The Relevance of Rabbinic Leadership

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Rabbis have been serving as leaders of the Jewish people for more than a thousand years.[1] The Jews' survival under conditions of exile, absent an overall social, political, or religious structure to which they could look for guidance, naturally enhanced the importance of community leadership. As a key part of this leadership (alongside other groups, such as notables and dignitaries)[2], rabbis have played a crucial role in not only the spiritual, but also the physical sustenance of the Jewish people.

The changes wrought by history have provided the Jewish people with new leaders, however. The establishment of a Jewish and democratic nation-state has produced institutions—the Knesset, the government, and the judiciary—that together hold most of the decision-making authority over the Jewish collective in Israel.[3] In addition, the decline in religious persuasion among many contemporary Jews leaves the rabbi little room for action; today's openness to the non-Jewish world and global cultural trends has arguably impeded rabbis' ability to lead the Jewish people, both in Israel and abroad, on the basis of a uniquely Jewish system of values. All this raises the question: Are rabbis still relevant as leaders in our generation?[4]

In the following essay, I will begin by exploring some of the general social difficulties—those, in other words, that have nothing to do with rabbis themselves—that obstruct the rabbis' attempts to assume significant positions of leadership. In the second section, I will discuss those problems that lie in domains of life over which rabbis may exert influence, if they so choose. (I will not consider, in this context, the important issues of a rabbi's personal conduct, and organizational and institutional methods. Rather, I will look at the challenges rabbis face as a result of their approach to ideological questions.) In the third section, I will examine the actual conduct of contemporary Israeli rabbis in light of the problems already discussed. I will propose a distinction between the way rabbis function within the religious and traditionally minded community—in which their leadership is dominant—and the way they function in the larger national context, in which it is almost meaningless (excepting those matters in which rabbis hold legal authority, such as marriage and divorce). Finally, in the fourth section, I will consider how modes of rabbinic leadership need to change. Specifically, rabbis' dedication to the interests of the religious and traditional public, though worthy of the greatest respect, must to an extent be circumscribed, so as to reduce the scope of their responsibilities. This would then allow them to fulfill their potential and value as true community leaders. By contrast, I will conclude, the rabbis' role on the *national* level requires the opposite remedy: In order to take their place as leaders of the nation, they must be cognizant of a number of issues that require their attention. The essay will then finish with a tentative outline of the required changes.

Recent decades have witnessed a thinning of the leadership ranks. It seems, in fact, as if the charismatic leader, the one we extol as "an outstanding young man… a head taller than any of the people"[5] has simply faded from view. The crisis is everywhere evident—in politics, in business, in academia, in the education system, in the media, and in the military. Nor is this problem unique to Israel; it can be seen throughout the Western

world. Clearly, ours is an era not conducive to the cultivation of leaders. The three main obstacles in this regard, which I will review at present, are postmodernism, the democratization of knowledge, and the dissolution of community boundaries.

Let us begin with postmodernism. Leadership usually coalesces around some idea (an ideology, a plan of action, or an interest) that attracts a group of followers. This process requires at least two conditions: one, the appearance of a leader—that is, a person endowed with vision and other appropriate qualifications; and two, the existence of followers who seek visionary leadership. In years past, when Israeli society was fraught with ideological tensions, leaders who rose to prominence were guided by an inner truth whose realization depended on the acceptance of the public. Among these leaders were men of great Zionist vision (David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin), professional vision (Meir Shamgar, Aharon Barak), and religious vision (Rabbi Eliezer Menachem Schach, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook).

The inherent link between vision and leadership bolsters the expectation that rabbis will become leaders, as religion, in its very essence, proposes an all-encompassing vision. True, every form of involvement in civil society can be inspired by ideology or vision, but such a motivation is exceedingly natural, even inevitable, in the case of rabbinic activity. Guided, in most cases, by a comprehensive spiritual worldview, rabbinical training forms an ideal breeding ground for visionary action. Indeed, we might say that the search for meaning is at the very heart of religious leadership. But, as aforementioned, for rabbis truly to lead, there must be a public that wants to be led. And this, it seems, is directly lacking in contemporary Israeli society.[6]

We are living in the age of *ke'ilu* ("as if"), an era whose main concern lies in casting doubt. Ethical discourse is received with skepticism, ideological proclamations evoke suspicion, and the exclamation point has been unceremoniously displaced by the question mark. Simply put, the postmodern age is not interested in authority. On the contrary, it tramples on it, and is eager to slaughter sacred cows of every type and species. Our world has become a place of multiple perspectives: Every possibility has its counter-possibility,

and any attempt to decide between them—according to any standards whatsoever—is met with scorn. The force of "truth" or "objective meaning" is fading fast. We are always short of breath, and few of us are committed to long-term processes. Wherever we turn—in business, government, academia, or family life—the immediate horizon is what counts, and patience is nowhere to be found.

In such a climate, the task of leadership is particularly challenging. For if leadership as we have defined it depends on vision, how can it possibly be exacted, when the very idea of vision is considered hopelessly outmoded? If a leader depends on authority, how is he or she to function in an environment pervaded by a disdain for authority of all types? And finally, if leadership rests on charisma and on maintaining a certain distance from the public, how can it be practiced in a wide-open public sphere, in which there are no secrets, exposure is total, and every would-be leader's yawn and sneeze is broadcast via mass media?

Rabbis, too, operate in this world of *ke'ilu*. Some believe that religious society, with its unique institutions and community framework, is immune to the effects of the postmodern age. This is not the case. The seeds of postmodernism have taken root throughout the religious world. The cultural, social, and technological mechanisms that have undermined other types of civil authority have taken aim at rabbinic leaders, too.

The second major challenge to the development of rabbinic leadership is the democratization of knowledge, the fuel that powers the human race. Throughout most of history, man himself was the sole generator of this resource. All the major projects of the ancient world—agriculture, war, settlement—depended on brute force; the prevalence of slavery in that world is perhaps the best proof of this point. In the wake of the industrial revolution, however, and especially in the twentieth century, financial capital became the engine of human activity. Money, and not muscle, supported the development of industrial, technological, and other projects. But over the last two decades, we have become a post-capitalist society, in which the key resource is human knowledge. Yes, we still need both human beings and

capital to live well. Yet now it is *knowledge* that catalyzes economic growth. An obvious example is the Israeli economy: Lacking as it is in both natural and human resources, the Jewish state has in the past decade experienced unprecedented prosperity, simply because it possesses the brainpower required to develop high technology.

Knowledge has two parents: education (both professional and general) and information. To an uneducated man, information is useless. Education is the cultural and intellectual platform that allows one to make optimum use of information. On the other hand, an educated person who possesses no information has a very limited capacity for action. Information is the content that directs the action of the educated man.

The democratization of knowledge characteristic of our age is a result of ready access to both information and education. If in the past only a very small minority acquired higher education, today a great many succeed in entering the ivory tower. In the post-capitalist age, after all, a decent income depends on one's level of education. Consequently, a multitude of institutes of higher education have emerged all over the Western world, including Israel. In addition, modern computer technology has made human databanks available to all, immediately and (practically) free of charge. Whereas information used to depend on authority, and was monopolized by individuals and professional guilds, today one can obtain unlimited information simply by pressing a key on a keyboard, with no need for qualified intermediaries. The public at large now has access not only to education, but also to information.

The democratization of knowledge is a fundamental factor in the erosion of authority. This is true of the family sphere (parents no longer "know best"), of the professional domain (patients know how to contend with their doctor), and of the public arena (who, today, really believes that politicians know better than voters?). The democratization of knowledge has also altered our self-awareness: We no longer rely on decision makers other than our own sovereign selves. We enjoy basic personal autonomy, not just in theory, but in practice. The democratization of knowledge has decentralized

the knowledge-dependent loci of power, privatized the system of authority, and equalized large ("leader") and small ("citizen").

Rabbinic authority, we must recall, emerged, and has since existed, in societies in which rabbis enjoyed a considerable advantage in both education and knowledge over those around them. The community heeded its rabbis because they were viewed, literally, as sages.[7] In many periods, rabbis were among the few persons in the community who could read and write. When this was no longer the case, and illiteracy had almost disappeared among Jewish men, rabbis managed to maintain their superiority by their devotion to intense study. Whereas a community's lay members were preoccupied with worldly affairs, the rabbinic calling allowed for uninterrupted intellectual development. This advantage (along with spiritual and other qualities) allowed them to continue to function as leaders in their communities.

Hence the problem that the democratization of knowledge poses for rabbis in their capacity as leaders: In our day, only some rabbis possess a general education superior to that of the average member of their communities. Indeed, the vast majority of Israeli rabbis have studied only in *yeshivot*, and are therefore unfamiliar with secular knowledge. How can an educated member of the community accept the leadership of a rabbi who is not as learned as he? How can he willingly bow to his authority?

It is true that rabbis can still rely on their more extensive Torah knowledge—and this is no small matter. And yet, the democratization of knowledge has given rise to a large body of Torah scholars who are well versed in religious matters, but go on to become rank-and-file members of their communities after their yeshiva studies. If in the past, the rabbinate attracted those who sought a life devoted to intellectual pursuits, today other opportunities are equally enticing. As a result, numerous individuals whose abilities and inclinations match those of their rabbis now occupy the pews of various synagogues. Even if rabbis still tend to possess a broader grasp of halachic matters than their congregants, there is no doubt that today, when people are judged largely by their level of formal education, a lack of general knowledge severely limits the scope of rabbis' practical leadership.

The third and final difficulty is the decline of the Jewish community. The rabbi's historic role was always centered on the community; he was, first and foremost, the *mara d'atra*: the head of a particular place. It was the community's members who granted the rabbi his authority (or stripped him of it). The community is, indubitably, the most natural stage for the drama of rabbinic leadership to play out. Even rabbis whose fame had spread far and wide derived their original authority from a specific sociological unit with defined geographical boundaries.[8]

Of course, communities continue to exist today, and the rabbi's function still largely revolves around them. But the strong pressures exerted on the traditional community have inevitably reduced its role in our lives. In the diaspora, the organized community was the main framework for Jewish life, the locus of all Jewish political, legal, cultural, and social activity. The rabbi's primacy in this community reinforced the importance of his leadership. Today, however, the community has been supplanted in many respects by the state. Though the former continues to provide its members with a social environment, and sometimes also with a spiritual milieu, the community has lost many of its other historical functions, thereby detracting from the rabbi's standing as its leader.

The decline in the community's organizational capacity has also deprived it of its critical role in defining its members' identity. True, there are certain Haredi circles whose members still regard the community as their home in all the most important senses. The same holds true, to some extent, for non-Haredi communities in small and isolated towns. But in general, the religious sector has left the *shtetl*. Religious Jews view their community as only one of several, often equally significant groups, such as the workplace, social circles, and voluntary associations (political, cultural, athletic, etc.). The rabbi may thus be the leader of a domain that, although important, is not the center of our lives.

Even in the religious context, many members of specific communities feel a sense of loyalty to other groups that are not defined by geography. For example, people may worship in a congregation with its own pulpit rabbi,

but feel a stronger allegiance to another community to which they used to belong (such as the yeshiva where they studied) or with which they enjoy a special rapport (for example, a religious or philosophical ideology). The Internet age has also given rise to virtual communities, whose future and importance remain to be determined. All of these undermine the status of the rabbi as a community leader.

Most important, even if the religious sector succeeds in preserving the congregational framework, the majority of Israeli Jews, who do not attend synagogue regularly, manage to live quite happily without it. And if the community has vanished from the lives of most Jews, it is that much more difficult for the rabbi, for whom the community is the traditional ambit, to reach them.

In sum, all the above-mentioned problems stand in the way of contemporary leadership. Postmodernism has undermined our trust in leaders; the democratization of knowledge has diminished our perceived need for leaders; and the decline of the community has severed us from our potential leaders. The situation of rabbinical leadership is arguably even more difficult, since a primary source of rabbinic authority is the consent of the community: The rabbi is someone "the public has accepted as an authority."[9] All of these social conditions have subverted the validity of the mandate the community grants its rabbi. We can view this as either a professional problem or a spiritual predicament. Either way, we must recognize that rabbis cannot alter the broader context in which they operate. The circumstances we have discussed are beyond their control. Nevertheless, rabbis can deal with them in a variety of ways. We will turn to some of these ways in the following section.

Rabbis function, first and foremost, as individuals. The public's attitude toward a given rabbi is based on his perceived character, way of life, and personal traits. In this respect, rabbis are no different from other leaders. Of course, the particularly ambitious goal of rabbinic leadership—

striving to guide people to the "right path that a person should choose for himself" (Avot 2:1)—increases the significance attached to rabbis' personal behavior, and justifiably so. An elaborate rabbinic ethics is therefore needed. That said, there is no fundamental difference between how rabbis behave and how other sorts of leaders conduct themselves, so I will not address this topic here.

Rabbis also function in organizational and institutional frameworks. We are familiar with various rabbinical organizations, whether ideological (the Rabbinical Council of Judea and Samaria), professional (the Rabbinical Council of America, the IDF Chaplaincy Corps), political (the Council of Torah Sages of the Agudath Israel party), or sociocultural (Tzohar). Of special note are rabbinic institutions that form part of the Israeli governmental establishment (the rabbinic courts, the Chief Rabbinate, and the institution of community rabbis in cities, towns, and neighborhoods). The conduct of all these organizations affects contemporary rabbis' ability to serve as leaders. In the case of broad public discontent with how an important rabbinic institution is operating, even rabbis unaffiliated with it may find themselves excluded from positions of national or local leadership. But while this, too, is an important issue, I leave it for future consideration.

Instead, I will focus in this section on problems of leadership that result from the way rabbis deal with ideological questions. As is well known, Haredi rabbis have voiced strong ideological objections to Zionism, military service, and in some cases, the revival of the Hebrew language. In doing so, they have chosen to abdicate responsibility for the Jewish people in the twentieth century. National-religious rabbis, by contrast, staunchly support all of these endeavors, feeling a profound sense of partnership in them (even though they were primarily initiated by secular Jews). Nevertheless, the national-religious rabbinate, is guilty of a series of ideological failures, the sum total of which has left it with limited influence. What, then, must rabbis do, ideologically speaking, to restore their status as relevant leaders for our generation?

The first major change required of today's rabbis has to do with their relationship to the state. The most important event in recent Jewish history

was the restoration of Jewish political sovereignty. The prayer that Jews uttered for almost 2,000 years—"and bring us to Zion, your city, in joy"—has been realized in our time. Not only have we been blessed to witness the ingathering of exiles and the recultivation of the land, but we have also been granted the opportunity—once inconceivable—to control our own national destiny through the vehicle of a sovereign state. Understandably, the expectations of a rabbinic response were enormous.

And yet, centuries of life in exile severely crippled Judaism. We existed as individuals, families, and communities, but lacked a public sphere, with all the benefits it entails. *Halacha* regulated all private affairs, and in some limited cases (such as community taxes and public regulations) the public domain as well.[10] But we had no Jewish public law in the fullest sense of the term. Certain fundamental issues were simply left out of halachic discourse. For instance, how should Jews relate to minorities under their control? What is the appropriate form of government for the Jewish collective? And is there a comprehensive, or even incomplete, Jewish doctrine of foreign policy, national defense (domestic and national security), or social welfare? Were Israel to be transformed into a halachic state tomorrow, its government would be hard-pressed to institute any national policies based on the "Jewish way" of doing things.

The concept of a legislature, for example, is foreign to halacha.[11] Jewish law's main mechanisms of revitalization are the halachic rulings that have developed over generations. The reliance on precedent enabled halacha to adapt to changing situations. But in matters of sovereign public law, in which the Jews' exilic reality did not produce any need for such precedents since the end of the Second Temple period, halacha was effectively muted. Even the Laws of Kings in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, which would seem to fill this gap, is hardly relevant: Maimonides intended it as a codex of utopian statutes for the messianic era.[12]

Against this background, one might expect rabbis to rally to the cause of resuscitating the otherwise paralyzed aspects of Judaism, thereby meeting the challenge of Jewish sovereignty. We are familiar with the classic Haredi

position that renounces (to various degrees) the secular State of Israel and consequently refuses to ascribe any religious significance to its establishment. But religious-Zionist rabbis, for whom the Jewish state is an essential element of their spiritual (rather than just civil) identity, would certainly agree that their main duty as leaders is to formulate some kind of halachic position vis-à-vis that state. Have they fulfilled this duty? Unfortunately, the answer is largely "no."

One cannot deny that a "Zionist halacha" has indeed emerged in some fields. For example, members of the religious-Zionist community serve in the army, so a rather elaborate corpus of halachic rulings on military affairs has been produced. The Jews' return to their land was also a return to an agricultural way of life. This meant that Zionist rabbis had to deal with *mitzvot hatluyot ba'aretz* (laws associated with the Land of Israel) and other land-related issues. The desire to hold on to all parts of the Promised Land has also generated an extensive philosophical and quasi-halachic literature focused on such laws as "you shall give them no quarter."[13] But these examples, important and weighty though they may be, do not begin to cover the vast halachic lacunae in major areas that became pertinent only with the establishment of political sovereignty.

Clearly, rabbinic leadership cannot be relevant if it fails to address—both in theory and in practice—the fundamental questions that face the nation. Rabbis can follow diverse paths:[14] They can grant halachic authority to decisions rendered by the democratic regime, such as the Knesset and courts (while defining criteria for the incorporation of state decisions into the world of halacha), thereby placing the responsibility for creating "political halacha" in the hands of the state. Another option is to set up an alternative system of rabbinic decision making, accompanied by mechanisms for resolving any conflicts that may arise between it and the existing political system. Of course, there are many intermediate possibilities between these two extremes. In any case, the present reality of halacha's deafening silence, particularly when it comes to laws pertaining to the state, substantially detracts from the rabbis' capacity to lead.

The second important change rabbinic leadership must undergo is a revision of its attitude toward secularism. Ever since the eighteenth century, the religious component of Jewish identity has lost much of its significance. Today, most of those who see themselves as Jews ground their identity in national and/or cultural factors. In contrast to the norm throughout most of Jewish history, failure to observe the mitzvot (and even the denial of God's existence) is no longer perceived as a betrayal of Judaism or a desire to break with it. A new type of Jew has emerged: a person with a full Jewish identity who is also essentially secular.

Secular Jews were far and away the most important initiators of the Zionist movement. It should not be surprising, then, that today, they continue to lead the Jewish commonwealth in practically every way. They send Israeli soldiers into battle, determine the allocation of national resources, bear responsibility for the education system, and perform many other functions crucial for the continuity of Jewish life. Furthermore, their prominence extends well beyond the political and public spheres: They are the majority of lecturers in the universities, the majority of physicians in the hospitals, the majority of judges in the courts, and the majority of authors and artists who mold Israeli culture. The secular Jew is the brother of the religious Jew, both metaphorically and biologically. But in all these roles—from prime minister to fellow member of a reserve army unit—the secular individual poses an unresolved religious (i.e., halachic and philosophical) challenge. Why should this be so?

There is a stark dissonance between the way the religious and secular coexist in practice, and the way the former regards the latter in theory. In practice, the sense of partnership and common destiny between religious and secular Jews is complete. The religious do not perceive the individual secular Jew as in any way immoral or undeserving of their solidarity. On the other hand, within the religious world, secular Jews as a group are fiercely criticized, and categorized by rigid halachic terms dating back to the formative era of Jewish law. In the past, a Jew who lacked religious commitment was considered deviant not only religiously but also nationally and socially.

To a community that lives under conditions of exile, and that safeguards its identity and common interests by means of a religious lifestyle, anyone who swerves from the traditional path is perceived as a serious threat to the public as a whole. The religious offender is seen as one who no longer shares the covenant of destiny with his people, and thus cannot take part in its covenant of fate, either. It is no wonder that, in classic halachic parlance, he is described in the most scathing of terms: heretic (*epikoros*),[15] apostate (*mumar*[16] or *meshummad*)[17], wicked (*rasha*),[18] or, in more recent times, "an infant captive" (*tinok shenishba*)[19] Not only are these labels insulting; they are also accompanied by a set of rules about how one may and may not relate to the individuals in question.

If rabbis are to lead the Jewish people, they must find a reasonable resolution of this dissonance. They must see to it that the religious person's two conflicting images of his secular counterpart become one. Without a decisive rabbinic step in this area, there cannot be any serious dialogue between religious and secular, and the stereotype of rabbis as mere functionaries will forever bar them from leading the Jewish collective.

Leaders cannot reject the world they seek to lead. Obviously, we cannot expect rabbis to compromise their goal of guiding all Jews in accordance with the religious view of the good life; it is, so far as they're concerned, part of their calling. At the same time, they must recognize secularism as a psychological, political, and social reality, and deal with it accordingly.[20]

A third necessary reform regards the rabbis' attitude toward liberalism. Practically all Israeli Jews live in a cultural duality: They are simultaneously, and inevitably, involved in both Jewish civilization and Western liberal culture. This duality takes various forms: compartmentalization (typical of the national-religious sector), alienation (characteristic of the Haredim), and renunciation (emblematic of the secular public).[21] What all of these approaches share is the fact of their lives being informed, willingly or not, by both cultures.

Liberal culture is undoubtedly the most significant "other" for religious Jews. It is both seductive and accessible at every turn. It is also the

default lifestyle in the Israeli public sphere: in the media, in literature and the arts, in the legal and education systems. Wherever we go, whatever we do, it is always in the background. Hence, Israeli leadership—of both the secular and the religious sort—must articulate a systematic view of liberal culture. But, we might ask, is it possible to create a synthesis or a constructive dialectic between the world of the Torah and certain aspects of liberal culture? Or are the basic assumptions of liberalism in such stark contrast to fundamental aspects of Torah that any encounter between them must end in a head-on collision? In the latter case, members of the modern Orthodox sector in Israel are condemned to a life of neither/nor; they can never be fully at home. In the marketplace of Israeli life, permeated as it is with liberal culture, they appear as religious outsiders; in the religious context, they are perceived as modern outsiders. In both situations, they must bear a split identity, a dual loyalty, and a personal consciousness of sin, compromise, or at best inconsistency.[22] In the absence of a clear stand on the matter, the moderate religious public assumes a position of inferiority vis-à-vis both worlds it is forced to navigate: the Haredi one, which (at least in theory) proclaims unequivocal fidelity to the bastion of Torah, and rebuffs any attempt at infiltration on the part of liberal culture, and the secular world, which—at least its radical manifestation—avers uncompromising commitment to universal values, and rejects (though, once again, only in theory) the unique riches of the Jewish tradition. Clearly, by striving to occupy the middle ground, religious-Zionist rabbis will find it difficult to assume leadership, perceived as they are as "inauthentic" by the denizens of both worlds.

Despite certain exceptions,[23] Orthodox rabbinic discourse woefully ignores the intra-religious significance of such central liberal values as freedom of expression, individual autonomy, human dignity, and equality. Indeed, the discourse of human rights is generally seen as a threat to the religious sphere of life, and most Orthodox rabbis prefer to take no part in it. Likewise, the role of women in our society is given short shrift, as are the values

of democracy. Neither, it seems, is considered important enough to earn a proper place in theological or halachic discussions.

Now, if I thought that most rabbis did indeed regard liberalism as religiously impermissible, I would have to hold my peace. But this is not the case. There is a vast gulf between pontificating and living. Though rabbinic pathos may sometimes, if not frequently, decry liberal values as fundamentally intolerable, a sort of modern Hellenism, in practice, the attitude is altogether different. Important liberal values are undeniably part and parcel of the life of the modern religious sector and its rabbis. Once again, there is a cognitive gap between life and ideology.[24]

In sum, each of the three topics discussed here—the state, secularism, and liberalism—must be addressed in depth. A religious discourse that ignores the state is exilic. A religious discourse that dismisses secularism is sectoral. A religious discourse that disregards liberalism is apologetic. Moreover, and in the context of the present discussion, rabbis' obliviousness to the totality of daily life in Israel, which unavoidably involves all of these aspects, renders them irrelevant as potential leaders.

In contrast to the matters raised in the first section, which lie beyond the rabbis' control, the topics discussed here can be affected by their conscious decisions. The worlds of halacha and Jewish thought contain the seeds of a dynamic potential that yearns to be realized. It is certainly possible from a religious perspective, both halachically[25] and ideologically. Only if and when today's rabbis choose to do so will they be able to assume positions of national leadership.

What do we expect of rabbis? What services are they supposed to provide? The Israeli public is sharply divided on this question. There is a vast, worrisome divergence in how Israelis relate to rabbis. In fact, I cannot imagine any other controversy that is so heated, and runs so deep.

A rough classification of the Israeli public's attitudes toward and expectations of rabbis will point to four groups—three that share certain basic characteristics, and one that stands alone. At one end of the spectrum stands a fairly small group (although its members hold significant sway in intellectual and media circles) with a determined intolerance toward rabbis. Some identify rabbis with backwardness; some believe, without a proper examination of the facts, that a state-supported rabbinate is a parasite, feeding off public resources through the cynical use of political power. They expect nothing from rabbis, and, were it up to them, would see rabbinic influence curtailed to the bare minimum.

The second group comprises a large percentage of Israel's secular public. Its members demonstrate a sort of apathy toward everything rabbis do. For them, rabbis are simply "there" to do the job when an individual requires a religious ceremony, joyous or mournful. But that is as far as it goes. Quite simply, rabbis have no real significance in their lives. Here, too, the level of expectation is low, even if there is a degree of acceptance of rabbis' social function.

The third group consists of both secular and traditional Israelis. Its members attribute special qualities to rabbis, but harbor no specific notion of what these qualities mean. They view rabbis as the link to tradition, to the past, or even to mystical forces. They tend to see some rabbis as possessing spiritual stature, and honor them accordingly. Moreover, in contrast to the first two groups, rabbis are not just bit-players in their lives but fulfill an important, albeit eclectic function. In other words, this group's positive perception of most rabbis does not necessarily shape its expectations of how they should act both in private and in public.

What all three groups have in common—those who view rabbis with resentment and consider them a problem; those who adopt an indifferent stance, viewing rabbis as merely religious technicians and service providers; and those who regard them respectfully, as possessors of a special but vague stature—is their lack of any defined expectations of rabbis' real role in our lives.

The fourth group consists of a small segment of the traditional public, the majority of religious Zionists, and the entire Haredi sector (I will henceforth refer to them as the "religious group"). This group expects just about everything from rabbis. They look to them to function as a "master key," a figure who can solve all the myriad problems of individual and public life. Because this is the rabbis' most important constituency within which and for which they operate, I will now turn my attention to it.

A rabbi's role within a religious community is both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. It may be divided into six functions: First, the rabbi is an agent of benevolence and compassion (*hesed*). He is the personal counselor and family therapist of his congregation. Matters of social welfare—the natural province of social workers—are frequently brought to his attention. He also advises and assists in matters of mental health, the usual domain of psychiatrists and psychologists. When a religious person's life is beset by tensions, problems, or difficulties, he expects the rabbi to grant him emotional and spiritual support, as well as social and practical guidance. Couples look to rabbinic guidance to restore domestic harmony; religious homosexuals seek rabbinic help with their plight; those who find themselves in the throes of economic hardship, who struggle with a wayward child, who desperately wish to find a life partner—all perceive the rabbi as a shoulder to lean on.

Second, the rabbi is a master of ceremonies. Observant Jews need a rabbi at significant moments in their lives, such as a circumcision (or *simhat bat*), a *bar* or *bat mitzva*, a wedding, an illness, or a death. Rabbis imbue these major intersections of life with religious significance, enhancing rites of passage through their active participation. In this capacity, as we have seen, rabbis interact not only with members of the religious community, but also with many of those in the other groups mentioned above. As a practical matter, this is an important function that takes up much of rabbis' time.

Third, the rabbi is a leader. Some lead through what they do and how they do it: They serve as role models for their pupils, followers, and communities. The rabbi, at his best, is a figure whose behavior represents qualities

for all to observe and emulate, as per the verse "and your eyes shall see your teachers."[26] Some lead by means of charisma, intensified by the spiritual traits attributed to rabbis. Yet another sort of rabbinic leadership, and arguably the most prevalent, stems from rabbis' status as teachers, educators, yeshiva deans, communal service providers, and similar such positions. In practice, as we have noted, the rabbi's leadership role is usually (though not always) limited to the congregation or community in which he serves as mara d'atra. Some rabbis' leadership extends to the political arena, where they are the actual, if not official, heads of mass movements and parties. It hardly needs be said that these parties appeal chiefly to the religious public (and are thus not meeting the need for rabbinic leadership on a truly national scale).

Fourth, the rabbi is an intellectual. His daily tasks require him to demonstrate outstanding Torah scholarship, comprehensive knowledge of Jewish tradition, and fluency in halachic matters. Rabbis teach others (whether in the informal educational settings of the community, or in formal institutions such as yeshivot). They are expected to issue rulings, that is, to function as judges (and sometimes legislators) who interpret halacha and apply it to the questions placed before them. Their legal decisions are often of critical importance to those who appeal to them, whether the issue at hand relates to mundane concerns (the halachist's daily fare) or to loftier, spiritual ones. People ask rabbis questions about *kashrut* and family purity, but also about matters of life and death, state and society. When they function in this role, rabbis bear a heavy responsibility for the conduct of others. To rise to the challenge of this responsibility, rabbis must have the appropriate scholarly character and aptitude. Furthermore, to accumulate the expertise required, rabbis must devote many years to study, far more than those required to gain an academic degree. Finally, like all scholars, rabbis cannot rely only on the intensive learning required of them as young students. They must continue to dedicate a major part of each day, throughout their lives, to constant study.

Fifth, the rabbi is a spiritual figure. Rabbis are supposed to convey a religious experience to their flock. Their sermons, when not displays of scholarship, are intended to inspire their listeners, sharpen their awareness, and refine their souls. Before the High Holy Days, for example, rabbis prepare us spiritually to repent; in advance of the three pilgrimage festivals (Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot), they guide us in the specific precepts of each holiday; during the three weeks of mourning that culminate in Tisha B'av, they try to instill in us the appropriate sense of melancholy, and so forth. Rabbis generate the community's emotions, shaping its experience of each holiday or lifecycle event. A few rabbis also deal in mysticism—whether by teaching, delivering sermons, writing, or conducting rituals—and exercise the authority of a spiritual leader inspired by the divine. Sometimes they make practical use of this stature, offering advice in a variety of fields and creating their own "courts."

Sixth, a rabbi is an ideologue. On top of rabbis' practical functions, the religious community expects them to outline a vision. Rabbis serve as the compass by which observant Jews orient themselves in the world. The rabbi is supposed to provide his community with an answer to the question "What is the straight path a person should follow?"[27] Many perceive the Judaism, with its specific views and practices, as a seamless and all-encompassing whole. Consequently, the vision that rabbis are required to formulate may be panoramic. This vision must serve as the basis for answering the most far-reaching questions of human philosophy, determining the concrete choices one should make at each of life's intersections, and establishing the appropriate attitude toward each milestone we encounter on our journey through the world.

Of course, this description of what the religious community expects of its rabbi requires a number of qualifications. To begin with, not all rabbis presume to fulfill all these functions. A teacher in a yeshiva, for instance, plays a different role from that of a congregational or community rabbi; a neighborhood rabbi cannot exert the authority of a leading

posek (halachic decisor), etc. Furthermore, different religious communities clearly have different expectations of their rabbis. One cannot compare the needs of a small, rural congregationwith those of college-educated persons in the city; likewise, the students of a yeshiva high school are a different lot from the average community of their parents, composed mainly of middle-class professionals.

But none of these reservations detracts from our basic argument regarding the lofty expectations that a religious community has of its rabbi. The basic religious intuition beholds the rabbi as one who can and must fulfill all six functions at the same time. This conception developed over centuries of diasporic existence, when the rabbi was—in theory, and often in practice the primary agent in all of these areas. It is also grounded in the stories we grew up with about the powers of the sages of past generations. The contemporary rabbinic ethos is predicated on figures who are "larger than life," with no one, least of all the rabbis themselves, bothering to temper our unrealistic notions in this context.

It appears, then, that there is a huge discrepancy between the exaggerated expectations that the religious community has of its rabbis and the abysmal image of them held by the rest of the Jewish population in Israel. This is why rabbis devote most of their time and energy to the needs of the religious public: that is where the demand for their services exists, and, naturally, where they direct their supply. The obvious cost of this state of affairs, however, is an abiding neglect of rabbinic responsibility toward the entire Jewish people, and a lack of attention to the unique problems of sovereign existence.

Rabbis should not surrender to market forces. Their religious and social responsibility requires them to venture into even those uncomfortable places where there is currently no real demand for their services. Rabbis are *supposed* to deal with the needs of the collective, to be in touch with the lives of all Jews, to stand by the side of the entire nation. Although this should be the basic instinct of all religious leaders, it has been stifled by years

of ceaseless and bitter conflict with alternative religious streams, secularism, and the imperialistic universal value systems that have penetrated the core of the Jewish world. Over the last two centuries, rabbis have become used to grappling with the challenges of daily life, to engaging in the protection of "the remnant of Israel"—and have made do with that.

I do not mean to belittle rabbis' achievements as leaders of the religious community. Theirs has indeed been a noteworthy success, considering the many obstacles posed by both the environment (see section II) and manner (see section III) in which they work. We can enumerate a long list of their accomplishments in this regard. For one, rabbis exercise tremendous influence over the collective agenda of the religious public. Religious political activity is subject to substantial rabbinic sway (for better or worse); the community's formal educational institutions are headed by rabbis (or persons sanctioned by rabbis); informal education—such as the religious youth movements—is under close rabbinic supervision; the most prominent public spokespersons of the community are rabbis. They, rather than intellectuals or politicians or social activists, are viewed as the authentic representatives of the Orthodox public. In general, rabbis continue to occupy the main positions of leadership in the religious community.

This success must be attributed, first and foremost, to rabbis' impressive dedication to their mission. A close study of a long line of rabbis of different ages and background, reveals that they all share a profound sense of duty regarding their work. Many rabbis operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, often sacrificing opportunities for personal development and options for greater economic compensation; their families, too, pay a heavy price. To satisfy the almost boundless expectations people have of them, rabbis labor morning and night, multi-tasking as teachers, arbiters, counselors, and leaders, not to mention officiating at hundreds of ceremonies each year. It is a sure recipe for burnout—but rabbis are not allowed that luxury. A rabbi must always be available, and at his best, at any time, almost unconditionally, on almost every subject, for almost every person. Evening after evening, rabbis drag themselves to their constituents' celebrations and

also, unfortunately, to rites of mourning and consolation. Shabbat and the festivals are the most strenuous days of their work schedule. One cannot overstate the physical and emotional fortitude displayed by rabbis who provide services literally around the clock. Indeed, rabbis' dedication to their job must certainly merit our honor and respect.

But is this how it ought to be? Are rabbis doomed always to work at a killing pace, on the verge of collapse? Has anyone ever given serious thought to the management of rabbinic human resources? Alongside the profit that results from rabbis' dedication, has anyone ever tallied he losses—that is, the things that rabbis don't do (or do less than optimally) because they are running an endless race to satisfy such far-reaching expectations? What price does a rabbi with intellectual aspirations pay for conducting weddings almost every evening? What price do congregants pay when their rabbi is always worn out? What is the quality of the halachic rulings scribbled by a rabbi, under pressure, in the intervals between fulfilling so many other functions? Is it possible for a rabbi to produce profound thought, not to mention a broad vision, when he is booked solid until further notice? How can a rabbi, no matter how dedicated, succeed in his simultaneous efforts to be a psychologist and social worker, a scholar and educator, a leader and ideologue, a spiritual leader as well as the star (and sometimes also the producer) of a never-ending series of dramatic events in the lives of other people, many of whom he barely knows?

The non-rabbinic world never imposes such unrealistic expectations on anyone. A scholar sits in the library all day and emerges only for short teaching assignments. The mental-health professional works in an institution, following clear guidelines and procedures, during regular hours. But each of the rabbi's jobs is a profession in itself, one that normally requires full-time commitment and, most importantly, specialization and focused attention. Can the rabbis' extraordinary dedication substitute for all of these? We must concede that the classic rabbinic model—that of an Atlas bearing the weight of the world on his shoulders—rests on a rather shaky foundation.

This essay is not meant to discuss ways of restructuring the rabbi's job within the religious community. However, by recognizing the extent of the problems he currently faces, we may have a better understanding of the sociofunctional background that prevents rabbis from attending to the needs of the Jewish people as a whole. A fundamental condition for rabbis' participation in the national leadership is a change of their role within the community. The rabbis' already breaking backs cannot support the additional burden of national responsibility.

Rabbis willing to take up the gauntlet of national leadership must therefore fulfill certain requirements. The first—and far from simple—requirement is that they free themselves of at least some of their current responsibilities vis-à-vis the religious community. I am not proposing, heaven forbid, that a rabbi sever his ties with his congregation; that link, after all, is the source of his power and authority, as well as the moral underpinning of his activity. But communities must learn to distinguish between rabbis who are service providers and rabbis who are leaders. At the same time, rabbis groomed for leadership must relinquish some of the social and individual aspects of their work. Perhaps we must establish special programs to train rabbis for leadership, institutions that not only would serve as an incubator for their skills, but would also bring them into contact with the regular demands made of a community rabbi.

A second requirement is the need for specialization. How can it be that, after completing their basic course of study, all liberal professionals—attorneys, physicians, accountants, scientists—specialize so as to improve their performance, whereas rabbis are expected to function without the benefit of on-the-job training? Of course, some rabbis choose to narrow their focus to certain areas and avoid engaging in others. Nevertheless, we see very few examples of organized and deliberate rabbinic specialization in the different fields of Judaic studies. To improve rabbis' performance, not only do we have to release them from the yoke of everyday burdens, we must also fit them with the yoke of professional specialization. And yet, we must beware: Though important, specialization can also impede the development

of leadership. I am not, therefore, calling for the cultivation of rabbis who are experts in their field but have otherwise narrow educational or personal horizons. It should be obvious that national leadership demands renaissance men. The demand for specialization must be understood as a call to shape the character of the rabbi as one who can delve deeply into matters, who has experience with such depth and understands what it means.

The first two requirements are prerequisites for the creation of a relevant rabbinic leadership. Although necessary, they are not sufficient, however. The third and most important condition is that rabbis be willing to address the ideological issues they have thus far neglected, in particular the religious position—both theoretical and practical—with regard to the three central elements of Jewish life today: the state, secularism, and liberal culture (see section III). Absent a systematic doctrine dealing with these phenomena, rabbis are doomed to remain a sectoral leadership whose leverage depends utterly on the size of the religious electorate. Were it only a question of rabbis' place in Israeli society (an important issue in its own right), that would be one thing. But I believe that Israeli society is in dire need of rabbis who are engaged with the *entire* polity, rabbis who can provide it with spiritual, moral, and human guidance. Here I am seeking not the good of the rabbis, but the good of us all.

The pioneers of neo-Orthodoxy in nineteenth-century Germany, and later the leading thinkers of religious Zionism, combined—each in his own way—a general education with involvement in public life outside the religious community. A few examples:

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, who propounded the philosophy of *Torah im derech eretz* (literally, "Torah with the way of the world"), established an Orthodox school in Frankfurt that invested as much time—if not more so—in the teaching of secular subjects (chiefly the sciences) as it did in Jewish education.[28] Hirsch did not choose this course for tactical or pragmatic reasons, such as the need to contend with the trends of modernity and emancipation. Rather, he considered the integration of religious and secular studies an authentic Jewish value.[29] In 1873, Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer

founded the rabbinical seminary in Berlin, whose curriculum combined high-level Jewish learning with secular studies. In addition to Talmud, halacha, and Bible, students took courses in literature, history, philology, Near Eastern languages, and philosophy. Admission was predicated on having a high-school diploma. After their morning classes in the *beit midrash*, students attended university in the afternoon and completed their doctoral dissertations.[30]

Rabbi Yehiel Jacob Weinberg, rector of the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary until its closure on the eve of the Second World War, explained in the introduction to his responsa *Seridei Esh*:

> Rabbis, as the bearers of the word of God, must expound for their people and the world Judaism's view on all the issues of morality, law, and social justice that confound the new generation. They must demonstrate that Judaism is not just a set of religious laws and customs, but a decisive spiritual force in human life. And, of course, they must not leave any problem or offense by the natural sciences without a fair and persuasive response.

According to Rabbi Weinberg, moreover, a rabbi must "be familiar with the goings on around him in the world of science and literature and the changing cultural currents. Without a systematic education, and without knowing the language of modern thought, he will not be able to find the pathway into, and emotional contact with, the inner world of the youth and members of the new generation."[31]

In the United States, Yeshiva University also embraces the ideology of *Torah u'madda* ("Torah and science"). Rabbi Professor Norman Lamm, its longtime president, saw no need to "reconcile" Torah and science, because the two are not antithetical in the first place: "Whereas it may be true that effectively Torah and culture become estranged from each other… in essence they are part of one continuum. Hence, the motivating mission of Torah u'madda must be to reunite and restore an original harmony."[32]

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the most important leader of religious Zionism in the twentieth century, taught us the importance of the three

forces that must be combined and balanced: holiness (religion), the nation (nationalism), and humanity (i.e., humanism, education, culture, ethics). In his words:

> The three official parties in the life of our nation: one, the Orthodox party… which carries the banner of the holy… Torah and commandments, faith, and all that is holy in Israel; the second, the new Nationalist party…; the third is the Liberal party… which seeks the universal human content of the Enlightenment, culture, ethics, and so forth…. We must always aspire to come to this healthy state, in which these three forces together will rein in all their plenitude and goodness, in a whole, harmonious state in which there is neither lack nor superfluity, for the Holy, the nation, and man will cleave together in a love lofty and practical.[33]

Rabbis who wish to lead all Jews cannot limit themselves to the religious and national message. Their leadership must incorporate the humanistic message as well, including ethics, culture, and an openness to secular education.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the most important leader of modern Orthodoxy in the United States in the twentieth century, was another thinker who emphasized the religious imperative to be involved, to accept responsibility, and to answer the general human questions that engage every society. He explained,

> The Jewish religious tradition expresses itself in a fusion of universalism and singularism. On the one hand, Jews are vitally concerned with the problems affecting the common destiny of man. We consider ourselves members of the universal community charged with the responsibility of promoting progress in all fields, economic, social, scientific, and ethical. As such we are opposed to a philosophy of isolationism… which would see the Jews living in a culturally closed society.[34]

Orthodoxy is coping both creatively and dynamically with the changes in our world. As Rabbi Mordechai Breuer has pointed out,[35] in the course of two hundred years Orthodoxy has given birth to Hasidism, the *Musar* movement, the yeshiva world, rabbinic seminaries, *Torah im derech eretz*, the revolution in women's education, and religious Zionism. This impressive list attests to an inherent dynamism in religious thought and its distinct potential to respond to changing times. But it is not enough. We now need another revolution, this one of *ideas*, to make it possible for Orthodoxy and its rabbis to serve once again as the leaders of all Jews. All of the religious thinkers I have quoted here emphasized the openness that the religious leadership must evince toward both the universal and human facets of our lives. I could back my claim with many more excerpts from their discussions on this subject. Granted many of them made their positions clear before the establishment of Israel, or, in the case of Rabbi Soloveitchik, in reference to a community that resides outside of it. But if this philosophy was appropriate for Germany in the nineteenth century, or for the United States in the twentieth, how much more so in the case of a Jewish state, where rabbis can contribute not only as an outside influence on a foreign culture, but also as leaders who have a direct impact on the life of the entire nation.

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Notes

1. With the end of the period of the Geonim (in the eleventh century), halachic authority became decentralized and gradually departed from its center in Babylonia to the rest of the diaspora. This seems to be when the honorific "rabbi," in the sense of the religious community leader (as distinct from its previous and more general application), came into formal use. Even before then, of course, religious authorities functioned as leaders under other titles—*rosh yeshiva*, *gaon*, *dayyan*, c*hacham*, *nasi*, etc.

2. For a description of the relations between religious and political leaders over the course of Jewish history, see Yedidia Z. Stern, "Public Leadership as Halachic Authority," in Avi Sagi, David Schwartz, and Yedidia Z. Stern, eds., *Judaism: A Dialogue Between Cultures* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999), p. 235 [Hebrew].

3. The state's organs also include the Chief Rabbinate, and the rabbinical courts that are part of the Israeli judicial system; but the practical scope of their leadership is highly limited.

4. A number of clarifications are in order: First, we must distinguish Haredi rabbis from other rabbis, notably those of the religious-Zionist public. The former tend to see themselves as sectoral leaders only (the Lubavitcher Rebbe was a prominent exception to this rule), whereas the latter, at least according to their declared ideology, seek to bear the responsibility for *Klal Yisrael* (all of Israel). This essay will thus focus on the non-Haredi rabbinate. Second, rabbis—like members of any professional group—are men of diverse talents, training, and ambitions. Few are actually suited for leadership roles. This essay will focus on them. See the discussion below, at the end of section IV. Third, the main thrust of my remarks relates to Israeli rabbis, rather than to rabbis in the diaspora.

5. I Samuel 9:2.

6. An apt expression of this is a statement made by former education minister Meir Sheetrit during a Kadima party convention: "We have disengaged ourselves of all ideologies. That is Kadima's uniqueness. We have here former Labor party members, former Likud members, and friends who have not been in any other parties before this. We don't have carry the baggage of the heritage of Ze'ev Jabotinsky or Berl Katzenelson on our back. We are looking only to the future." See Ahiya Raved, "Kadima: We Have No Ideology," YnetNews, March 26, 2006.

7. In eastern countries, rabbis were addressed by the title *chacham*, meaning "sage" or "wise man."

8. See, for example, Yitzhak Baer, "The Origins of Jewish Communal Organization in the Middle Ages," *Ziyyon* 15 (1949), pp. 1-41 [Hebrew]; Haim Hillel Ben Sasson, ed., *The Medieval Jewish Community* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1976) [Hebrew]; Isaiah Gafni, Avraham Grossman, Yosef Kaplan, and Israel Bartal, eds.,

Jewish Self-Rule Through the Ages (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2001-2004) [Hebrew].

9. Sanhedrin 23a. Rabbi Moses Isserles (*Shulhan Aruch*, *Hoshen Mishpat* 8:1 and 22:1) ruled that if a rabbinic judge has been recognized as such by the public, litigants cannot object to his presence on the bench. In the original context, the phrase refers to the authority of judges to preside in monetary disputes; its use in the present context is metaphorical only.

10. See Menachem Elon, *Jewish Law* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), p. 70 [Hebrew]. Elon holds that the development of Jewish civil law also influenced public law through the numerous rabbinic responsa on these topics. But halachic texts, and responsa in particular, relate only to practical questions (see Yedidia Z. Stern, ed., *The Responsa Literature: Conversion Through the Lens of the Generations* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2008), p. 13 [Hebrew]). This is why, until the birth of the state, halacha never addressed substantive public questions associated with sovereign statehood (such as majority rule), as opposed to communal life.

11. The mechanism of "community regulations" did indeed define norms in various matters, including some that fall within the realm of public law. This mechanism, however, was not created by a formal body that produced regulations valid for all Jews at all times; rather, it was a patchwork of ad-hoc solutions, enacted for a particular time and place. What is more, leading rabbinic *poskim* (halachic decisors) held that the validity of such regulations derives from the consent of the community and not from the authority of those enacting them (hence the phrase "consent of the community," by which these regulations were often referred to). See Elon, *Jewish Law*, p. 558 onward.

12. Yaakov Blidstein, *Political Concepts in Maimonidean Halacha* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2001), pp. 264-277 [Hebrew].

13. Deuteronomy 7:2. This prohibition was interpreted to include bans on selling land to non-Jews, giving them gifts, and praising their works.

14. See Yedidia Z. Stern, "Religion and State: The Halachic Silence," in Nahum Langenthal and Shuki Friedman, eds., *The Conflict: Religion and State in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2002), p. 37 [Hebrew].

15. See, for example, Mishna Sanhedrin 10:1; Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishna, introduction to this chapter.

16. See, for example, *Shulhan Aruch*, *Orach Haim* 385:3.

17. See, for example, Tosefta Horayot 1 (ed. Zuckermandel, p. 474).

18. See, for example, Sanhedrin 26b.

19. Rabbi Jacob Ettlinger, responsa *Binyan Tziyyon ha-Hadashot*, sec. 23; see also Maimonides, Commentary on the Mishna, Hullin 1:2.

20. Eliezer Goldman, "The History of Religious Zionism: According to the Book by Dov Schwartz," *Amudim* 46:7 (1998), pp. 14-17 [Hebrew].

21. See Yedidia Z. Stern, "Facing Painful Choices: Law and Halacha in Israeli Society," *Bar-Ilan Legal Studies* 19 (2002), p. 103 [Hebrew].

22. For a touching sociological description relevant to this situation, see Samuel Heilman, "Inner and Outer Identities: Sociological Ambivalence Among Orthodox Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 39:3 (Summer 1977), pp. 227-240.

23. See, for example, Eliezer Berkovits, *Not in Heaven: The Nature and Function of Halacha* (New York: Ktav, 1983); Jonathan Sacks, *Crisis and Covenant: Jewish Thought After the Holocaust* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1992).

24. Another possibility is that the world of Jewish thought could reinforce liberal discourse, just as liberal culture could contribute to the inner world of Judaism. Judaism has always interacted with foreign cultures. The patriarch Jacob asked Esau's guardian angel to bless him, a profound example of the benefit that can be reaped from an engagement—both a battle until dawn and an embrace, as was the case of the encounter that took place at the ford of the Yabbok—with the cultural "other."

25. The scope of the halachic expanse and the options for its dynamic development are well known. Maimonides, for example, outlines the broad authority of a rabbinic court to enact regulations and decrees or to introduce customs as needed (within the boundaries of certain principles); see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Rebellious Elders 1-2.

26. Isaiah 30:20.

27. Avot 2:1.

28. See Mordechai Eliav, *Jewish Education in Germany in the Period of Enlightenment and Emancipation* (Jerusalem: Jewish Agency for Israel, 1960), pp. 227-232 [Hebrew].

29. Mordechai Breuer suggests that for Hirsch, the integration of Torah and secular knowledge was not similar to a physical combination but more akin to a chemical compound. Torah and life, Judaism and culture, are not complementary, but are rather the necessary components of a whole identity. See Mordechai Breuer, "The Doctrine of *Torah im Derech Eretz* in the Philosophy of Rabbi Samson Ra phael Hirsch," *Hama'ayan* 9:1 (1968), p. 15 [Hebrew].

30. For the history of this institution, see Moshe Avigdor Schulweiss, "The Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin," in Samuel K. Mirsky, ed., *Jewish Institutions of Higher Learning in Europe: Their Development and Destruction* (New York: Ogen, 1956) [Hebrew].

31. Yehiel Jacob Weinberg, *Responsa Seridei Esh* (Jerusalem: Committee to Publish the Works of Rabbi Yehiel Jacob Weinberg, 1999), p. 24 [Hebrew].

32. Norman Lamm, *Torah Umadda: The Encounter of Religious Learning and Worldly Knowledge in the Jewish Tradition* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1990), p. 143.

33. Abraham Isaac Kook, *Orot*, trans. Bezalel Naor (Spring Valley, N.Y.: Orot, 2004), pp. 176-177.

34. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "On Interfaith Relationships," in Norman Lamm and Walter Wurzburger, eds., *A Treasury of Tradition* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1967), p. 78.

35. Mordechai Breuer, "Orthodoxy: A Proposal for a Historical Reckoning," in Aviezer Ravitzky, Adam Ferziger, and Yosef Salmon, eds., *Jewish Orthodoxy: New Aspects* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006), p. 79 [Hebrew].