

Few issues have divided the traditional camp as much as the controversy regarding the proper attitude towards secular education as well as involvement with the world of general culture. In this paper, which originally was presented at the Conference of Orthodox Jewish Scientists in Chicago in 1964, the author shows how such divergent attitudes arose within the matrix of Jewish historic development. Rabbi Shapiro, a member of the Editorial Board and frequent contributor, teaches at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

SECULAR STUDIES AND JUDAISM

The Halakhah has always occupied a central place in Judaism. It is impossible to conceive of historic Judaism without it. Yet Halakhah is only one aspect of the Torah, whose measure is larger than the earth and broader than the sea.¹ The Halakhah sets forth a positive system of norms for human conduct, but the Torah provides the guiding principles which are the very presuppositions of the former.

While sometimes halakhic discussions on a speculative level are carried on purely within the framework of formal Halakhah, actually halakhic problems should be viewed in the light of the fullness of Torah. Nachmanides in his *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*² differentiates between a *mitzvah* (commandment) and an *ikkar* (a principle). He thus explains the failure of the Baal Halakhot Gedolot³ to include the commandment to know God and believe in Him, which is a *principle* of faith, within the register of the *mitzvot*. Maimonides excludes general imperatives from the specific *mitzvot* of the Torah. The injunction, for example, to obey the commandments of the Torah cannot be counted as a specific *mitzvah*, for the obligatory character of any *mitzvah* is contingent upon God's command to observe the *mitzvot*, which, in

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turn, hinges on our *a priori* acceptance of the One Who commands us.⁴ Similarly we must consider Halakhah in terms of its goals, purposes, and ideals. We have to evaluate how any action helps achieve these goals and ideals. The question of secular studies for Jews has to be studied with these criteria as background.

The fact that in the past different opinions on the subject were expressed need not disturb us. The Halakhah and the Torah are not inflexible, static structures. They are directed at the perfection of human society and provide us with the tools for its achievement. Different times and situations demand different approaches in accordance with the dynamic character of the Torah. What is the meaning of the celebrated Talmudic dictum: "Both opinions are the words of the living God,"⁵ if not that, within the limits of the Torah, there is a place for divergent views, each of which is true in its time and place⁶?

I.

The supreme religious obligation of the Jew is study of the Torah. Study is important not merely because it leads to practice⁷ but because it constitutes the very purpose of Jewish existence⁸ and is the equal of all other commandments.⁹ The words of the Torah may never depart from our mouth and we are to meditate on them day and night.¹⁰ In the Code of Maimonides this obligation is formulated as follows:

Every son of Israel is duty-bound to study Torah, whether rich or poor. Even a recipient of charity, and one who has a family to support must set aside time for the study of the Torah by day and by night. How long should a person occupy himself with study? Till the day of his death, as it is written:¹¹ "Lest these words depart from thy heart all the days of thy life," and as long as one does not study he forgets.¹²

The decisions of Maimonides are, of course, all based on halakhic sources. The life-long obligation to study Torah is based on the text in Deuteronomy dealing with the duties of the king of Israel:¹³ "And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, then he shall write himself a copy of this

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law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life". The *Sifre*¹⁴ interprets "all the days of his life" as referring to both days and nights. In the *Tosephta*¹⁵ we read: "May we not derive this rule *a fortiori*? If the king of Israel who is busy with public affairs is required to study Torah all the days of his life, how much greater is the duty of the ordinary citizen." The *Tosephta* further cites the example of Joshua who was busy with the conquest of the Holy Land and nevertheless was enjoined by God: "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night."¹⁶ Likewise, in the *Ethics of the Fathers* we read: "He who forgets even one thing from his studies deserves to forfeit his life."¹⁷ The principle that there is no exemption from the study of the Torah (for those who are obligated to study¹⁸) is thus clearly grounded in basic halakhic texts.¹⁹

On the other hand, some Talmudic opinions hold that one has fulfilled his obligation to study Torah by reading the *Shema* twice a day.²⁰ It is quite clear, however, that while the exigencies of life may compel an individual to limit his study of the Torah,²¹ nevertheless, whenever the time is available, one must devote oneself exclusively to this study. Neglect of Torah study²² is regarded as a very serious violation both of the letter and the spirit of the Torah.²³ God Himself weeps every day over the one who is in a position to study Torah and does not do so.²⁴ In the ideal world, such as that envisaged by Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai²⁵ or Maimonides,²⁶ the people of Israel will be engaged only in the study of the Torah, and will literally fulfill the commandment: "This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night."²⁷ For in the Messianic era the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as waters cover the sea.²⁸

In our world, imperfect and unredeemed as yet, men have to engage in ploughing in the time of ploughing, and in sowing in the time of sowing. The study of the Torah cannot be our sole occupation.²⁹ Men have to devote themselves to their respective trades and professions.³⁰ According to many rabbinic authorities, the foremost among them Maimonides, one should

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engage in some worldly activity to acquire a livelihood, rather than occupy himself exclusively with the study of the Torah while receiving support from the community and deriving sustenance from the crown of the Torah. To use the Torah for an ulterior purpose constitutes a desecration of God's Name.³¹

In the light of the foregoing, it is obvious that secular learning for the purpose of earning a livelihood is approved. A father's duty is to teach his son a trade.³² There is no restriction as to the type of trade or profession as long as no violation of the Torah is involved.³³ The solitary view of Rabbi Nechemiah that he would give up all trades and teach his son only Torah³⁴ reflects the high idealism and unworldliness of Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai and his school³⁵ and represents the outlook of certain groups who sought to live lives of unquestioning trust in God and preoccupation with the study of the Torah.³⁶ This way of life was undoubtedly outside the mainstream of Judaism and can be respected as foreshadowing the World-to-Come. The majority of the sages, however, recognized the exigencies of daily life and encouraged men to handle their problems in a realistic manner.

II.

The question now arises whether the Halakhah countenances secular studies for their own sake. This problem may be subdivided into two parts: 1) Does the Halakhah approve these studies as means of improving the quality of human life or 2) does the Halakhah attach any intrinsic value to the secular disciplines regardless of any pragmatic results?

In his Commentary to the Mishnah³⁷ Maimonides makes the following statement:

A gambler is invalidated as a witness because he is not engaged in activity that is of benefit to civilization (*yishuv ha-olam*). It is a principle of the Torah that in this world one should keep busy with one of two things: either with the study of the Torah so that his soul may through its wisdom achieve perfection, or with such activity as will help the preservation of society, either trades or the mercantile occupations, except that one should limit his preoccupation with the latter.

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The furtherance of the physical and spiritual welfare of society is the proper pursuit of all men. To the extent that the secular disciplines help to enrich human life they are commendable objects of study. Did not God Himself declare at the creation that man was to replenish the earth and subdue it, that he was to exercise dominion over the animal and mineral kingdoms?³⁸ Man's domination over the world created for his benefit can be carried out only by means of the technological sciences so highly praised in the twenty-eighth chapter of Job (although their identification with ultimate wisdom is emphatically rejected). From the perspective of the civilizatory goals affirmed in Genesis, there can be no question but that the attitude towards science as a means for the fulfillment of these goals must be positive.

Our second question now needs to be considered. Do the so-called secular disciplines have any intrinsic value in the light of the Torah? I say *so-called* secular disciplines, because I believe that it is here that the crux of the problem lies. Is there really such a thing as a realm of secular studies? If we study Torah with the intention of using this learning for a selfish purpose, the Torah remains sacred, but our study of it anything but. Our sages say that whosoever studies Torah not for its own sake, it were better for him never to have been born.³⁹ The Tossafists⁴⁰ point out that such beratement applies to study for the purpose of causing vexation or lording it over one's fellows. Any branch of knowledge, like any human activity, may be sanctified or profaned by our motives. The Baal Shem Tov has pointed out that the Lord may be served in many ways.⁴¹ Already in ancient times our sages insisted that all our actions be oriented towards a divine purpose.⁴²

Whosoever follows these directions (of performing all his deeds for the sake of Heaven) serves the Almighty at all times, even when he is engaged in business and even when engaged in marital relations, for his intention when performing these acts is the satisfaction of his needs so that his body may be in the proper state of health to enable him to serve the Lord. And even when he sleeps, if it is for the purpose of achieving bodily rest and mental tranquillity or the prevention of any illness that might hinder service of the Lord, sleep itself is an instrument of service. With this in mind our sages instructed us that all our

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deeds be for the sake of Heaven, and this is what Solomon meant in his Book of Wisdom: "In all your ways know Him and He will straighten your paths."⁴³

How can one study the secular branches of knowledge for the sake of Heaven? When knowledge is applied to the betterment of human life, it is easier for men to strive for spiritual goals.⁴⁴ But this motive is far from exhaustive. An understanding of the world created by God, the heaven and earth, the creatures within this world, the body and spirit of man, constitute a legitimate objective of man's inquisitive mind. To deny man the right to study the world in which he lives would be to rob him of one of his most precious prerogatives. Man with his body is to exercise dominion over the world. With his spirit he is to encompass it. The unique quality of man, says Rav Saadia Gaon,⁴⁵ is that, though physically he is relatively insignificant, with his mind he can encompass the totality of creation. To exercise his mind to understand God's world in all its ramifications is the fulfillment of a divine blessing, as is the orientation of his intellectual faculties towards the comprehension of God's Law for man. To study the world impelled by such a motivation is undoubtedly to direct one's thoughts to God. Nor may it be said that the preoccupation with the world and the fullness thereof is the task of the nations of the world, but that Israel's sole task is the study and fulfillment of the Torah. Certainly the patrimony into which Israel was to enter was to be vaster, richer, and more comprehensive than that of the other nations, not more restricted and less inclusive.⁴⁶

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork . . . The Law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul."⁴⁷ There are two ways of reaching God, through Creation and through Revelation.⁴⁸ The light of Revelation may be brighter, its directives clearer, its rules more explicit, but the light of Creation is no less glorious. If one studies the Torah to understand God's will, his study is for the sake of Heaven. If one studies the world in order to discover the footsteps of divine Providence one is seeking God. This study is also for the sake of Heaven.

Moreover, Maimonides makes it quite clear that a knowledge

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of the world created by God is indispensable for the attainment of the love and fear of God. At the very beginning of his great Code, the *Mishneh Torah*, he asks:

How can one attain the love and fear of God? Whenever we examine his great and wonderful works and his marvelous creatures we become aware of the infinite wisdom of God. We are then inspired to love Him, to praise and exalt Him, and become possessed of an uncontrollable desire to know His great Name, as David said: "My heart thirsteth for God, the living God." And while we are contemplating these very same things we withdraw in fear and trepidation, in full realization that we are insignificant creatures, slight in knowledge in the presence of Him Whose knowledge is perfect, as David said: "When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast established; what is man, that Thou art mindful of Him?" On the basis of these thoughts I will clarify the general principles of God's handiwork, that they may serve as a guide for the intelligent person to love the great Name of God.⁴⁹

Thus Maimonides incorporated the natural and biological sciences within the corpus of the Torah. He presents in his Code a survey of the universe, in terms of the astronomy and physics of his day, for the purpose of inspiring students to achieve love and reverence for the Creator. If one aims to deepen his understanding of the universe and achieve thereby a greater appreciation of the divine wisdom, he is fulfilling the commandment of *Talmud Torah* — the study of the Torah.⁵⁰ Maimonides includes those branches of learning which he calls *Pardes* in the category of *Gemara*, with which the person who has achieved proficiency in the Scriptures and the Mishnah must occupy himself all the days of his life. *Pardes*, according to Maimonides,⁵¹ is the study of *Maaseh Bereshit* and *Maaseh Merkavah*⁵² which he identifies with physics and metaphysics. Maimonides' declaration is, of course, based on Talmudic sources, particularly on the views of Rav, Bar Kappara, and Rabbi Yochanan. Rav (Abba) maintains that he who is capable of studying the calculations of astronomy and fails to do so is unworthy of being spoken well of. Bar Kappara states that not to study astronomy when one is capable of doing so is tantamount to ignoring the handiwork of God, like those who ". . . regard not the work of the Lord, neither have they considered the operation of His

hands.” According to Rabbi Yochanan, occupation with this science is the obligation of Israel. Israel’s knowledge of astronomy is referred to in the Biblical text: “For this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples.”⁵³ It should be pointed out, however, that Maimonides places a priority upon the study of pure Halakhah whereby the Jewish person learns to distinguish the forbidden from what is permissible and the unclean from the clean. The son of Israel must first learn the commandments and obligations of the Torah. Only then may he occupy himself with other branches of knowledge.⁵⁴

There is another aspect to the question of the so-called secular disciplines. The Torah itself presupposes a knowledge of astronomy in the laws of *Kiddush ha-Chodesh*, of biology and physiology in the laws of *Terefot*, *Bekhorot*, and *Niddah*, and of psychology and economics in *Dinei Mammonot*.⁵⁵ A student of the Torah need not necessarily be an expert in all the sciences, but, applying Maimonides’ criteria for qualification for membership on any religious court,⁵⁶ he should have some familiarity with medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. Those areas of science with which Halakhah deals are not merely in the category of *parparaot*, the aftercourses of wisdom,⁵⁷ but are actually essentials of the Torah.⁵⁸

In the *Midrashim* and the Kabbalistic writings the Sovereign of the universe is said to have looked into the Torah and fashioned the world according to it.⁵⁹ Rabbi Judah Leib of Ger states: “Since the entire world was patterned after the Torah, it is possible to discover words of the Torah everywhere.”⁶⁰ While we will not discuss the mystical meaning of this doctrine, it is clear that a knowledge of the Torah and the universe are mutually enriching. As the Gaon of Vilna said, to the extent that one is deficient in his knowledge of the sciences, to that extent he is wanting in the knowledge of the Torah.⁶¹

There thus appear to be no real grounds in Jewish tradition for looking askance upon what are generally known as secular studies. No branch of knowledge concerned with God’s world and studied in a spirit of reverence can really be called secular. From ancient times through the Middle Ages Jews believed that originally they were in possession of all branches of knowledge,

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and that particularly the tribe of Issachar excelled in diverse areas of wisdom. This was believed also by non-Jews. Maimonides states that⁶² “. . . many sciences devoted to establishing the truth regarding these matters that have existed in our religious community have perished because of the length of time that has passed, because of our being dominated by pagan nations . . .” This view is also accepted by Rabbi Judah Halevi.⁶³ We are not concerned with the historical accuracy of these beliefs, but they indicate the high esteem in which the sciences were held by the Jewish people. It could hardly be supposed that they believed that their great ancestors who cultivated the various branches of learning were guilty of the neglect of the Torah or of engaging in secular studies at the expense of the sacred.

Could there be anything but reverence for the secular sciences seeing that upon meeting a non-Jewish sage one must recite a benediction expressing gratitude to God for having imparted from His wisdom to His creatures?⁶⁴ Can we possibly despise the divine wisdom which He has apportioned to mortals? It is none other than God Who gives wisdom to the wise.⁶⁵ May we disrespect that wisdom by closing the doors to those who seek it? Did not the Tanna say: Despise not any man and do not carp at any thing?⁶⁶ The sages clearly teach us that one should learn from every man.⁶⁷ They assured us that one word of wisdom even from a heathen entitles him to be called a wise man.⁶⁸ One must honor wisdom wherever and whenever it makes its appearance.

III.

A critic might point out certain passages in Talmudic literature which seem to reflect an entirely different point of view. To the question whether one may occupy himself with the wisdom of the Greeks (*Chakhmat Yavan*), after having completed the study of the entire Torah,⁶⁹ Rabbi Ishmael answered: “This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.”⁷⁰ If one can possibly find time that is neither day nor night he may then occupy himself with the study of “Greek wisdom.” In *Sifre*, as well as in *Sifra*, we read:

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“And thou shalt speak of them:” they are to be essential and not secondary; the exercise of your mind shall be exclusively with them, so that you should not mingle other subjects with them. You should not say: “I have studied the wisdom of Israel; I will now go and study the wisdom of the nations of the world.” It is therefore written: “Ye shall observe my commandments to walk in them,” and not to exempt yourselves from them.⁷¹

What did the sages have in mind when they spoke of the “wisdom of the Greeks”? The Talmud tells us⁷² that the study of “Greek wisdom” was prohibited after the civil war between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, and again after the destruction of the Second Temple. The Tossafists⁷³ maintain that it was necessary to issue the prohibition twice because it was not accepted the first time. Moreover, special dispensation was granted to those who stood close to government circles, for whom knowledge of “Greek wisdom” was indispensable.⁷⁴ Again, according to the Tossafists,⁷⁵ this knowledge is sanctioned whenever there is a public need (*tzorekh tzibbur*) for it. It is, nevertheless, never made clear exactly what is meant by “Greek wisdom.” Maimonides in his commentary to the Mishnah⁷⁶ interprets this term as referring to some kind of cryptic language used by the Greeks to disguise their true intentions. Moreover, he maintains that no vestige of this “wisdom” remains anywhere. While this writer knows of no such “wisdom,”⁷⁷ the prohibition could have applied at most to pagan literature and speculative philosophy, particularly that of the Cynics, Skeptics and other Sophists, but not to the sciences.⁷⁸ According to one version in the Jerusalem Talmud,⁷⁹ “Greek wisdom” was prohibited because of the danger of its misuse by informers and spies. The ban thus seems to have been the result of the precarious political situation of the Jewish community. We may safely assume that it in no way applies to the sciences which themselves are inextricably bound up with the Torah.⁸⁰

As for the other passage from *Sifre* and *Sifra*⁸¹ which restricts all study to the “wisdom of Israel” and not the “wisdom of the nations of the world,” what is implied is not the total rejection of other studies, but their relegation to a secondary place vis-à-vis the Torah. When one has made the study of the Torah his

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supreme objective he may also apply himself to other branches of learning.⁸² The term "wisdom of the nations of the world" may possibly have no reference to sciences which are universal and are the common heritage of all mankind. They are in no way the exclusive property of the nations of the world. The term probably refers to literary documents of various groups in which the exploits of their mythological heroes are recounted. Again the question raised by Ben Dama as to the permissibility of studying "Greek wisdom" may have referred to a full-time dedication to pagan epics and mythology. Rabbi Moses Isserles in the *Shulchan Arukh*⁸³ decided that one may pursue other branches of learning, if they are studied incidentally, and not as a full-time pursuit. This limitation must be understood as applying only to branches of learning which have no bearing, either direct or indirect, on the understanding of the Torah.

In summary, a Jew should be primarily occupied with the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the commandments. Any branch of learning which facilitates or enriches the study of the Torah and its observance is included within the purview of the Torah. Within its scope must be included those disciplines which provide man with a greater control over his physical as well as his social environment, since they contribute to the benefit of civilized society (*yishuvo shel olam*) which is one of the objectives of human activity.⁸⁴ Theoretical science, for example, nowadays leads to practical applications which affect the quality of our lives. From the standpoint of the goals of civilization, absorption in theoretical science is no different from engagement in any other occupation which benefits society. Pre-occupation with other areas of knowledge in order to achieve a deeper comprehension of divine wisdom is certainly a commendable activity from the standpoint of the Torah, with, however, the indispensable proviso that the study of the Torah as such remain supreme and all other interests be subordinated to it.

IV.

What place is there, if any, for other branches of learning that appear to be remote from the study or the control of na-

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ture? Is there any place within the realm of Torah for history, literature, music and art, philosophy and the social sciences? There is much in the arts and literature that runs counter to the letter and spirit of the Torah. Certain types of sculpturing may violate the second commandment.⁸⁵ Some works of art may infringe on Jewish views of chastity. Some literature expounds unbelief and libertinism. There are types of music which have been interdicted by the Halakhah since the destruction of the Temple.⁸⁶ These problems have not been dealt with by authorities who are great both in Halakhah as well as in their understanding of the significance of these aspects of human creativity. This writer does not pretend to know the answer to these very serious questions. But he does believe that whatever enhances and beautifies human life has a place within the Jewish world-outlook. Whatever broadens man's outlook and lifts his spirit is to be welcomed and encompassed within the sphere of the life of Torah.⁸⁷ To the extent that literature and the arts (excluding, of course, what is contrary to the spirit of the Torah) can lift our hearts and souls, to that extent they deserve to be an integral part of our curriculum. While some Jews may obtain spiritual fulfillment through exclusive preoccupation with Torah, we cannot proscribe what others have created for spiritual enrichment any more than one can forbid the use of furniture or utensils made by non-Jews.

It is the task of the Jewish people, according to the Kabbalah, to release from their profane prisons sparks of holiness that are disseminated throughout all of creation and lift them into the realms of holiness. The implication of this doctrine⁸⁸ is that we seek the good, the true, and the beautiful wherever we can find them and sanctify them by using them for noble purposes. In a not dissimilar vein, Israel, which has been termed by the Torah as "a wise and understanding people,"⁸⁹ has been placed in the world to serve as "a light unto the nations,"⁹⁰ not merely by teaching and serving as an exemplary people, but by subjecting all activities and ideas to critical examination in the light of the principles of the Torah.⁹¹ How can we evaluate what is happening in the world if we indiscriminately repudiate all values that do not bear directly and explicitly on Torah? Need the Jew

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deny himself the joys and insights provided by wisdom and creative genius which he himself affirms is the wisdom of God?⁹²

Not every individual is suited for this type of well-rounded education. For some an exclusive dedication to Torah may be sufficient and it may even be hazardous for them to transcend its bounds. For this very reason philosophy should be studied only by those who have already achieved an unshakeable faith. But for sturdy souls a knowledge of philosophy is indispensable for an understanding of universal currents of thought and their relationship to the Torah. There are also traps in the social sciences, history and psychology, which may beguile the unwary. But we cannot for this reason eschew the disciplines devoted to the evaluation and betterment of the individual and society.

Another problem is the right of Jews to engage in research that results in the development of instruments of destruction. A medieval Jewish thinker stated with pride⁹³ that for us, all sciences and activities that bring harm to humanity are forbidden. The Talmud prohibits the participation of Jews in wars of aggression, when they live in the midst of the non-Jewish world. Nor may they supply belligerents with the necessary weapons, unless the wars are purely defensive.⁹⁴ It is for us to deliberate whether our studies are devoted to the ultimate good of mankind, whether the weapons we create will be used to preserve humanity and the Jewish people, or the reverse. There is no choice for men of good-will but to devise counter-weapons that will frustrate the designs of those who are "inciting wars every day."⁹⁵ The Jewish scientist should, nevertheless, strive to be in the forefront of scientific research directed towards constructive purposes.

The great sage Raba reprimanded a contemporary for his ignorance of current events.⁹⁶ The statement of the Gaon of Vilna that ignorance of the secular sciences is reflected in a lack of proper perceptions of the Torah⁹⁷ applies with much greater force today. If a student of Torah at the present time lacks basic secular knowledge, it borders on a desecration of the Name of God and the name of the Torah. The Torah and Israel become associated in the minds of those familiar with this type of student with backwardness, benightedness, and sheer ignorance.

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Repudiation of the world in which we live, including the good that it contains, contributes nothing, putting it mildly, to the enhancement of the position of the Torah in the world.

Indeed, what our generation should strive for is a philosophy in which the Torah not merely tolerates a liberal education, but becomes the fountainhead of scientific pursuits, profound philosophy, and the matrix of great art. More than superficial toleration, mechanical juxtaposition, or artificial synthesis are necessary. Rav Saadia Gaon, Rabbi Judah Halevi, Maimonides, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch and Rabbi Kook must have had much more in mind than that. The Halakhah will have to strike out for new goals and directions with this purpose in mind. It is here that we have to look to Rabbi Kook for guidance. In the section entitled "The Unification of the Science of the Holy and the Secular," he states in his *Orot Ha-Kodesh*⁹⁸:

The inner science, and especially the innermost of all which is the science of holiness, that gives life to the light of existence, is not dependent upon any other science, because itself it is the upper river that originates in Eden, and derives its blessings from its own source. The combination of the Torah and wisdom is not intended to supplement any missing power, but to bring about new combinations and new phenomena. This creativity, based on the union of the light of the holy spirit, the inwardness of the Torah, with the wisdom of human comprehension, in the fullness of the stature of both, and in the fullness of the spirit of friendship which is proper to both, will bring new souls into the world and will endow life with a new character, healthful and refreshing. From the depths of the underground it will draw forth great light, to illuminate with a new light, with the light of the righteous, all the inhabitants of the world.

Behind the mystical language of Rabbi Kook, some of which it is difficult to decipher, we discern the striving for a new harmony between the sacred and the secular which will result in the emergence of new values and a new type of religious personality which will be able to bring light to a world so greatly in need of the inspiration which can originate only in the divine light. Out of this new harmony we may hope for the appearance of a science, literature, and art that is not merely ancillary to the Torah, but that is actually inspired by the Torah and embodies its spirit.

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V.

It is obvious to anyone familiar with the Jewish scene that the views expressed above will not receive unanimous approval. This writer does not, however, assume that the repudiation of worldly learning in some segments of Jewry is the product of arbitrary antagonism. It is rooted in a basic attitude of Jewry towards the world at large, an attitude which is tied up with the very meaning of Jewish existence.

The relationship of the Jewish people to the rest of the world constitutes one of the great problems of Jewish history. The fathers of the Jewish people brought forth a nation which they knew would dwell alone in the world. Abraham was known as *Ha-Ivri* which, according to our sages,⁹⁹ signified that the whole world was on one side and he was on the other. Abraham's religion demanded his isolation from the rest of the world. He had to depart from his native land to seek a home in a strange land. Though he lived on amicable terms with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, he remained a stranger in their midst. He discouraged the members of his family from intermarrying with the natives. He was given the mark of the covenant which was to be imprinted on the bodies of his male descendants who were to constitute a nation whose God was the Lord and who were to occupy the land of Canaan as an everlasting inheritance. Abraham, it is true, was to be the father of a multitude of nations, or, as the Talmud puts it, the father of the whole world,¹⁰⁰ but at the same time he was to be the progenitor of the people of the covenant. The separateness of Abraham's seed is evident in the records of the Patriarchal period. The children of Israel constituted a distinct racial and religious entity in Egypt. The establishment of the nation at Sinai necessitated total isolation from the rest of mankind. The religious and ethical way of life that Israel's inspired leaders perceived made it imperative for them to seek for their people a land of their own, protected from corruption by means of a regimen which would regulate their activities "when sitting in the house, and when walking in the road, and when lying down and when rising up."¹⁰¹ The reason for this isolation was not hatred for others

