Action* 56 (Summer 1996), 20-24; and Baruch Pelta, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's View of Secular Studies in the Thought of Rabbi Joseph Elias: Some Critical Observations," *Hakirah* 7 (Winter 2009), 69-80. See also, "Hirschians Debate the True Meaning of Hirsch," *Jewish Action* 57 (Fall 1996), 61-66.

<sup>84</sup> See George D. Frankel, *Dan Shall Judge His People: Five Essays on Torah im Derech Eretz and the Breuer Community Today* (New York: Aire Publishers, 2002), 6.

<sup>85</sup> Yonason Rosenblum, *Rabbi Sherer: The Paramount Torah Spokesman of Our Era* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2009), 359. See also "A New Voice: Our Reason for Existence," *Jewish Observer* 1 (September 1963), 3.

<sup>86</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Shemesh Marpeh*, trans. Eliyahu Meir Klugman (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1992).

<sup>87</sup> Eliyahu Meir Klugman, *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Architect of Torah Judaism for the Modern World* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1996).

by Hirsch's great-great grandson, Samson Bechhofer. A lifelong member of the congregation, Bechhofer felt compelled to publicly lament the community's departure from Hirsch's worldview. "If the goal of our *kehilla* and yeshiva is to have all of our sons and daughters end up in Lakewood—and I use Lakewood as a metaphor—then," said Bechhofer, "I submit that we are not being faithful to our founder's philosophy or Weltanschauung, nor are we doing the future of our *kehilla* any great favors." Mantel rebuffed Hirsch's descendent, explaining that "grandchildren and lawyers" would not be the ones to dictate the direction of the Washington Heights community. In the aftermath, several members of synagogue's board, including its longtime president, resigned from their posts in acknowledgement that Samson Raphael Hirsch was no longer the spiritual guide of that community.<sup>88</sup>

This, then, is Hirsch's complex legacy in America. Hirsch is in no way absent from contemporary Orthodox libraries, thanks in large measure to R. Joseph Breuer. After Breuer's death, his children established the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Foundation to continue the work of Breuer's Samson Raphael Hirsch Society. Undoubtedly the centerpiece of this undertaking has been *The Collected Writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch*, begun in 1988. To date, the Foundation has published nine volumes in this series. In addition, Breuer's family recently issued a new English translation of the Hirsch Chumash to accommodate English speakers who found Isaac Levy's translation too difficult and not sufficiently modern.<sup>89</sup> Consequently, Hirsch is an integral starting point for many who consider any subject in Jewish tradition on which he wrote. Today, preachers and teachers quote Hirsch in synagogue sermons, classrooms, and published essays. Many of the educational models embraced by sectors of America's Orthodox community resemble the philosophies espoused by Hirsch. However, one must draw a stark distinction between borrowing an idea and embracing an ideology like the one Hirsch championed in his lifetime.

At present, the Breuer Kehillah's numbers are in grave decline. Many sons reared in the Mesivta Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch followed R. Schwab's example and left Manhattan to study in Lithuanian schools in Brooklyn and Lakewood. Few returned to Washington Heights.<sup>90</sup> Among the Modern Orthodox, Hirsch's difficult reception within that

<sup>88</sup> Eliot Resnick, "Controversial Moments at Rav S.R. Hirsch Memorial Celebration," *Jewish Press* (June 27, 2008), 18.

<sup>89</sup> Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Chumash: The Five Books of the Torah*, trans. Daniel Haberman (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2000-2009).

<sup>90</sup> Lowenstein, *Frankfurt on the Hudson*, 235.

camp suffers from the same trials it endured during the previous century. A case in point is illustrative. In the fall semester of 1996, a rabbinical student, Ezra Schwartz, published a review of R. Elyahu Klugman's biography of Samson Raphael Hirsch in one of Yeshiva University's student magazines. Although Schwartz found much to praise in Klugman's book, he could not withhold his criticisms. The student astutely noted that much of Klugman's work was meant to revise the disparaging profile painted in Noah Rosenbloom's biography. In Schwartz's view, Klugman maintained "an interpretational bias [by] slanting the evidence to make R. Hirsch appear more like the stereotypical *Gadol*" and a "defender of 'authentic' Judaism."<sup>91</sup> Schwartz acknowledged that Hirsch was more of a scholar than Noah Rosenbloom gave him credit for in 1976, but he was unsatisfied with Klugman's emphasis on Hirsch's *responsa* and halakhic rulings when those were not what marked Hirsch as a great man. In Schwartz's words, Hirsch was a "Gadol for the Nineties"—a highly dynamic and multidimensional figure. In this light, Klugman's portrayal was just too limiting:

The concerted (and ineffective) attempt to portray R. Hirsch as a *posek* arises out of the mistaken notion that all Torah luminaries must be masters of Halakha. What would be wrong with accepting R. Hirsch for what he was? He was, after all, a masterful commentator on the Torah, a brilliant polemicist against Reform Judaism, and a great innovator in the field of Jewish education. These qualities of R. Hirsch—not his *responsa*—are the most relevant today.<sup>92</sup>

Schwartz's provocative essay alarmed at least one member of the school's rabbinic faculty. Fearing that other students might take to Schwartz's line of logic, R. Yehuda Parnes spoke out against the major points of the review article before dozens of students. To Parnes, Schwartz's characterizations of Hirsch echoed the criticisms of Rosenbloom and others who cast doubt on Hirsch's Torah knowledge. Specifically, Schwartz's bid to remove Hirsch from those who were "masters of Halakha" was understood by Parnes as a severe knock on Hirsch's legacy. "Rabbi Hirsch is the one *Gadol* who could speak to us in America," Parnes was said to have exclaimed.<sup>93</sup> To discredit him, therefore, as a legitimate scholar and role model is to lose a guidepost in the spiritual wilderness of America.

Whether or not Parnes properly understood the review is beside the point. His concern that Hirsch was losing his relevance within American

<sup>91</sup> Ezra Schwartz, "A *Gadol* for the Nineties," *Hamevaser* 36 (Fall 1996), 7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>93</sup> Ezra Schwartz, interview with author, February 14, 2011.

Orthodoxy reflected a reality caused by a myriad of factors, each of which traces its roots to the difficulty of Torah im Derekh Erets to find a host in America. Both Modern Orthodoxy and its ultra-Orthodox cousins in the Torah-Only camp share an Eastern European bond that Hirsch never could fully penetrate in his lifetime or posthumously. Due to its Eastern European lineage and because Hirsch never conceptualized what Torah im Derekh Erets might look like for advanced students, the Modern Orthodox community that developed in America never viewed him as its intellectual ancestor. Instead of looking to Hirsch, Modern Orthodox leaders conceived a Torah u-Madda curriculum that was anchored in a Lithuanian-style yeshiva environment and the Talmudic discourses of Eastern Europe's rabbinic scholars.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> See Zev Eleff, "Jewish Immigrants, Liberal Higher Education and the Quest for a Torah u-Madda Curriculum at Yeshiva College," *Tradition* 44 (Summer 2011), 19-34.