REVIEW ARTICLE:

Howard I. Levine

The interrelationship between Torah and secular culture represents one of the most crucial and sensitive areas of current Jewish thought. Although more than a century has elapsed since Samson Raphael Hirsch first pioneered his revolutionary concept, Torah im Derekh Eretz, the impact of this trail-blazing personality still reverberates throughout the Jewish world. In this review, Rabbi Howard I. Levine of the Jewish Studies Department of Stern College for Women, critically examines the salient features of Hirsch's ideology and attempts to place them within historic perspective. Because of the controversial nature of these observations, TRADITION invites expression of dissenting evaluations. Rabbi Levine's most recent contribution to these pages was "The Non-Observant Orthodox" in the Fall 1959 issue.

ENDURING AND TRANSITORY ELEMENTS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH*

Time is a severe judge and Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) has stood up remarkably well under its trial. In the more than a century and a quarter since the appearance of his first major works, The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel and Horeb, his influence has not waned and interest in his writings has not flagged. In our day, numerous translations and expositions of his works, originally written in German, are being published in Hebrew and English to meet the spiritual needs of Jews in Israel, America and England.

Hirsch's numerous followers today remain loyal, observant Jews, while functioning freely in the various fields of modern endeavor. They are testimony to the enduring vitality of Hirsch's philosophy of Torah im Derekh Eretz (Torah together with worldliness.)

* For a different evaluation see "Samson Raphael Hirsch; Educationist and Thinker," by Zvi E. Kurzweil in the Spring 1960 issue of this journal.—Ed.

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Many of the problems that confronted the Jews with the spread of the Emancipation still plague us today. Hence, Hirsch's solutions for the conflict between Orthodoxy and secularism are still relevant. The need for re-affirming the practical intellectual and moral cogency of Orthodox Judaism remains as urgent as ever.

This accounts for the enthusiastic reception which was accorded to the publication in English of Hirsch's *Horeb* — a presentation and philosophical exposition of the Jewish laws operative in our own day. It is indeed an excellent edition from many points of view: the two volumes are attractively printed, the translation is accurate and pleasing, the introduction in scholarly and comprehensive, and the notes are enlightening and provide helpful cross-references to Hirsch's other writings. Dayan Dr. I. Grunfeld, the editor and translator, has made a noteworthy contribution which should deepen and broaden the appreciation of Orthodoxy in our day. The extensive introduction dealing with such topics as humanism, symbolism, and Kabbalah in relation to Hirsch's thought shows vast erudition and a thorough mastery of the material. Yet Grunfeld's unbounded love and admiration for Hirsch does not prejudice his fair treatment of other positions.

It is indicative of Hirsch's frame of mind, that it was his intention to print *Horeb*, the practical exposition of the observance of Judaism, before his work on its theoretical foundations and philosophy. In explanation of this order, he writes:

> The knowledge of the general should precede that of the particular . . . Nevertheless I shall publish the particular first. I know well that I will thereby rouse up more opponents, for people are readier to acknowledge principles before they have obtained a full view of the consequences to which they logically lead. Still I cannot do otherwise. I recognize as our nearest and most fundamental evil the false opinions which prevail concerning the extent as well as the contents and meaning of our mitzvot (N.L., p. 220).*

It was only at his publisher's suggestion that the publication of a shorter work embodying his main ideas would entail less financial risk, that he published the *Nineteen Letters* first. *Horeb* and the *Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel*, therefore, belong together. "They contain the fundamentals of Samson Raphael Hirsch's philosophy of Judaism and Jewish Law." (Grunfeld, Introduction, XXXIII).

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** Quotations are from Hirsch's *Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel*, English translation by Bernard Drachman, (Bloch Publishing Co., 1942) and are indicated by the abbreviation N.L.
These works of the author, printed before his thirtieth year, show his vast Torah learning, impressive general culture and a remarkable maturity and comprehensiveness of thought. They provide a rationale for the role of the Orthodox Jew in modern life and culture. Cognizant as he was of the novelty of his position within Orthodoxy, he was convinced that it bespoke the true essence of Judaism.

Much has happened in the modern world since Hirsch’s time. The cataclysmic destruction of European Jewry and the phenomenal rebirth of the State of Israel, call for a new appraisal of Hirsch’s view. So, too, the rise of new cultural concepts under the influence of Darwin, Marx, and Freud demands a re-appraisal of the relationship of Judaism to general culture. Much of Hirsch’s thought retains its value; some of it does not. Our main problem is to evaluate what endures in Hirsch’s philosophy, and what is transitory. Blind adulation is not a fitting tribute to a great spirit, particularly when our main interest concerns modern Judaism’s ability to cope with the challenges of our time. Hirsch himself did not flinch from a critical evaluation of the thought of his predecessors, especially when he regarded their ideas as detrimental to the cause of Judaism. We should do no less for him.

For this purpose it will be necessary to consider in some detail Hirsch’s views on secular culture, humanistic emphasis in religion, the mission of Israel and Zionism. We should also inquire into possible foreign influences on his thought.

**Secular Culture and the Orthodox Jew**

What should the attitude of Orthodox Judaism be to secular learning? Should it be rejected as inimical to our doctrines because it interferes with complete concentration upon the study of the Torah? Or should it be tolerated as a necessary evil with which we must compromise for the sake of professional careers or other forms of worldly success? Or should it be warmly embraced as a means of intellectual and spiritual enrichment?

Hirsch faces these questions in a forthright manner. In his essay “The Relation of General To Specifically Jewish Education,” he writes:

Friends of Jewish education might see in all labor spent on instruction in general subjects a sacrifice of the time and energy which should be given to Jewish education. They might sanction such a sacrifice as a necessary concession to the spirit of the age, but they might bewail this necessity and remain anxious about the influence which such a, to their mind, alien subject of study might exercise on the whole future Jewish outlook and direction of our youth. Now, our institute devotes the same care and attention to general educational subjects as to the specifically Jewish, and, in fact, it is one of its declared principles that both should be put on the same footing. It is, therefore, incumbent on us to explain to its Jewish friends the intimate connection between the two branches and the great benefit
which the whole future outlook and conduct of our Jewish youth derives from their general education (Judaism Eternal, Vol. I, pp. 203-4).*

Perhaps the most convincing proof of Hirsch’s positive attitude towards secular culture is that in his chapter on the Mitzvah of studying and teaching the Torah, he presents a model course of studies for Jewish schools which includes secular as well as religious subjects. It is significant that secular subjects comprise the major proportion of this curriculum which is formulated to help us fulfill the Mitzvah of education (Horeb, p. 411).

Hirsch believed that there is more than one source of knowledge of the Divine Will. In addition to the revelation which is recorded in our sacred literature, there is the mind of man in which God has implanted a knowledge of truth and right.

He has implanted in your mind the general principles of truth and right — a spark of His universal order ... God’s will has established both external reality and the internal reality of your mind and spirit. Thus, truth and right are the first revelation of God in your mind (ibid., p. 219).

Thus, Hirsch saw no conflict between our study of Torah and the pursuit of human wisdom.

Both represent sources of knowledge of God’s will. Hence, the education of the Orthodox Jew should include the two components which actually reinforce each other. Torah increases our understanding of the true nature of man and his duties and general education increases our understanding of God’s will as it unfolds in nature and history.**

As Dayan Grunfeld points out in his Introduction to Horeb: “Hirsch’s philosophy of life was that of a religious humanism. He denied the alleged contrast between Judaism and humanism. Neither the Written nor the Oral Law forbids us to enjoy this world or the beauty of its nature or to take part in what amounts to real progress of the human mind.” (Grunfeld, op. cit., p. XC).

In line with his conception of the harmony of the two disciplines, Hirsch stressed the importance of having general subjects, taught by teachers who were imbued with spirit of Torah, and conversely, of having Jewish subjects taught by individuals who possessed a knowledge of general subjects. In his essay “Religious Instruction,” he wrote:

Find educated Jewish teachers with a Jewish education, men whose own intellectual and spiritual education has matured on a harmonization of its Jewish and secular components, who have absorbed with

* See also ibid., p. 219.

** Hirsch highlights this interrelationship by two essays: “On Hebrew Instruction as Part of a General Education” and “The Relation of General To Specifically Jewish Education.”
equal thoroughness and earnestness both Jewish learning and secular learning; men whose roots are in Judaism, mind and heart, but who have learned to appreciate Judaism from the standpoint of secular philosophy, and secular philosophy, from the point of view of Judaism . . . To such men you may entrust your children, so that they may early in life introduce them into both spheres equally, with equal earnestness and equal care . . . Try to apply the ancient principle of Talmud Torah im Derekh Eretz (Torah together with the ways of the world) which ties religious and secular education closely together and makes one conditional on the other (Judaism Eternal, Vol. I, p. 172).

Truly a beautiful vision of harmony and peace for the Orthodox Jew in the modern world! But all is not sweetness and light in Hirsch's approach to Torah study. He is, indeed, a very severe critic, of the method of Torah study prevalent in his day. He is also sharply critical of the entire world-outlook of the Orthodoxy that was not in intimate relationship with the stream of European culture. Thus he bemoans the fact that the leaders of Orthodoxy became at first enemies of this philosophical spirit, and later, of all specifically intellectual and philosophical pursuits in general. Certain misunderstood utterances were taken as weapons with which to repel all higher intellectual interpretation of the Talmud . . . The inevitable consequence was, therefore, that since oppression and persecution had robbed Israel of every broad and natural view of world and of life, and Talmud had yielded about all the practical results for life of which it was capable, every mind that felt the desire of independent activity was obliged to forsake the paths of study and research in general open to the human intellect, and to take its recourse to dialectic subtleties and hairsplittings (N.L., pp. 185-6).

Hirsch is condemning the entire method of Torah study from the early Middle-Ages until his day as leading to an inadequate, external and improper comprehension of Judaism. As he continues:

"Only a very few during this entire period stood with their intellectual efforts entirely within Judaism, and built it up out of its own inner concept" (ibid.).

Hirsch reiterates his negative attitude towards the traditional method of Torah study which he ridicules as a "dull and prosaic dialectic [which] had reduced to merest mummies, laws full to overflowing of life and spirit (ibid., p. 99)."

A prominent feature of Hirsch's thinking is the emphasis upon the centrality of the Bible as the main core of Torah study.

The Bible should be studied as the foundation of a new science; with Davidic sentiment nature should be contemplated; with the ear of an Isaiah history should be listened to, and then with, eye thus aroused, with ear thus opened, the doctrine of God, world, man, Israel, and Torah should be drawn from the Bible, and should become an idea, or system of ideas, fully comprehended. In this spirit Talmud should be studied, in the Halakhah only further elucidation and amplification of ideas already known from

* See also ibid., p. 198.
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the Bible should be sought; in the Aggadah, only figuratively disguised manifestation of the same spirit (N.L., ibid., 197-8).

Two ideas should be noted in this quotation: 1) The Bible cannot be properly understood from within itself; one must come to the Bible from the standpoint of a certain contemplation of nature and a special type of knowledge of history. 2) The Talmud cannot be properly understood in terms of itself; the Bible determines the range of ideas to be gleaned from the Talmud. Both of these ideas are exceedingly strange. Why not read the Bible independently of our pre-conceptions of nature and history? It does not help to characterize our view of nature as Davidic or to associate our understanding of world history with that of Isaiah. How do we know that we have attained such prophetic heights that we can parallel the achievement of an Isaiah in our reading of world history? The entire point is obscure. Do we come to the Bible from the vantage point of our insight into nature and history? Or do we come to nature and history from the vantage point of our knowledge of Bible? If both, where does one start and how does one start? Since either investigation requires a preliminary knowledge of the other, one is left with the possibility of not being able to know either.

A similar difficulty arises with regard to Hirsch's view on the relationship of the Bible to the Talmud, the Written Law to the Oral Law. Do we understand the Written Law from the vantage point of the Oral Law? Or vice versa? The traditional view of the relationship of the two seem to favor the first alternative. The Oral Law determines our understanding of the Written Law, whereas the Written Law may help in our understanding of the Oral Law but does not determine it.

Time and again we encounter in Hirsch's thought the emphasis upon the practical and the deprecation of the purely theoretical study of the Law.

To be sure, the Jewish spirit, in its most recent form, was chiefly devoted to abstract and abstruse speculation; a vivid consciousness of the real world was lacking, and therefore the object of study was not what it should chiefly have been, the attainment of knowledge of duty, for use in the world and in life. Study became the end instead of the means, the subject of investigation became a matter of indifference, the dialectic subtleties thereof the chief concern; people studied Judaism but forgot to search for its principles in the pages of Scripture (N.L., p. 147-8).*

Hirsch goes so far as to re-interpret the traditional terminology and invest it with a new meaning and nuance. Mishnah for him means, "begin to teach him his duties, with instruction in the rudiments of the Oral Law." In reality, Mishnah is far from being a practical source for a knowledge of Jewish duties — but Hirsch wishes to force his scheme of in-

* See also ibid., pp. 150, 178 and Horeb, p. 409.
struction into the traditional prescription: “At ten years of age one begins the study of Mishnah” (Avot, 5:24). Gemara, for Hirsch, means “deeper penetration into the knowledge of the Torah.” This is to say a deeper understanding of the Bible, not necessarily the traditional study of the Talmud.

In his scheme, little value would be attached to the pure theoretical study of the Halakhah. Hence, study of such areas of Jewish Law as are not operative today would hardly be warranted. Theoretical Halakhah is not identified with divine wisdom: What matters is only the practical application of the Law in life. In short, Halakhah is conduct; insight into divine wisdom is to be gained from a study of the Bible, nature, and history.

At this juncture the question must be raised: Did not Hirsch by his depreciation of traditional talmudic study, his emphasis on the Bible as over and against the Talmud, his insistence on the practical function of talmudic study and encouragement of the co-ordinate study of nature and history with the study of Torah, weaken the role of study of Oral Law in Jewish life? This is a crucial question. A very good case can be made for the contention that the central problem of the Haskalah (Enlightenment) period with its attendant disruption of traditional ways of life and values, was precisely the problem of the study of the Oral Law.

Yechezkel Kaufman, in his perceptive study, Golah Ve’neichar, points out that the Haskalah movement was not primarily an attack on the Law itself, but on the study of the Oral Law. Students left the traditional Yeshivot by the droves and the Talmud was reserved as a special field of study for rabbis. For the broad masses and especially for the intellectual youth, the Bible and general subjects of study became the new centers of interest. This brought about a displacement of the traditional order. With the collapse of the very heart of Orthodoxy, the other limbs died.

And yet Hirsch was eminently successful in preserving and reviving traditional Orthodox observances in his own and succeeding generations. Does this invalidate our criticism that Hirsch was unduly influenced by the Haskalah and other conceptions of his time that were incompatible with the values of traditional Judaism? Not necessarily. It is possible that the appeal of his teaching was especially geared to a certain character type, to a temperament and cultural background not found commonly nowadays. It is therefore necessary for us to examine the intellectual and temperamental foundations of Hirsch’s philosophy and evaluate their relevance for our milieu.

Hirsch’s views on the close relationship between Torah study and secular learning also come to the fore in his stress upon the practical significance of the Mitzvot. It is through their effect upon both nature and history that, according to Hirsch, they enable Israel to fulfill its mission to humanity. It
can be said without exaggeration that Hirsch's philosophy stands or falls with the validity of this notion. On the very first page of *Horeb*, reference is made to Israel's lofty vocation as God's instrument in history for the education of the human race. As Grunfeld points out (Note on p. 271), "This idea runs like a golden thread through his works and is woven into the whole structure of his spiritual edifice."

It is important to recognize that in Hirsch's scheme, the Mitzvot are merely regarded as a means to the fulfillment of Israel's mission. But the goal of this mission is completely this-worldly and humanistic. As Hirsch put it,

After what has been now explained, I ask you, what do you expect in the Torah? You will answer, revelation of conduct, how you, using the powers and faculties which are yours may fulfill the will of God towards the beings by whom you are surrounded; in other words, how you may practice justice and love with all and towards all (*N.L.*, pp. 102-3).

In line with this approach, Hirsch reverses the traditional view of the highest goal of religious life: holiness. We are accustomed to viewing holiness, the experience of the numinous, as the very acme of religion. For Hirsch, however, holiness is but a means of preparing us for the end purpose which is the life of service to mankind. Thus, he writes, on the commandment of self-sanctification:

Sons and daughters of Israel, recognize your mission what the Lord your God requires of you, and render yourselves fit to fulfill it properly; this fitness lies not in the possession of material means, nor of knowledge, nor of skill, but first and foremost in purity of heart, in sanctity of disposition, and in holiness of endeavor. It lies, above all, in keeping your heart and disposition free from anything which can come between yourself and your mission, and filling them with that wholehearted devotion which your mission requires (*Horeb*, p. 47).

Rabbi Moses Chaim Luzzato provides a sharp antithesis to the Hirschian view. In his classic *Mesilat Yesharim*, which follows the generally accepted ranking of perfection described in the *Mishnah Sotah* (9:15), divine inspiration is higher than *chasidut*. The opening section of the *Mesilat Yesharim* introduces us to a view which is the antithesis of Hirsch's.

It is fundamentally necessary to realize clearly what constitutes man's duty in this world. Our sages have taught us that man was created only to find delight in the Lord, and to bask in the radiance of His Presence. But, the real place for such happiness is the world to come, which has been created for that very purpose.

Hirsch's view that the Mitzvot constitute the means of advancing the mission of Israel to humanity is most clearly evidenced in his greatest contribution to the study of the Mitzvot, his system of clas-
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sification of the 613 Commandments of the Torah:

(1) Torot — Instructions or doctrines — the historically revealed ideas concerning God, the world, the mission of humanity and of Israel . . .

(2) Mishpatim — Statements of justice towards creatures similar and equal to yourself . . . That is justice towards human beings.

(3) Chukim — Arbitrary statutes — statements of justice towards subordinate creatures by reason of the obedience due to God; that is, justice towards the earth, plants, and animals or, if they have become assimilated with your personality, towards your own body and soul.

(4) Mitzvot — Commandments — Precepts of love towards all beings without distinction, purely because of the bidding of God . . . and in consideration of our duty as men and Israelites.

(5) Edoth — Symbolic observances. Monuments or testimonies to truths essential to the concept of the mission of man and of Israel . . .

(6) Service or Worship — Exaltation and sanctification of the inner powers by word-or-deed symbols to the end that our conception of our task be rendered clearer, and we be better fitted to fulfill our mission on earth (N.L., pp. 103-5).

Notably absent in this scheme are appreciation of Israel as an end in itself, or the worth of the Mitzvot for their expression of the direct relationship of man to God, transcending the scope of human relation. With his antipathy to supra-mundane worlds, Hirsch naturally had no use for Kabbalah with its ascription of value to the religious act itself irrespective of its social effect.

Hirsch’s criticism of the Kabbalah is somewhat harsh.

What should have been eternal, progressive development was considered a stationary mechanism and the inner significance and concept thereof as extra-mundane dream worlds . . . Practical Judaism which comprehended in its purity, would perhaps have been impregnated with the spiritual became in it, through misconception, a magical mechanism, a means of influencing or resisting theosophic worlds and anti-worlds (N.L., p. 187).

A perverted intellect comprehended the institutions which were designed and ordained for the internal and external purification and betterment of man as mechanical, dynamical, or magical formulas for the up-building of higher worlds, and . . . thus the observances meant for the education of the spirit to a nobler life were but too frequently degraded into mere amuletic or talismanic performances (N.L., pp. 99-100).

It need be stressed that though Hirsch’s sharpest criticisms are directed against practical mysticism and its performances, the logic of his position requires his opposition to the very basis of the Kabbalah: a belief in supra-mundane worlds and the effects of the religious act in spheres not directly related to man and his world. In view of his position, it is difficult to comprehend how Hirsch can view Nachmanides, one of the greatest of the early Kabbalists, as a kindred spirit.

If Hirsch’s treatment of mysticism seems harsh, it is mild com-
pared to his treatment of rationalism, and of Maimonides in particular, of whom he writes:

He entered into Judaism from without, bringing with him opinions of whose truth he had convinced himself from extraneous sources. He . . . gives expression . . . to opinions concerning the meaning and purpose of the commandments . . . which are utterly untenable . . . But since the precepts, as practically fulfilled, stand entirely out of connection with these explanations it was inevitable that their ceremonial fulfillment lost its spiritual basis, and became despised (N.L., pp. 181-4).

Moses Mendelssohn, the father of the Haskalah movement, comes off much better in Hirsch's hands. A line of descent from Mendelssohn's superior comprehension of Judaism to that of Maimonides is traced.

His Jerusalem . . . emphasizes . . . in contra-distinction to the Moreh, the practical essence of Judaism, and gives utterance to an opinion concerning the Eduth, which, had it been carried out and intellectually comprehended by his successors, might have revolutionized the subsequent period . . . The science of Judaism was not further developed by him, and his successors, lacking the religious sentiment of the Master . . . could do nothing better . . . than to surrender completely to the Maimonidean theories (N.L., pp. 189-90).

How are we to explain Hirsch's bitter and intemperate attack on Maimonides and his rationalism? Not for subsequent breaches of observance, for on that score Mendelssohn was more assiable. Strangely enough the same line of reasoning resulted in the condemnation of both mysticism and rationalism for their non-humanistic ideals. For the rationalist the knowledge of God, and not the practical consequences of the Mitzvot, constitutes the highest desideratum of religious living.

For him [Maimonides] self-perfection through the knowledge of truth was the highest aim, the practical he deemed subordinate. For him knowledge of God was the end, not the means; hence, he devoted his intellectual powers to speculations upon the essence of the Deity . . . (N.L., pp. 182-83)

For Hirsch, the Mitzvot must serve the eternal purpose and task of Israel, the mission to humanity. The higher purpose that Maimonides finds in religion is unacceptable to Hirsch, who, in his zeal for the humanistic conception of Mitzvot, has perhaps exceeded the rightful limits of criticism in condemning the greater and more inclusive idea for not being the lesser and the narrower.

Because he did not perceive the purely religious dimension of Mitzvot, Hirsch viewed them largely as a course of training for raising moral standards in the world by curbing man's lust and pride. It was from this point of view that he interpreted the general commandment "Be thou holy" and specific corollaries such as Sabbath, Kashrut, and family purity.

Where Ta'ava (lust) draws, Torah cannot abide, for where mind and disposition set themselves up as the directive forces of life, how can there be room for the law which desires to implant the promotion of the will of God and the sal-
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vation of the world as the mission of life.

Where Ta'ava rules, Mitzvah must give way, for the latter binds you more not for your own benefit but for that of others . . . every sin and every crime is only a product of Ta'ava (Horeb, p. 45).

Yet Hirsch also maintained that the Mitzvot may be interpreted in terms of a positive, humanistic goal — the quest for justice. “Thus justice is the sum total of your life, as it is the sole concept which the Torah serves to interpret” (ibid., p. 220). Needless to say more that a little stretching is necessary to fit all of the commandments into these two categories. Yet, this is roughly what Hirsch sets out to do as he explains each commandment in detail, admonishing the reader not to yield to lust or covetousness but to live up to the duty of justice and observe the Mitzvah at hand. The continued harping on the same tune leads to a monotony that tends to lessen the inspiration of words so sincerely written. One could wish for more varied explanation and motivations though they be less urgently remindful of our task and duty. The type of explanations offered by Maimonides at the conclusion of various portions of the Mishneh Torah could serve as a good example.

The Mission as a Group Function

The concept of the mission relates primarily to a national group, not to an individual. It is based on the view that all nations were endowed with special gifts and bear the mission to contribute their share to “the edifice of human history.”

This is the lesson of the life of all the good and the virtuous of all nations . . . have . . . united in brotherhood for the working out of the same ideals — and Israel has done and will do its share of the glorious task (N.L., pp. 143-4.).

The task of the individual is to work for the attainment of the mission of his national group.

Everything that you have or will have is given to you only that you may fulfill the task of Israel in your life (Horeb, p. 370).

In this view, the role of the individual is weak and the worth of individuality is practically nonexistent. Even the religious experience of the individual is of no great account if it does not lead directly to the advance of the mission of the group.

The Torah teaches you, the individual, justice and love towards individuals. But the relationship between individuals is not the whole consummation of life; the individual is weak and transitory . . . And yet, not for the fleeting moment only, not with limited means should you try to preserve the nobility, the greatness, the God given humanity to which the name of Israel pledges you. God has given the loftiest possessions and concerns of Israel into the safe keeping not of the individual but of the collectivity. For the collectivity alone is strong, the totality alone is immortal even in this world (ibid., p. 452).

This would seem to be a very dangerous doctrine. It smacks of
statism and of totalitarianism, and threatens the very foundation of religion as we view it today as the safeguard of the priceless and absolute worth of the individual. Of course, it was not intended in this way, but the seeds of this harmful doctrine are, unfortunately, there.

In the scheme of the mission the highest goal for the individual is that of self-sacrifice, even self-obliteration.

Genuine humility . . . reaches its crowning point in chasiduth, that noble love which is nothing for itself and all for others, and foregoing even its legitimate rights, devotes itself utterly and completely to the general good (ibid., pp. 42-3). The child is not there for you, but you are there for the child (ibid., p. 406). Not Thine is the earth, but Thou belongeth to the earth . . . (N.L., p. 33).

A key expression used by Hirsch throughout his writings is Mensch-Jissroel (sic). This term has been translated and interpreted in various ways. Some translate it as “Israel-Man,” others as “Man-Israel.” Grunfeld translates it as “man and Israelite” interpreting it to mean that the human element comes first. “For Judaism, according to Hirsch, means humanism elevated to a higher plane by the enobling influence of the Torah” (op. cit., p. 271).

However, an alternative explanation should be considered. Cannot “Man-Israel” mean that Hirsch is speaking to the individual in his primary role as he conceives it, as a member of the group Israel? The individual is but a representative of the group and the group ideal. The role of the individual is then doubly weakened: he is subservient to the collectivity of Israel and Israel is the servant of mankind in its mission to humanity, at large.

In Hirsch’s thinking the relationship of the individual to his mission as an Israelite is an all-or-none matter. Either you are completely committed to it and are thereby part of it, or you are completely separate and cut off from it. He is completely unsympathetic to those who have deviated from practical Judaism. His practical policy of separation from the larger Jewish community which included non-observant elements, is in full accord with his view of the mission of the Jew. The individual must identify himself fully and actively with the mission of Israel and the Law in its totality, in order to be considered part of Israel. There must be a complete and absolute obedience to begin with. He writes in the Foreword:

Not a single line of this work has been written with the object of trying to defend the Divine commandments, since the very thought of such an attempt would appear to me as a denial of their Divine origin, and consequently as lying outside the pale of Judaism . . . If, therefore, dear reader, you look to my book for a defense of the Divine commandments . . . in order to decide accordingly whether to accept or not to accept the Divine commandments . . . leave my book unread; it was not written for you.

The relationship of the individual to collective Israel takes on the same quality of the relationship of the individual to the State
familiar in German thinking (Fichte, Hegel) in that era. It requires absolute loyalty, and unlimited sacrifice for the "mission" of the collective group. It allows little room for individual gropings and strivings which are not immediately translated into group-sanctioned actions.

The Rabbinic idea, "An Israelite though he has sinned, remains, nevertheless, an Israelite," strikes no responsive chord in Hirsch. Hirsch does not acknowledge any special spiritual endowment or quality of the Jewish people. Such considerations might interfere with his concept of the mission as the all-important duty and goal.

Contrary to Onkelos, Mekhilta, Rashi, and Ibn Ezra, who interpret the verse, "Then ye shall be my peculiar treasure from among all peoples" (Exodus 19:5) in the sense of a special quality in God’s love for Israel, Hirsch interprets it not as love but as "a property belonging exclusively to one owner . . . God has the sole and exclusive claim to Israel’s devotions and service" (N. L., p. 142).

Despite Hirsch’s espousal of the philosophy of Halevi, he is antipodal to him in many major aspects. The very essence of Halevi’s philosophy is that Israel has a special spiritual endowment which is transmitted by heredity. For Halevi, unlike Hirsch, Eretz Israel represents an irreducible value. Again, in contrast to Hirsch, the Mitzvot do not merely represent an instrument for the fulfillment of our mission to the nations. Insofar as Halevi is concerned, the ethical and moral content of the Torah, irrespective of its vital importance as the first step in our religious life, cannot be regarded as the higher purpose and fulfillment of Judaism. The revelational laws are distinguished from the moral or rational laws in that they are the higher stage of religious experience and are a distinctive trait of Jewish religion.

The rational law demands justice and recognition of God’s bounty . . . Sabbath, circumcision, etc., are ordinances especially given to Israel as a corollary to the rational laws. Through this they received the advantage of the Divine Influence . . . Can it be imagined that the Israelites observe the doing of justice and the love of mercy, but neglect circumcision, Sabbath, and the other laws, and feel happy withal? (Kitab Al Khazari — Hirschfeld translation, p. 112).

**Galut Approval — Hirsch’s Mission Theory**

Hirsch’s concept of the mission of Israel to humanity performs a remarkable feat. Our national tragedy is transformed into a veritable blessing. In radical departure from the biblical and Talmudic teachings that consider Galut life as an aberration and as a negation of our ideal situation, Hirsch waxes enthusiastic about life in Galut as an expanded opportunity for fulfilling the mission (N. L., p. 80). The entire era of the Second Commonwealth is viewed as a mere preparation for the great task that awaited Israel in the Dispersion. Moreover, according to Hirsch, Israel was aided by its offshoot, Christianity, in the fulfillment of its mis-
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mission of "rendering intelligible to the world the objects and purposes of Israel's election" (ibid.).

In attempting to adduce scriptural support for his concept of the mission, Hirsch seems to be guilty of a serious misreading. "If only Israel when it still lived happily and united on God's soil had entered the Sukkah in the true spirit of the Sukkah, never would the voice of the Prophet have been heard 'Back to the Wilderness'" (Horeb, p. 126). Elsewhere, this reference finds its fuller explanation.

To the wilderness again proclaimed the prophet's voice. "Into the wilderness again, prepare there the path of the Lord. And all flesh shall see that the mouth of God hath spoken." Israel accomplished its task better in exile than on the full possession of good fortune.

Hirsch is here rendering a poetic and free translation of the prophecy of consolation read in the Synagogue on the Sabbath after Tishah B'Av. It is Isaiah's classic expression of the theme of redemption from the Galut.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, bid Jerusalem take heart, and proclaim unto her, that her time of service is accomplished, that her guilt is paid off, that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Hark! one calleth: Clear ye in the wilderness the way of the land, make plain in the desert a highway for our God (Isaiah, 40:1-3).

The Targum, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Radak all interpret this passage as a prophecy of return from the exile, not of return to exile. The Prophet's call, then, is "Back from the Wilderness." Small comfort indeed would the call "back to the wilderness" be on the Sabbath of consolation. It would seem that Hirsch is putting into the mouth of the Prophet his own espousal of life in the Galut.

The problem of the suffering of the Jew in Galut does not upset Hirsch to any great degree.

Israel above all owes to suffering the greatness of its past; it performs its great national task only in suffering and must be trained for its future through suffering (Horeb, p. 39).

The duty of patriotism is not only a matter of outer obedience but a matter of inner feeling as well, no matter what policies the government adopts towards the Jew. Hirsch includes this obligation among the commandments of love.

But this outward obedience to the laws must be joined by the inner obedience: . . . To be loyal to the State with heart and mind . . . so that every aim which your country has set as its national good shall be achieved and furthered . . . And this duty is unconditional and not dependent upon whether the State is kindly intentioned towards you or is harsh. Even should they deny your right to be a human being and to develop a lawful human life upon the soil which bore you, you shall not neglect your duty . . . which God lays upon you: "Loyalty towards king and country and the promotion of welfare wherever and whenever and however you can" (ibid., p. 462).

We, today, would not look with favor on these conceptions. It is one thing to make the best of a bad
situation, it is another thing entirely to raise the need for compliance to brute force to a high and noble religious ideal. Would it be the noble duty of the Jew to further the national goals of a Nazi Germany or of a totalitarian communist state? Is there no higher ideal than that of loyalty to the State, no matter how unjust the State? Is it consistent with the ideal of justice to co-operate with the forces of evil? As Ahad Ha'Am pointed out, the suffering of injustice is itself unjust. Turning the other cheek is not a Jewish way of furthering justice in the world. It is, on the contrary, aiding and abetting the forces of evil.

Does the ideal of the mission of the Jew to teach justice really imply that Israel in Galut must not "wrest its independence by its own efforts" (ibid., p. 145)? Must we in fulfillment of our mission demonstrate our unconditional surrender to God through "resigned obedience . . . to oppressors" and only rely on the hope that as a result of divine intervention "the length of our suffering will be eased" (ibid.)?

Grunfeld, in a note here, is quick to point out that Hirsch in real life was an ardent democrat and "was anything but a quietist." This vindicates the man but not the doctrine he taught and wrote. The problem becomes even sharper: Why should such a man propound doctrines which are at such great variance with his role in life?

As the obverse side of the same coin, Hirsch strongly insists on the sinful nature of Jewish nationalism. The Jew dare not, in any way, further his nationalist aspirations, or work for the Jewish homeland.

Not in order to shine as a nation among nations do we raise our prayers and hopes for a reunion in our land, but in order to find a soil for the better fulfillment of our spiritual vocation in that reunion . . . But this very vocation obliges us until God shall call us back to the Holy Land, to live and to work as patriots wherever He has placed us . . . But it forbids us to strive for the reunion or the possession of the land by any but spiritual means (ibid., p. 461).

Thus, the way for unquestioning patriotism is cleared.

Here, again, Hirsch's thought diverges sharply from that of Halevi. The ideas that the goal of the Jew is not the fulfillment of the Jew, that the mission to the world is not a by-product but the main purpose of life in the exile, that suffering is necessary and good, that the nations of the world are not accountable to the court of justice of the Jewish consciousness for inflicting such suffering, that it is wrong for the Jew to leave his area of mission and do anything to bring himself by his own effort to the Holy Land — all such thinking is completely alien to Halevi.

A serious inner difficulty besets the notion of mission. To succeed the mission must satisfy two conditions: 1) Its agents must constantly bear their goal in mind and direct their actions accordingly. 2) Its audience must have some forms of intimate contact with the former and view them with some measure of respect. Neither of these
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conditions obtained to any widespread degree in Hirsch's time.

How does Hirsch get around these difficulties? The aspect pertaining to the Jewish attitude, he attempted to solve by means of his Horeb and Nineteen Letters, which clarify for the Jew the nature of his mission. They call for a new type of Judaism whose name will be "self-comprehending Judaism" (N. L., p. 202) and a new birth of awareness which will make the observance of the mitzvot more patently an instrument of the mission. The mitzvot would become "deed-symbols" and not uncomprehended mechanical acts.

The aspect pertaining to the attitude of the non-Jew presents a more formidable problem, yet Hirsch does not despair.

A new age was dawning in history, the age of emancipation and of human brotherhood. In this new atmosphere, Israel can function effectively.

On account of this purely spiritual nature of the national character of Israel it is capable of the most intimate union with states... Summon up, I pray you before your mental vision, the picture of such an Israel, dwelling in freedom in the midst of the nations, and striving to attain unto its ideal, every son of Israel a respected and influential exemplar priest of righteousness and love, disseminating among the nations not specific Judaism, for proselytism is interdicted, but pure humanity (N.L., ibid., pp. 162-3).

A beautiful picture, perhaps, but how true is it to the meaning of Jewish history in the Galut? Can a wholesome positive attitude towards the Jewish past maintain that all of previous generations of the Galut have misunderstood Judaism and have not lived it with the proper purpose in mind? How can the philosopher par excellence of the Galut and of the positive value of suffering, allow that "the excess of oppression drove Israel away from human intercourse, prevented the cultivation of the mind, limited the free development of the noble sides of character" (ibid., p. 165)? In short, can one build up traditional Judaism by downgrading the Jewish character and the major creative expressions of the Jewish spirit as embodied in the works of many centuries? Neither an inner view of Jewish values nor an outer view of world history can justify Hirsch's idea of the mission. Judaism has had independent final value not contingent upon the role of the mission of humanity. History has demonstrated conclusively that both Hirsch's faith in European culture and his lack of faith in Israel's national character were ill-founded.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES ON HIRSCH'S THOUGHT

Despite all of Hirsch's vigorous disclaimers of external influences, despite his insistence that Judaism must be comprehended from within and despite his contention that all of his interpretations are based purely on Bible, Talmud, Midrash, he, by no means, escaped the widespread net of foreign influences. Hirsch was a man of broad culture and his training is reflected
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in his system of thought. Dr. Noah Rosenbloom has offered extensive
evidence of the influence of Hegelianism on Hirsch.* We need not,
however limit ourselves to Hegel; the list can be extended to a broad
group of German writers. Suffice it to catalogue in brief some of
theses relationships.

1. Since all things, the smallest and the greatest, are God's
chosen messengers, to work each in its place . . . Should man
alone be excluded from this circle of blessed activity? . . .
Only when working out some end canst thou know God in
love and righteousness; to work out ends of righteousness and
love art thou called; not merely to enjoy or suffer (N. L., p.
32).

In a similar vein, Fichte writes:
"Not merely to know but ac-
cording to my knowledge to do,
is thy vocation . . . Not for
idle contemplation of thyself,
not brooding over devout sen-
sations; no, for action art thou
here; thine action, and thine
action alone, determines thy
worth."†

2. Hirsch emphasizes the importance of freedom for the sake
of submitting to duty. So, too,
Fichte: "I must be free . . . for
the sake of duty and for the
end of duty only . . . This alone
is what constitutes our true
worth."**

3. Hirsch's teaching that each nation has its peculiar national
spirit and vocation is expounded by Herder, the acknowl-
edged master of Hirsch's teach-
er, Bernays. That each man can
best serve mankind by aiding
his own nation to fulfill the
vocation which Providence al-
lotted to it is an idea popular-
ized by Fichte in his Addresses to the German Nation. Sim-
ilar ideas are to be found in
Hegel.

4. The deprecation of individual-
ism found in Hirsch is an
idea emphasized again and
again by Hegel.

5. Hirsch's emphasis upon lan-
guage as an instrument of na-
tional culture is an idea stressed
by Herder and Fichte.

6. Hirsch's very strange concep-
tion of the chukim as bespeak-
ing man's duty of justice to
lower creatures must be under-
stood in terms of the idealistic
nature conceptions of his day.
Fichte identified God as the
"World Order." Hirsch gives
expression to a similar notion:
"One Spirit lives in all, from
the construction of our Holy
tongue to the construction of
the universe, and the plan of
life, one spirit — the spirit

* The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel, A Hegelian Exposition, Historia Judaica,
Vol. XXII, April 1960.
† The Vocation of Man (La Salle: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1955),
p. 94,
** Ibid., p. 133.

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of the All-One!” (N. L., p. 199). He was fond of quoting the romantic conception of nature voiced by Schiller. “Do you search for what is highest and greatest, every plant can teach it to you. What it is without a will of its own, you must be with a will, that is it.”

Hirsch believed that our obligation to lower creatures (i.e., animal and plant life) derived from some need of these creatures according to their inner spirit of life. “To know what justice requires in regard to every creation you would have to know yourself and the creatures about you as well as God knows you and them” (Horeb, pp. 219-20). “Could you put yourself as thoroughly in the place of other beings, could you even understand the conditions of the union and the combined activity of your own body and soul, you would find it as easy to comprehend Chukim as Mishpatim” (N. L., p. 111).

It is difficult for us to allow that the laws of hair trimming, mixtures, and burial relate to the needs of lower creatures. Hirsch’s view is explicable only in terms of his conception of nature gained from authors of the idealist and romantic schools of nature interpretation, particularly, Herder.

Almost all of these ideas are no longer acceptable today, nor are they authentically Jewish.

CONCLUSION

In evaluating the contribution of Hirsch to Jewish thought, we must bear in mind that the difficulties which confronted him were far greater than those with which Maimonides had to cope. The conflict between Revelation and reason did not bother the masses of Jews in Maimonides’ time. It was a problem only for the intellectuals, and it was not exclusively a Jewish question. In Hirsch’s time, however, the problem involved the broad masses of Jews in Western Europe. At stake was their basic identification as Jews, not mere intellectual orientation. To Hirsch, Israel was like “a child enveloped in flames” (N. L., p. 212) who must be daringly rescued.

To stem the tide of assimilation and self-obliteration, Hirsch had to appeal to the emotion and will of the people as well as their reason. He had remarkable success. He harnessed the emotional and volitional energies of the culture of his age and directed them to Torah ends. He utilized the congenial elements in the spirit of his time for the sake of the Divine Law. He showed how Judaism embraced and ennobled the ideal elements of worldly values and wisdom. He broadened the perspective of Torah to include these elements in the realm of religious study and life. All this he accomplished without sacrificing one jot or tittle of Torah and mitzvot. We cannot estimate too highly the dimensions of his task and achievement. Indeed, not only West-European Jewry, but American Jewry as well are deeply indebted to him. The modern Yeshivah movement on all levels is, to a large extent, the heir of his legacy.
Nevertheless, it is our contention that we today cannot accept much of his system of philosophy without basic modification. The world has changed too much since his day. The pendulum of history has swung backward. We can no longer believe in a straight line of development in the progress of civilization and the education of mankind. The tragedy of the last war and the destruction of European Jewry shrieks this lesson. Humanistic culture and civilization have betrayed us. Israel must concentrate directly on its own physical and spiritual preservation, even if its larger end is to help mankind as a whole. Without a House of Israel, there can be no mission of Israel. The State of Israel is a reality which must be protected and nurtured. Orthodoxy must actively participate in the fulfillment of its spiritual destiny.

Secular culture has changed considerably since Hirsch's time and we are obliged to re-evaluate our relationship to it. Darwinian, Freudian and Marxist conceptions are not as congenial to Judaism as were the scientific conceptions of Hirsch's era. It is true that we cannot afford to reject outright the culture of our time, but neither can we afford to embrace it warmly and with confidence. Philosophy, as a total vision of man and the universe hardly exists in our day. We can no longer assert as did Hirsch that both Revelation and nature both proclaim the same basic message of God. We must concentrate on the revealed word of God to derive from it the meaning of God, Israel, and man. Thereafter we should strive to impose this message on nature and history. We must give up, at least for the present, the hope of deriving, from within, the message of history and nature.

Hirsch's ideal of synthesis is, alas, far removed from our present capabilities. If we cannot find an integrated view of human culture from within that realm itself, how can we expect to find a total view of the universe which embraces both human culture and Revelation? If human culture cannot by means of its own resources give us values and ideals, why should we ascribe value to it and make of it an ideal? What we require is co-existence, not synthesis. The challenge of human culture should be met on the plane of necessity, not on the plane of religious idealism. The necessary should neither be condemned nor commended.

In light of the above what is our final evaluation of Hirsch's philosophy? It can best be summed up in a simple formula. In the main, we accept his affirmations and reject his negations. We accept his espousal of a broad education for our youth in both religious and secular subjects, his emphasis upon ethical religion and its worldly tasks, his stress upon the universalist goals of Judaism and its noble sense of mission, his conception of Judaism from within and his total commitment to practical Judaism.

On the other hand, we cannot accept his depreciation of talmudic pilpul, his impatience with a Ju-
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daism divorced from worldly wisdom, his rejection of classical Jewish mysticism, his criticism of Maimonides, his aloof attitude to the non-observant, and his hostility to Jewish nationalism.

With these qualifications in mind, Hirsch's writings can be studied by the modern Jew with great profit as a source of instruction, inspiration, and ennoblement. Hirsch writes in the language of modern man and renders the teachings of the Torah comprehensible to him. Through his writings as well as the chain of his personal influence, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch will live on in Jewish history as an exemplar of a true servant of God, a remarkable leader, and a great teacher of his people.*

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