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We apologize for unavoidable factors that have delayed the appearance of this issue. The next issue, Jan.-Feb. 1989, will be a 100-page Twenty-fifth Anniversary edition, bringing you samples of the most striking, thought-provoking, and inspiring articles that have appeared in *The Jewish Observer* over the past quarter of a century.

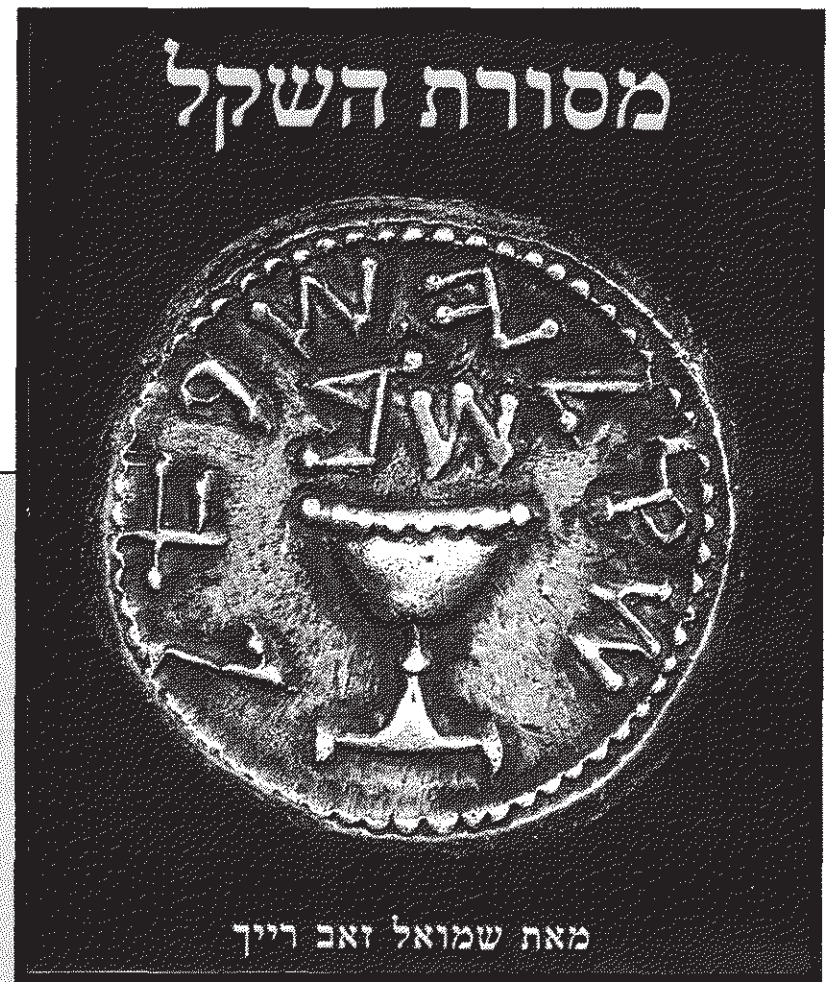
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# Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch זצ"ל

On the twenty-sixth day of Teves it is a hundred years since the passing of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch זצ"ל. There were many in his lifetime who viewed him with disdain, as the champion of outdated ideas and a lost cause. Others admired him as the redeemer and savior of German Jewry. Still others respected his gifted pen and brilliant thought. But surely very few anticipated that, while much more famous contemporaries of his have been almost totally forgotten, Rabbi S. R. Hirsch would be a towering presence on the Jewish scene a hundred years later, his ideas the subject of intense analysis, his works studied—in diverse languages—all over the world. And this despite the historic upheavals that marked these hundred years, the destruction of the European Jewry that he knew, and the rise of new centers of Jewish life and Torah study under totally new conditions.

Yet, while his name is a household word in the Jewish world, this does not mean that there is an understanding of what he stood for. Some see him as the champion of Orthodox acculturation to the modern world and interpret "Torah Im Derech Eretz" as mandating a college degree for every Jew; they view him as a founding father of what is (or used to be) called Modern Orthodoxy. Others consider him the driving force behind Orthodox separation, and believe that he was only concerned that *frum* Jews should be able to "make *Shabbos* for themselves," totally disinterested in the rest of the Jewish people. But even when we disregard these distortions—and the resulting violent positive and nega-



tive reactions to the mention of his name—there is little real understanding of his teachings. Yes, he did stress that the Torah Jew should not retreat from the world around him, but try to mold it in accordance with the compromising demands of Torah. And yes, he argued that the Jewish community can only find unity on the basis of Torah. But one of his descendants, in a recent article, stressed that these were only aspects of his teachings but not the core.

What, then, was the core? It must be understood, in the first place, that Rabbi S.R. Hirsch was an extraordinary *Gadol BaTorah* (no less a personality than the *Ksav Sofer* expressed admiration for his *Gadlus* in Torah). From the wellsprings of Torah he drew the vision of a world ruled by G-d's will as expressed in the Torah. This was the basic idea.

Applied to the Jew's relationship to society at large, it took the form of *Torah Im Derech Eretz* (the use of general culture in the service of Torah), to be realized in our educational institutions. Applied to our communal and organizational concerns, it meant that the Jewish people's cohesion—nationally, regionally, locally—could only be built on a common loyalty to Torah. Applied to the exploration of the treasures of our sacred heritage, it required that we should seek in it the answers to the problems and issues of our time. The details of how his grand design was to be realized, obviously depended in great measure on the changing conditions and needs of different times and places. Not so the basic idea itself—he did not see himself as its originator, but merely as chosen to impress it upon his age. The *Nineteen Letters* (published in 1836) was the first work specifically written to meet the challenges posed by the modern, secular world to traditional Judaism. But the ideas which it presented so brilliantly were drawn from the wealth of the Torah's teachings—and that is, of course, why they still have such a dynamic impact. Naturally, not only the structure of his writings but many of the insights that we find in them were original; but they had their roots in the fullness of Torah. However, the manner in which he presented his great vision and how he applied it in practice—that was where the creativity, wisdom, and total commitment of his personality found their fullest expression.

We are pleased to present the following article by Professor Yehuda Levi on "Torah Im Derech Eretz" which both illuminates the roots of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch's ideas in classic Torah teachings, and defines his particular contribution to their practical implementation. ■

Rabbi Joseph Elias

Rabbi Elias is a member of the editorial board of *The Jewish Observer* and menahel of the Yeshiva Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch High School for girls and the Rika Breuer's Teachers Seminary. He is author of a soon-to-be published new translation and commentary on *The Nineteen Letters*.

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# TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ:

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## Torah Proper or Hora's Sha'ah?

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**A**ny discussion of "Torah Im Derech Eretz" must begin with a definition of this phrase since it has been interpreted in different ways. In the first place it has been used to describe the fact that the Torah views the world as essential raw material to be used in service of G-d, and thus there is a necessary link between Torah and worldly concerns. This may be called the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle.<sup>1</sup> In addition, there is an educational system which, too, is called TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ because it stresses that Torah education should also include attention to knowledge of the world. Whereas this educational system is subject to differences of opinion among Torah authorities, the above Torah principle is, I believe, accepted

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**Dr. Levi**, who immigrated to Israel from America nineteen years ago, heads the Dept. of Physics and Electro-Optics at Jerusalem College of Technology. His published works include *Jewish Chronology*; a carefully edited version of Talmud Yerushalmi's Shvi'is, with a new commentary (*Kav Venaki*) prepared with Rabbi Aryeh Carmell; and articles in journals of Jewish thought, including *The Jewish Observer*.

almost unanimously throughout the Torah world.<sup>1a</sup> Unfortunately, the all-too-common failure to distinguish between the Torah principle and the educational system leads to serious misconceptions and confusion.

Here I would like to elucidate the (generally accepted) Torah principle as distinct from the (disputed) educational system.

### DEFINITION OF THE TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ PRINCIPLE

**T**he meaning of the principle of TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ I learned from my revered teacher, HoRav Yosef Breuer of blessed memory. He defined it as our obligation to imprint upon this world the ideas of the Torah. By conducting our worldly life in accordance with the teachings of the Torah, we mold the world according to G-d's will. According to Rabbi Y.Y. Weinberg ז"ל, the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle sees the world as the matter, which is to receive its form as described in the Torah.<sup>2</sup> In brief,

the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle highlights the crucial role of the world in Torah life.

Let us now investigate the validity of this principle.

### THE TORAH AND THIS WORLD

**A**ccording to our sages, the first verse of the Torah, stating that the world was created "in the beginning," implies that the world was created for the sake of the Torah, which is called "beginning."<sup>3</sup> This immediately raises a question. Since the Torah is so beautiful, so perfect, why does it need this world, which after all, is often far from beautiful and perfect? Our sages gave us the answer to this question in a fascinating Aggadah.<sup>4</sup>

*When Moshe went on high to receive the Torah, the angels protested: "This concealed treasure, which You kept hidden 974 generations before the creation of the world, You wish to give to man?" G-d then asked Moshe to answer them, and he did, as follows:*

What is written in the Torah? "I am G-d, your G-d, Who brought you out of Egypt." Have you angels gone down to Egypt? Were you enslaved by Pharaoh? What is the Torah to you?

What else is written there? "You shall have no other gods before Me." Do you live among the gentiles who serve idols?

What else is written there? "Do not swear falsely in My Name." Do you conduct business [that you need to take oaths]?

What else? "Remember the Shabbath to keep it holy." Do you work, that you need to rest?

What else? "Honor your father and your mother." Do you, then, have parents? . . .

We may paraphrase Moshe's argument as follows: "The Torah can only be lived, and its *mitzvos* observed by people who are exposed to the vicissitudes of history and the culture of nations, who engage in business and work, who marry and have children. To the extent to which anyone flees the demands of this world and isolates himself from it, to that same extent the Torah loses its full applicability for him." The Torah existed already before the world—but it lacked its full significance until the world was created for its sake.

A similar idea is expressed by the Torah when it states that man was "put into the Garden of Eden to work it and guard it,"<sup>5</sup> which the Sages interpret: "[Adam, before the sin,] was made a serf, who, if he does not work, will not eat."<sup>6</sup> Even more explicit are the words of the *Netziv* (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin): "[Adam] came to be a worker of the land and thereby the purpose of creation was completed."<sup>7</sup> That the shaping of the world is the goal of the Torah is expressed also in such Talmudic statements as: "The greatness of [Torah] study is in that it leads to action"<sup>8</sup>—"Not study, but actions are primary."<sup>9</sup>

All this points clearly to the interaction of man with his environment as central to the purpose of creation and to Torah ideology,

which is to guide us in our relationship to the world. Torah and world together make up G-d's creation, and any effort to separate them in effect subverts the purpose of creation.

That is the principle of TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ, and in that respect the Torah differs radically from both Greek philosophic and Christian religious ideology. Greek philosophy places abstract human reason at the center of things; not action, only contemplation is praiseworthy. On the other hand, Christianity idolizes

ism from other systems of religion or morality.

The following describes Torah principles in the abstract, according to their strict meaning. For practical purposes, on the other hand, the Torah invests the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people with the authority within well-defined limits, to promulgate modifying directives as emergency regulations when special circumstances warrant it. Toward the end of this article we will discuss this point further.

## Since the Torah is so beautiful, so perfect, why does it need this world, which, is often far from beautiful and perfect?

feeling and faith. In fact, neither of them really needs this world in any positive sense.

And so it is with anyone who wishes to elevate himself by cultivating his own spirituality without expressing it in action, as ordained by the Torah; he is likely to fall into either the trap of emotionality, as the religions do, or into the rationality trap, as the Greek philosophers did. Both fail to appreciate the importance of action and this-worldly involvement. Only Torah with its TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle can guide man to a proper synthesis of spirit and the material world; and only the Jewish people, who received the Torah, can appreciate the fundamental importance of this world, so that they need not escape it, to avoid its challenges; in facing these challenges they are doing G-d's will. They trust that the same Torah that asks them to confront the world will guide them well along its paths.

### IMPLICATIONS OF THE TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ PRINCIPLE

**W**e will now elaborate on some implications of the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle which distinguish Juda-

#### 1. The Torah as Guide to the Utilization of the World

According to the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle, we may view the Torah as a guide to the proper way of managing the world. Without it, any use we make of the world may be harmful; with it, every aspect of the world is significant and beneficial. This explains a number of *halachos* that appear puzzling.

- *Tannaim* of the *Mishna* disagree concerning the obligation to be joyful on the festivals of the Torah. In one place, the Torah implies that these should be dedicated to G-d, and in another verse that they should be used for ourselves. Rabbi Eliezer deduces that these festivals should, if possible, be devoted to Torah study exclusively<sup>10</sup> or else entirely to our own gratification, whereas Rabbi Yehoshua holds that they should be divided between both endeavors. Concerning this dispute, the *Amora* Rabbi Elazar states that regarding *Shavu'os* even Rabbi Eliezer agrees with Rabbi Yehoshua that we should devote the festival to ourselves in part. Why? "It is the day on which the Torah was given."<sup>11</sup> A rather amazing argument. We might have expected this to be a reason for Rabbi Yehoshua to agree that this

day be devoted to Torah study exclusively, and not the reverse! But if we grasp that it is the Torah which gives meaning to this world and makes it accessible to us, the argument becomes eminently understandable.

• Another regulation unique to Shavu'os relates to the question of *chametz* and *matzah* which, in Torah thought, symbolize materialism and spirituality, respectively. *Chametz* is appropriate to the "private table" in our home, all year, and *matzah* to the "divine table"—the altar in the Temple. (The *menachos* flour-offerings, all year, must

sacrifices are of two types, *olah* and *shelamim*. The *olah* is given over completely to G-d; it is burned on the altar. The *shelamim*, in contrast, are mostly eaten by the offerer and his guests, this eating being a consummation of the offering. *Shelamim* are, as a rule, brought only by private individuals. Most public sacrifices, and all *voluntary* public sacrifices, are of the *olah* type—totally spiritual in nature. There is just one exception, only one *shelamim* sacrifice that is brought by the public, and that is on Shavu'os<sup>13</sup>—it is "on the day on which the Torah was given" that the nation, as such,

sanctity by separation from and rejection of the this-worldly, symbolized by the *olah*.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Laws of Nature

The Torah calls upon us to use the world in the service of G-d—such usage presupposes stable laws governing the operation of the world. Such laws are tools, necessary for the implementation of the Torah program. Were the world to behave haphazardly, we could not foresee the results of our actions, nor plan any accomplishments. The giving of the Torah with its commandments implies the imposition of strict laws upon the world, and they are, indeed, among the wonders of creation. The Prophet Yirmiyahu's statement, "Were it not for My covenant, day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth,"<sup>17</sup> can be understood to tell us that the laws of nature were established only to enable us to live Torah. If moon and sun did not obey strict laws, how could we fulfill the first mitzva given to the Jewish people, commanding them to establish a unique lunar-solar calendar<sup>18</sup>, requiring the calculation of the passages of moon and sun? How could we fulfill the last commandment of the Torah and write a Torah scroll<sup>19</sup>, if a given ink would one day adhere to the parchment and on another day roll off it?

The Torah's positive view of the laws of nature is well expressed by the great medieval scholar Rabeinu Nissim (popularly known as *Ran*): "It is G-d's wish and desire to maintain the 'custom' of the world as much as possible and nature is dear to Him, so that He will deviate from it only when necessary . . . Events do not occur according to individual causes, but according to general causes, because G-d does not wish nature to be changed according to [the needs of] each individual."<sup>20</sup> We find the same idea expressed in the *Chovos HaLevavos*: "Let him work with [natural] causes, thereby to fulfill the mitzva of the Creator Who commanded man to work with the [laws of nature]."<sup>21</sup> Even Ramban

## Laws of nature do not possess an existence of their own; they are simply an expression of the consistency with which G-d runs the world.

be *matzah*.) Only on Pesach, the "festival of matzos," even our private table must be free of *chametz*; and, vice versa, on Shavu'os *chametz* is offered in the Sanctuary, in the form of "the two loaves."<sup>12</sup> Only the this-worldliness of the Torah can explain why just the "time of the giving of the Torah" is the occasion when *chametz*, worldly materialism, can be offered to G-d.

• Turning to animal sacrifices, we discover another anomaly unique to Shavu'os. The voluntary

demonstrates through the *Shelamim* that its service to G-d is based on the use and enjoyment of the material world.<sup>14</sup>

It is only the Torah which makes possible this use of the world. That accounts for the fact that a non-Jew can only bring an *olah*, and *shelamim* are not accepted from him.<sup>15</sup> Through the acceptance of the Torah, the Jew can sanctify himself even when he performs mundane activities such as eating. He who did not accept it, can only strive for

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who stresses that the righteous must believe that G-d directs nature to meet his needs,<sup>22</sup> states that generally G-d's help is given through the normal operation of nature. "The Torah commands us to conduct our lives according to [the demands of] *derech erez* and performs miracles in a hidden manner only. He does not wish to change the nature of the world, except when there is no other way to salvation or, occasionally, to make His Name known to His adversaries, as He did at the Splitting of the Sea . . ."<sup>23</sup>

These opinions were, of course, not originated by the authorities we cited. The *Gemora* already hints at this principle when it says: "If someone steals a measure of wheat and sows it in the ground, by right it should not grow. But the world goes according to its 'custom' and the destructive fools will eventually have to render account."<sup>24</sup>

All this does not deny, in the least, the complete power that G-d has over the world; nor does it imply that He refrains from leading it surely through history, along the course that He planned for it. He can do so even while He lets the laws of nature function fully. "When man walks justly, that is in G-d's ways, he can reap blessing also in a natural way. That is how the Jewish people were blessed: 'If you walk in My ways,' then the laws of heaven and earth, too, will function in the right way. For the divine wisdom has arranged the ways of nature in such a manner that they run parallel and are correlated to the ways of Torah and mitzva."<sup>25</sup>

As to the frequent statements in the later rabbinic writings that we should not place too much trust in the laws of nature, they appear to me to be meant as a warning that we should not ascribe to these laws an independent existence—as if G-d had instituted them and then withdrew from directing this world (G-d forbid).

In the Torah view, laws of nature do not possess an existence of their own; they are simply an expression of the consistency with which G-d runs the world.

### 3. Scientific Knowledge

For "laws" of nature to become efficient tools in our hands, we must know them. This explains the high esteem the Sages had for science. "Every one of the seven scientific wisdom is praiseworthy and esteemed in the eyes of the Sages and they loved each of them. You will not find in any Aggadah whatsoever—neither in the Babylonian Talmud, nor in the Jerusalem Talmud, nor in any Midrash—that they deprecated any wisdom."<sup>26</sup> The Sages even declared scientific study a *mitzva*: "From where do we know that it is a *mitzva* upon a man to make astronomical calculations [beyond those needed for calendar calculations]? For it is written: 'For this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations' . . ."<sup>27</sup>

Just one illustration of the lengths to which our Sages went in their efforts to acquire the scientific knowledge required for *mitzva* observance: The *Gemara* tells us

that Rav spent a full year and a half with shepherds in order to learn the pathology of *mumim* [physical defects that make first-born male cattle permissible].<sup>28</sup>

### 4. The Importance of Work

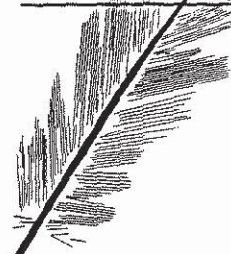
The Torah values work greatly: "He who enjoys the fruits of his hands' labor is greater than one who fears Heaven."<sup>29</sup> Nor are we simply to tolerate work; we are taught to "love work."<sup>30</sup> The Sages elaborate on this: "If he has no work to do—if he has an uncultivated court yard or fallow field, let him busy himself with it."<sup>31</sup>

Work is even in the category of walking in G-d's ways. "You shall walk after G-d—is it then possible for flesh and blood to walk after G-d? . . . At the beginning of creation G-d occupied Himself first of all with planting [the Garden of Eden] . . . so you too, when you enter *Eretz Yisroel*, occupy yourself first of all with planting."<sup>32</sup> From this it is evident that work is dear to G-d

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because He desires the development of the world<sup>33</sup> and not only as a means for a livelihood.

### 5. Guarding Our Health

The Torah obligates us to guard our health and even declares that "endangering our physical well-being is worse than transgressing a prohibition."<sup>34</sup> Also, saving a life overrides all Torah prohibitions (except idolatry, immorality, and murder).<sup>35</sup> This rule applies to

selves to a few highlights.

Beautiful surroundings are recognized as conducive to intellectual accomplishment<sup>38</sup> with the importance of music in this respect even based on *Tanach*: the Prophet Elisha requested the services of a musician to enable him to attain prophetic inspiration.<sup>39</sup> No wonder that the service in the Sanctuary was accompanied by music;<sup>40</sup> we are asked to beautify the *mitzvos*,<sup>41</sup> and anyone with special artistic talent should devote it to the service of G-d.<sup>42</sup>

**We have to use the world for this service of G-d, and everything that is used for it is naturally ennobled. But anybody who argues that "everything is holy" does not know the difference between holy and profane.**

saving the lives of others—all the more so are we commanded to guard our own, for "your life takes precedence over your neighbor's."<sup>36</sup>

### 6. Beauty and Art

In contrast to the traditionally ascetic moral schools, Judaism values beauty and art, certainly not as ends in themselves,<sup>37</sup> but as precious tools. Here we limit our-

### 7. Yetzer Hora

The TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle can also help to explain the Torah's surprising attitude toward the *yetzer hora*, the "evil inclination." The Sages explained: 'And G-d saw all He had made and lo it was very good'—*very good*, that is the *yetzer hora*.<sup>43</sup> It is called "evil," because it is originally self-centered; but, when educated according to the

Torah's directives, it is, in essence, very good, for it is one of the strongest forces in society and is of primary importance in its functioning.

This may be the point of another Talmudic statement: "G-d says: I have created the *yetzer ho'ra* and the Torah as a spice for it"—not a remedy or antidote, but a spice, a spice that makes food fit for consumption! "That you may enjoy the pleasures of this world and not fall into a transgression."<sup>44</sup> Apparently the *yetzer ho'ra* is a vital tool in Torah life; the only trouble is that it is sharp and tough, and is likely to do more harm than good. Only the Torah can make it fit for consumption.

### 8. Solitude

In many philosophies and religions, solitude is the hallmark of piety. But Judaism opposes excessive solitude. "You shall love your fellow as yourself—this is a great rule of the Torah."<sup>45</sup> The nineteenth century Torah giant, Rabbi Moshe Schreiber (*Chasam Sofer*) proclaimed: "It is not G-d's wish that we be seclusive, that is that we go to desolate places, deserts and forests, to investigate and contemplate G-d's awesome works; He did not create [the world] desolate; He formed it to be settled. It is G-d's wish that we love [His] creatures . . . and even if that would mean that we thereby limit our self-perfection, nevertheless it is G-d's wish that we love [His] creatures . . ." for thereby he brings them to Torah, by his association with them.<sup>46</sup>

Here, in particular, we see how the Torah guides us. On first sight, common sense would endorse the seclusive contemplation (*omphaloskepsis*) of Greek philosophy and the hermitism of Christianity and other systems; involvement in society would appear to be harmful to the striving for self-perfection. But the Torah, through its TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle, teaches otherwise: "It is *not* good for man to be alone."<sup>47</sup>

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## TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ AS TOTAL SANCTITY

**I**t is characteristic of the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle that it does not negate completely any aspect of our physical existence; this is one of its outstanding features. Consequently, it rejects extremism and projects moderation. Since moderation and compromise appear similar to each other, on first sight, it is important to point out that the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle, as elaborated here, is very far from compromise. On the contrary, it demands from the Jew total dedication—emotional, intellectual, and physical: "Look upon yourself and all that is yours as My property, and devote yourself wholly to Me, with every fraction of your property, every moment of your time; with mind, feeling, bodily strength and means, with word and action."<sup>48</sup> Such total dedication—to account for every moment of our lives, every penny of our possession, every small pleasure we derive from the world: to devote ourselves completely to the service of G-d—that is the peak of sanctity, and that is what TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ demands of us.

Such sanctity demands a proper use of the means the world puts at our disposal. It is therefore much more difficult to attain than the limited sanctity that consists of merely refraining from improper use of our means. The *Mesilas Yeshorim* sees in this the superiority of sanctity over purity.<sup>49</sup>

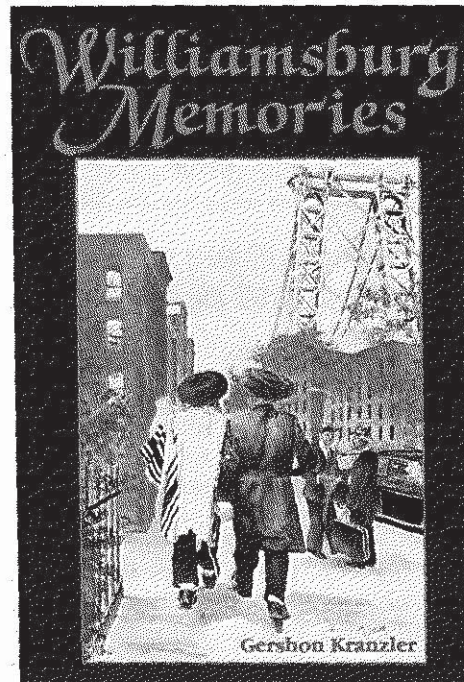
I would like to comment in this connection upon the idea, held in certain circles, that we have to "sanctify the material"—or, as it is sometimes put, that "the whole world is holy." This is a questionable concept and it is not what I mean with my remarks here. I only mean to stress that we have to sanctify *ourselves*, i.e., through full dedication to the service of G-d. As for the world, we have to use it insofar as it is needed for this service of G-d, and everything that is used for it is naturally ennobled. But anybody who argues that "everything is holy"

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does not know the difference between what is holy and what is profane. Unlike the profane, that which is holy must not be used for *derech erez* even if the intention is for the sake of Heaven. On the other hand, the profane, too, must only be used in G-d's service.

### THE SITUATION IN THE TORAH WORLD TODAY

In the light of what has been said, the situation in the modern Torah world raises some questions. The Torah world, today, is concentrated primarily in the higher yeshivos and kollelim, and

(b) There is also some reservation concerning learning a vocation in general, and especially an academic profession. This seems to be far more recent. (The *Rashba* did, for a period of fifty years, ban the study of Greek science by the young, but explicitly excluded the study of medicine from this ban.)<sup>50</sup> In part, this development may be due to the greater difficulties and moral temptations that the modern world poses to the Torah observer—particularly in connection with academic studies there is the above-mentioned secularism—and there is also the impact of the information explosion. (It was vastly easier in the time of the *Rambam* to be a doctor as well

### RABBI S.R. HIRSCH'S CONTRIBUTION TO TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ

We have concluded here that the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle always was part of Torah proper; and perhaps even one of its foundation stones. If that is so, what was the contribution of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch זצ"ל, whose name is usually associated with this principle?

It appears that his contribution to it was a dual one:

(a) The unnaturally restrictive circumstances that had prevailed for centuries in the Jewish ghettos greatly limited *derech erez*, worldly activities, and caused the awareness of their significance to atrophy somewhat. When the Emancipation opened the gates of general society and culture to the Jewish population, Rabbi Hirsch realized the danger inherent in the existing separation of Torah and *derech erez*. There was a great temptation for the Jew to enter the contemporary world, leaving the Torah behind—while the reaction of the pious, the rejection of all current *derech erez*, threatened to leave Judaism as form without substance, soul without body. He saw in this situation a great and urgent challenge to restore *derech erez* to its proper role, and bring about an awareness of its significance.

(b) He developed the educational system designed to achieve this goal in the fullest sense—a system that would include science study with Torah education in the school program. This may have been a *hora'as sha'ah*, a temporary measure—though, even so, it may be argued that the need for it has not yet passed.

While his contribution to TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ may have been limited to these two points, his accomplishments in these areas were truly gigantic. Perhaps the ideas that he advanced are capable, even today, of helping to heal the spiritual crisis of our sorely troubled nation. But anyone who thinks that Rabbi Hirsch originated the TORAH

## The Torah Im Derech Eretz principle always was part of Torah proper; and perhaps even one of its foundation stones.

these tend to limit and minimize their involvement in worldly endeavors. How could it be that Torah authorities would disapprove of a basic Torah principle?

In reply we must turn to the second interpretation of TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ that was mentioned at the outset of this article—TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ as an educational program. The comprehensive implementation of the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle in our present-day society demands familiarization with general science and culture—and this is a matter of controversy, for it raises several questions:

(a) For many generations (at least since the days of the *Rashba*, i.e., the thirteenth century) the study of philosophy and science had harmed many of those who devoted themselves to it. Since then there have been disputes concerning the extent that protective fences must be erected around their study. The danger still exists today, and has, indeed, been aggravated by the secular rationalism and the adoption of science as a surrogate "religion," which have marked the modern era.

as a Torah authority than it is today to combine Torah eminence and success in professional study.)

But this is not the whole explanation for the reservations that exist today concerning earning a livelihood. I asked a number of Torah authorities about it. They explained it as an emergency measure: in emergency situations, the Torah leadership is permitted to deviate temporarily from Torah principles in order to save the whole Torah.<sup>51</sup> As a result of the Enlightenment, and especially after the horrible European holocaust extinguished the major Torah centers of the world, Torah knowledge became weakened to such an extent that it became necessary to deviate somewhat from Torah principles lest Torah become forgotten from Israel, and to restore the proper balance between Torah scholars and the general public. But all these Torah authorities agreed that, according to Torah proper, it would be preferable that everyone be self-supporting as long as this does not prevent him from being learned in Torah and steeped in *Yiras Shomayim* and *Avodas Hashem*.

IM DERECH ERETZ principle is surely mistaken. As we have tried to show, the TORAH IM DERECH ERETZ principle is fundamental to Torah ideology and is not an innovation, and certainly not an emergency measure. On the contrary, it may be argued that the deviation from it, which is widespread today, and was apparently necessary to save the Jewish people spiritually, represents a response to an emergency. ■

### NOTES

1. The expression is based on the *Mishna* (Avos 2,2), which states *yafeh talmud Torah im derech eretz*—Torah study combined with worldly endeavors is beautiful.
- 1a. It must, however, be added that, while the *Torah Im Derech Eretz* principle was accepted almost unanimously among Torah authorities, there were opposing opinions (notably Beth Shammai)—and while most accepted it, there were those who saw it as valid for the community as a whole but not for the individual who aspired to the highest level of Torah perfection (*Nefesh Hachayim*, based on *Kiddushin* 82b, *Berachos* 35a, etc.)
2. Rabbi Y.Y. Weinberg, "Toras Chayim," in

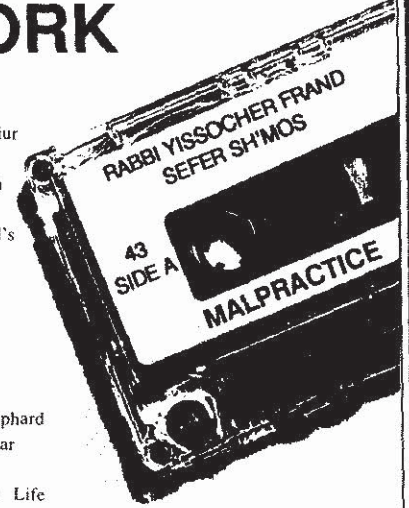
- HaRav S.R. Hirsch, Mishnas V'Shitaso*, Jerusalem (5722), p 192.
3. *Bereishis Rabba* 1,1
  4. *Shabbos* 88-89
  5. *Bereishis* 2,4
  6. *Bereishis Rabba* 14, end
  7. *Ha'amek Davar, Bereishis* 2,4
  8. *Kiddushin* 40
  9. *Avos* 1,17
  10. *Beitzah* 15b
  11. *Pesachim* 68b
  12. *Vayikra* 23,17
  13. *Vayikra* 23,19
  14. Rabbi Joseph Breuer, oral communication. A similar thought is brought by *Meshech Chochma* to *Shemos* 20,18.
  15. *Rambam, Ma'asei HaKorbanos* 3:2
  16. Heard from Rav Joseph Breuer.
  17. *Yirmiyah* 33,25
  18. *Shemos* 12:2; *Rosh HaShana* 22a
  19. *Devarim* 31,19; *Sanhedrin* 21b
  20. *Derashos HaRan VIII* (Feldman Ed., pp. 129 and 140)
  21. *Chovos HaLevavos, Sha'ar HaBitachon* 3, end
  22. Cf. his commentaries to *Bereishis* 12,1 end and *Vayikra* 26, 3
  23. *Ramban* to *Devarim* 20,9 Compare also *Bamidbar* 26,1
  24. *Avoda Zara* 54a
  25. *Meshech Chochma, Bamidbar* 26,1
  26. Rabbi Yaakov Provenceali, "Responsum Concerning the Study of the Wisdoms" in *Dvoret Chachomim*, Rabbi E. Ashkenazi, ed.; p. 71. Note that Rabbi Yaakov was a very high-

- ly regarded authority; the XV century author of the *Sefer Ha'Agur* asked him for his approval (*haskama*) for this authoritative work.
27. *Devarim* 4, 6; *Shabbos* 75a; the parenthetical remark is based on Rashi and *Maharsha* ad loc.
  28. *Sanhedrin* 5b
  29. *Berachos* 8a
  30. *Avos* 1, 10
  31. *Avos DeRabbi Nathan* 11
  32. *Vayikra Rabba* 25, 3
  33. *Yefeh To'ar* ad loc.
  34. *Chullin* 10a
  35. *Kesubos* 19a
  36. *Bava Metziah* 62b
  37. The *Mishna* (*Avos* 3,7) states that a person who, while on the road, interrupts his Torah study to admire the beauty of nature, is as if he had forfeited his life
  38. *Berachos* 57a (but see *Maharsho*)
  39. *Melachim* II 3, 15; *Pesachim* 117a. See also *Rabbeinu Bachya* to *Bereishis* 27:4
  40. *Sukka* 50b; *Erechin* 10-11
  41. *Bava Kama* 9b
  42. *Midrash R. Tanchuma, Re'eh* 12
  43. *Bereishis Rabba* 9,7
  44. *Kiddushin* 30b; *Maharsha* ad loc.
  45. *Yerushalmi Nedarim* 9,4
  46. *Chasam Sofer, Parshas Kedoshim*, begin.
  47. *Bereishis* 2,18. Cf. *Tur, Euen Ha'Ezer*, begin.
  48. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Chorev*, Sec. 4
  49. *Mesilas Yeshorim*, 26
  50. *Rashba*, Responsa 1.415, 416
  51. *Yevomos* 90b

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