

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

but a profound belief in the unity of the human race, the dignity of the individual, and the worthwhileness of human existence. Israel was to dwell apart so that it could ultimately bring about the restoration of all nations to the service of God, under His universal sovereignty. But as long as God remained forsaken by men, Israel had to withdraw from the historic life of the world community. Only at the end of days, with the fulfillment of Zephaniah's prophecy, when all nations "will call upon the name of the Lord and serve Him with one consent" can Israel terminate its aloofness and become one with all mankind.¹⁰²

Subsequent history shows the story of Israel's struggle for the maintenance of its own spiritual integrity. The Canaanite cults with all their barbarity, brutality, and lasciviousness, had been extirpated to some degree with the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. However, the toleration which the children of Israel later extended to the native population and its aboriginal cults took a terrible toll in terms of moral deterioration and retrogression. "They mingled with the nations and they learned their deeds."¹⁰³ The prophets, who arose during the period of the Judges and later, warned the people of the disastrous consequences that would follow in the wake of their assimilative propensities. The fluctuating alliances in the Middle East which characterized the political developments of the following centuries led Israel to take sides, at one time with one power, at other times with another. These political attachments subsequently resulted in the infiltration of foreign culture into Israel where new idolatries and depravities replaced the indigenous traditions. "For thou hast forsaken thy people, O house of Jacob, for they are replenished from the East, and with soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the brood of aliens."¹⁰⁴

The first attempt to bridge the chasm that separated Israel from the nations was made during the reign of Solomon. Complete freedom of religion prevailed in Israel at the time,¹⁰⁵ and, ideas were freely exchanged between Israel and its neighbors.¹⁰⁶ However, Solomon, with all his wisdom, showed no foresight in his easy toleration of the cults and ideas that his people had been called upon to combat. Israel and its neighbors had

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not yet reached the stage where they could speak the same language. The separation of Israel from the world should have been maintained at all costs. In the realm of the spirit the nations had very little to offer Israel, except what might prove disastrous to the latter's harmony with God. "And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of the Shihor? Or what hast thou to do in the way to Assyria, to drink the waters of the River?"¹⁰⁷

Hundreds of years passed and Israel continued to struggle for spiritual freedom from foreign domination. It had appeared that for certain the Jewish spirit had finally succeeded in firmly imbedding itself within the life of the people, especially during the Second Commonwealth. However, another enemy appeared on the horizon, the Greek-speaking Syrians. Their civilization did not differ essentially from the earlier cults against which the prophets had waged relentless warfare, except that it was more elegant and refined. Even after the Maccabean victories, the struggle continued in the battles of the sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes, which continued for centuries.

Close to the beginning of the Christian era, the Jewish community of Alexandria had reached a state of maturity where for the first time ever a rapprochement between integral Judaism and the surrounding culture was seriously attempted. For the first time the Jewish community found itself face to face with a world-outlook which spoke to loyal Jews in intelligible terms. The Jews of Alexandria, whose vernacular was Greek, found in the writings of Plato and the Stoics ideas which struck responsive chords in their hearts. While they witnessed in their neighboring pagan communities ugly religious cults and depravities in their full stench, they were, nevertheless, not blind to the stirrings towards something more human, more spiritual, and more refined in the world about them. They were eager to translate their own tradition into the language of philosophy with which they were so much impressed. With the combined language of Judaism and philosophy, so they were convinced, they would conquer the pagan world for ethical monotheism. The Alexandrian era thus represents the first attempt by the Jew to create a synthesis of Judaism and worldly culture. Per-

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haps this was the first time in human history that cultural synthesis was attempted.

In the ensuing centuries the struggle for physical survival led to an intensification of the inner values of Judaism both in the land of Israel as well as in Babylonia, so that the Alexandrian synthesis left very little impression on native Jewish thought, except perhaps indirectly in later Jewish philosophies and mystical speculation.

In the middle of the Gaonic period about seven hundred years later, some basic Jewish ideas had already conquered a substantial portion of the globe. Christianity had taken over Europe, and Islam dominated Asia and Africa. During this period the Moslems rediscovered Greek thought. A general intellectual ferment and confusion pervaded the entire Middle East in both the Arabic and Jewish worlds in much the same way as in modern times. In Rav Saadia we find an individual who sought to bring about a new synthesis. He was the supreme master of the Jewish tradition, as well as a devotee of all the sciences and the branches of learning of his day. In him we find for the first time since Philo a complete blending of the wisdom of Israel and the wisdom of the world. Unlike Philo, who, though a loyal and observant Jew, was, nevertheless, outside the mainstream of Jewish thought and also not a Jewish scholar of the first magnitude, Rav Saadia was fully immersed in the main current of Jewish scholarship. Through him, for the first time in Jewish history, it may be said that the beauty of Japheth had begun to reveal itself in the tents of Shem.¹⁰⁸

The contribution of Rav Saadia, as well as of his great successors, consisted primarily in their conviction that the wisdom of Japheth had reached a stage where it could no longer challenge the integrity of Judaism. On the other hand, it could now be used as an instrument for clarification and demonstration. Not that Judaism was being put to the test! Its truth was, for them, established autonomously on the grounds of reason and experience. But philosophic thought could help bring about a better and clearer understanding of Judaism. Reason and revelation, philosophy and faith complement each other. Even more so, these thinkers believed that they were restoring to Judaism

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what was its own original philosophic heritage. The creative thinking and intellectual productivity of the following centuries were the result of the bridge-building between the Jew and the world that was initiated by Rav Saadia.

The search for a rapprochement with the surrounding world did not obtain in all segments of Jewry. The Jews of northern France and Germany, because of the general cultural backwardness of their environment, made no noticeable attempt to build a bridge to the outside world. Even in Spanish and Oriental Jewry, where the synthesis had been most brilliantly achieved, the close relationship between the Jew and the world soon came to an end. The persecutions in Spain and the expulsion in 1492, as well as the expulsion from Portugal in 1497, led to another withdrawal of the Jew from the world. It is true that in Renaissance Italy there were still stirrings of the old synthesis as well as the adumbration of a new synthesis yet to be achieved. However, on the whole, after the tragic decade of the 1490's and the subsequent years, the Jewish people began to draw back within its own protective shell. The teachings of the Kabbalah, the Jewish esoteric doctrine, were becoming more and more widespread, and were gradually taking the place of the monumental intellectual structures reared by Saadia, Bahya, Maimonides, Gersonides, and others. The Kabbalah tended to emphasize the differences between the Jew and the Gentile and encouraged the Jew to withdraw totally from the cruel and hostile world into the hospitality and warmth of his own hearth and home. Jews found supreme spiritual satisfaction in the strict observance of the laws of the Torah, which had by this time become codified in the *Turim* of Rabbi Jacob ben Asher and in the famous compendium of Rabbi Joseph Caro known as the *Shulchan Arukh*, in the tender and comforting works of the *Haggadah* and later homileticians, as well as in the inspiring and exalting, though at times highly intricate and obscure Kabbalah.

Jewry of Eastern Europe flourished in a very backward cultural environment and found little in it that could attract it, and much that repelled it. Rabbinic as well as Hassidic Jewry in Eastern Europe consequently, tended to withdraw from the

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world. While East European Jewry advanced to very great heights in the study of the Torah and in religious insights and inspiration it, nevertheless, suffered from a cultural lag which kept it out of touch with intellectual and spiritual developments in the Western world.

For the Jew living in Western society, the Emancipation and Enlightenment once more brought into the foreground the problem of his relationship to the world. This tension has given rise to various movements, some of which are representative of the centrifugal aims of Jewry, others, of its more centripetal strivings. The record of this struggle, which has been all the more exacerbated as a result of the incredible holocaust perpetrated on the Jewish people by the most culturally advanced of European nations, constitutes the intellectual history of modern Jewry.

It should be realized that, to a great extent, at least in modern times, and especially at the present, all attempts that are made to keep the Jew from participating in the manifold expressions of modern cultural life, hark back to the deep wounds inflicted upon the Jew by the world. The Jew who has suffered so bitterly regards the outside world and everything that stands for it with bitterness and resentment. Nevertheless, he must participate in the activities of this world, just as he cannot escape its benefits. He is involved in its development and must keep pace with its progress. Whether in Israel or anywhere else in the Diaspora, the Jew will continue to live in the modern world; he will serve it and, in turn, be served by it. Individuals here and there, even small groups, might isolate themselves intellectually, but such withdrawal cannot be made a way of life for the Jewish people. The Jewish people "that dwells alone"¹⁰⁹ cannot liberate itself from its providential task. From the perspective of its own unique historic role and goals it must discover anew its place in the world. Within the framework of its indigenous ideology and way of life it must find a place for the arts and the sciences, for everything that ennobles and beautifies human life, and place upon them its own stamp, the divine stamp of Sinai and Moriah.

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NOTES

1. See *Eruvin* 21a, based on Psalm 119:96 and Job 11:9. The statement attributed to Mari bar Mar maintains that the universe is 1/3200 of the Torah. This ratio undoubtedly has a profound mystical significance. However, in the literature available to me I was unable to discover any interpretation that would in any way help to decipher, or even to hint at, its mystical meaning. Cf. also *Yalkut*, Psalms 878.

2. Comment on Positive Commandment 1.

3. Edited by R. Azriel Hildesheimer, Berlin, 1890.

4. Introduction, Root 4.

5. *Eruvin* 13b.

6. See comment on passage in *Eruvin* by RITVA (R. Yom Tob ben Abraham of Seville); Introduction to *Tanya* by R. Schneur Zalman; cf. Rashi to *Ketuvot* 57a. See also *Chagigah* 3b and commentary of MaHaRSha. Rabbi Norman Lamm has called my attention to the interesting comment of *Keli Yakar* to Deuteronomy 17:11. [In reference to the subject under discussion see the view of R. Baruch Dov Lebovitz of Kamenitz, published in *Birkhat Shemuel, Kiddushin*, No. 27, and in *Rabbi Barukh Dov Lebovitz* by I. Edelstein (Tel Aviv, 1957), p. 148 ff. Coinciding with this view is that of R. Elchanan Wasserman in his *Kovetz Shiurim, Yevamot*, end. An analysis of these opinions is beyond the scope of this paper. Cf. also *Pachad Yitzchok* by R. Isaac Hutner (N. Y. 5724) p. 58-65.]

7. *Kiddushin* 40b.

8. Cf. *Berakhot* 35b; *Sanhedrin* 99b; in *Avodah Zarah* 2b, the nations of the world justify their activities because they enabled Israel to occupy itself with the study of the Torah. It is the study of the Torah that maintains the entire world (*Sanhedrin* 99b; *Pesachim* 68b; *Avot* 2:8).

9. *Peah* I:1.

10. Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Joshua 1:8.

11. Deuteronomy 4:9; this passage, which applies to the theophany at Sinai, is interpreted by the sages as referring to the entire text of the Torah, both written and oral, revealed at Sinai. See *Avot* III:8; *Menachot* 99b.

12. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Talmud Torah* I:10.

13. Deuteronomy 17:18-19.

14. *Ad locum*.

15. *Sanhedrin* 4:8 (ed. Zuckerman).

16. *Ibid.* 4:9. Biblical text: Joshua 1:8. See above note 10.

17. *Avot* III:8. See above note 11.

18. Cf. Maimonides *ibid.*, I:1. Women, slaves (non-Hebrew), and minors (on their own) are exempt from the obligation of studying Torah. The reasons for, and the extent of, the exemptions cannot, of course, be dealt with in this paper.

19. A lengthier discussion of this entire subject by this writer is found in *Hadarom*, Vol. XI, p. 151 ff.

20. *Menachot* 99b.

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21. See *Hadarom, loc. cit.*, p. 153. Cf. *Shabbat* 31a; Maimonides, *ibid.*, I:8. This is the concept of *keviat ittim le-Torah*.
22. Known as *bittul Torah*. See Maimonides *Mishneh Torah, Talmud Torah*; III:13.
23. Cf. *Shabbat* 32b; *Sifra* to Leviticus 26:3,14; *et passim*.
24. *Chagigah* 5b.
25. *Berakhot* 35b.
26. End of *Mishneh Torah*.
27. Joshua 1:9.
28. Isa. 11:9; 59:21.
29. *Berakhot, ibid.; Shabbat* 33b.
30. The many passages that speak in praise of labor testify to this. Cf. *Avot* I:10; *et passim*.
31. Cf. Maimonides' Commentary to *Avot* IV:5.
32. *Kiddushin* 29a.
33. Cf. *Kiddushin* 82a-b.
34. *Ibid.*
35. See above, note 29.
36. *Sotah* 48b.
37. *Sanhedrin* III:3. See also Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Gezeleh* VI:2; *Edut* X:4.
38. Genesis 1:28; Isa. 45:18.
39. *Berakhot* 17a.
40. *Ad locum*.
41. *Tzava'at R. Israel Baal Shem*.
42. *Avot* II:12.
43. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Deot* III:3. Biblical text, Proverbs 3:6. Cf. also Maimonides, *Commentary to Avot, ibid.*
44. Cf. *Berakhot* 57b; *Shabbat* 33b; *et passim*. Cf. especially *Shabbat* 82a where medicine is explicitly excluded from the category of "secular matters" (*mile de-alma*). Cf. Maimonides *ibid. Teshuvah* IX:1.
45. *Emunot ve-Deot* IV:2.
46. As will be pointed out, a proper understanding of the Torah is predicated upon a knowledge of the world and the fullness thereof. Israel is not exempt from preoccupation with mundane activities prior to the Messianic era.
47. Psalm 19:2.
48. *Kusari* II:56.
49. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Yesodei Ha-Torah* II:2. Biblical texts: Psalms 42:2; 8:4-5. Whether the modern scientific view of the universe is capable of yielding religious experience similar to the one described by Maimonides is an extremely important question, which this writer hopes will be treated by competent authorities. The problem of the conflict of religion and science is, likewise, outside the scope of this paper.
50. Maimonides *ibid., Talmud Torah* I:12.
51. *Ibid. Yesodei Ha-Torah* IV:13.
52. *Chagigah* 11b. Cf. also Maimonides, *Commentary to Mishnah, ibid.*

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53. *Shabbat* 75a. The Biblical texts: Is. 5:12; Deuteronomy 4:6.
54. *Yesodei Ha-Torah*, *ibid.*
55. *Kusari* II:64; cf. *Tiferet Israel* to *Avot* III:18.
56. *Mishneh Torah*, *Sanhedrin* II:1, cf. *Kusari*, *ibid.*
57. *Avot* III:18.
58. Rabbi Simeon ben Zemach Duran, *Magen Avot*, to *Avot* III:18.
59. Cf. *Bereshit Rabbah* I:1, and comment of R. David Luria (*Radal*).
60. *Sefat Emet*, end of *Terumah*. Cf. Nachmanides' Introduction to his Commentary on the Torah. See also R. A. L. Kook's *Orot Ha-Torah* (Jerusalem, 5700), p. 17.
61. See quotation in Z. Jawitz, *Toledot Israel* XIII, 231. R. Barukh of Shklov who translated the Geometry of Euclid at the insistence of the Gaon states in the introduction to his translation (*op. cit.*) that the Gaon told him personally that a person lacks a *hundredfold* in his comprehension of the Torah to the extent that he is deficient in his knowledge of the sciences. The authenticity of this statement is questioned by Bezalel Landau in his recent work *Hagaon He-Chasid Mi-Vilna* (Jerusalem, Usha Publication, 5725), p. 225, note 16 on very flimsy grounds, such as the fact that R. Barukh was acquainted with Moses Mendelssohn and had his support. We must remember that the translation was published during the Gaon's lifetime and he would not have dared to attribute to the Gaon words that the latter could very easily have denied. The quotation from the *Peat Ha-Shulchan* (*op. cit.*, *ibid.*), rather than contrary evidence, serves only to confirm R. Barukh's statement, although it is not expressed as strongly as in the work of R. Barukh. In *Peat Ha-Shulchan* (ed. Jerusalem, 5719) of R. Israel of Shklov, it is stated that the Gaon maintained that all the sciences are needed for the comprehension of the Torah and are included in it. Specifically cited are algebra, trigonometry, geometry, music, medicine, surgery, pharmaceuticals, thaumaturgy (!), and philosophy. Cf. also the quotation in Landau's work (p. 224, note 13), of the Gaon's grandson who confirms the value of the natural sciences for the understanding of the Torah. See also *op.cit.*, p. 218, note 2. Cf. also in general *Beer Ha-Golah* by Rabbi Loewe (*Maharal*) of Prague, Section VI. Landau's very valuable work on the Gaon is unfortunately vitiated by the quixotic battles he still wages against the *Haskalah* movement, as though all the *Maskilim* are to be placed in one category and all of them had only one intention, viz., the destruction of religious Judaism. The falsity of this assumption is, I believe, quite apparent to the unprejudiced student.
62. *Guide of the Perplexed*, I:71, cf. also I:11.
63. *Kusari* II:66. Cf. note of Dr. A. Tzifroni in his edition of the *Kusari* (Tel Aviv, 5708). See also H. Wolfson, *Philo*, I, 141. More on this subject and its relation to historical factuality in my paper in *Judaism*, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 70 and corresponding notes.
64. *Berakhot* 58a.
65. *Daniel* 2:21.
66. *Avot* IV:3. Cf. Isaac Breuer, *Nachaliel* (Tel Aviv, 5711), p. 206.
67. *Ibid.*, IV:1.

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68. *Megillah* 16a; cf. *Echah Rabbah* II:13. On the basis of the principle that only he who honors others will himself achieve honor (*Avot* IV:1), Israel will be recognized as a "wise and understanding people" (Deuteronomy 4:6) when it accords honor to wisdom wherever it appears.

69. *Menachot* 99b.

70. Joshua 1:8.

71. *Sifre* to Deuteronomy 6:6; cf. also *Sifra, Acharei*, 141. Biblical texts: Deuteronomy 6:7; Leviticus 18:4

72. *Menachot* 64b.

73. *Ibid.*

74. *Baba Kamma* 83a.

75. *Menachot, ibid.*

76. *Sotah*, end.

77. Perhaps the riddles of the elders of the School of Athens (*Bekhorot* 8b) influenced Maimonides' definition of "Greek wisdom."

78. Cf. comments of R. Israel Lifschitz in *Tiferet Israel* to *Sotah* IX:14.

79. *Peah* I:1.

80. See Professor Saul Lieberman's discussion of this problem in his *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, (New York, 1962), pp. 100-114. According to Lieberman there was never a ban on the study of Greek wisdom. The prohibition was against teaching it to children.

81. See above, note 71.

82. The study of the Torah, according to these texts, must be *ikkar* and not *tefelah*. The other studies may be *tefelah*.

83. *Shulchan Arukh, Yore Deah*, 246:4.

84. See above note 38.

85. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Avodah Zarah* III:9.

86. *Sotah* 48a. See *Shulchan Arukh, Orakh Chayim*, 560:3. Cf. Maimonides *Responsa* (ed. Freimann), pp. 338-9; R. Moses Feinstein, *Igrot Mosheh, Orakh Chayim*, No. 166. In his *Shemoneh Perakim*, Chap. 5, Maimonides speaks of the therapeutic value of music and art, as well as their power to relieve mental fatigue. It should also be noted that music was regarded as one of the "seven sciences." See *Kusari* II:64. No proper halakhic evaluation of the place of music and art, it appears to this writer, can be made without an awareness of the supreme significance of these disciplines.

87. Cf. *Shemoneh Perakim, ibid.*, based on *Berakhoth* 57b; *Shabbat* 25b. A place for literature on this ground, can be found on the basis of Maimonides' statement borne out by *Shabbat* 30b.

88. See Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Schoken Publishing House, Jerusalem, 1941), p. 264.

89. Deuteronomy 4:6.

90. Isaiah 49:6.

91. See Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah, Melakhim* VIII:9-11. Cf. comments of *Tossafot Yom Tom* to *Avot* III:14; R. A. L. Kook, *Igrot Reiyah* (Jerusalem, 1922), p. 18. Cf. also *Sifre*, Deuteronomy 18:9 and Rashi *ad locum* where the permission is expressly given to study foreign cultures in order to know how

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to avoid the evil that is in them. See also *Shabbat* 75a.

92. *Berakhot* 58a.

93. Abraham ben Hiya, *Hegyon Ha-Nefesh*.

94. See my paper "The Jewish Attitude Towards Peace and War", published in *Israel of Tomorrow*, edited by Leo Jung, Herald Square Press Inc., New York, 1949, p. 214-5.

95. Psalms 140:3.

96. *Shavuot* 6b.

97. Above, note 61.

98. Vol. I, p. 63 ff. (Jerusalem, 5698). After this paper was completed my attention was called to an excellent exposition of the views of Rabbi Kook in this area by Rabbi Norman Lamm in his article *Two Versions of "Synthesis"* published in *The Leo Jung Jubilee Volume* (1962), pp. 145-154. [Attention should also, at this point, be called to two papers on the subject of secular knowledge and its relation to Torah, published in previous issues of *Tradition: A Traditional View of Liberal Education* by Justin Hofmann (Vol. 6, No. 1); *An Integrated Jewish World View* by Eliezer Berkovits (Vol. 5, No. 1). These valuable papers should be read in conjunction with the present one.]

99. *Bereshit Rabbah* 42:8.

100. *Berakhot* 13a.

101. Deuteronomy 6:7.

102. Cf. the concept of "withdrawal and return" in Toynbee's *Study of History* (Abridged Edition, Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 217 ff.

103. Psalms 106:35.

105. See I Kings, 11:4-8. It is possible that King Solomon, because of his tolerance and foreign contacts, reinterpreted pagan concepts so as to comply with Hebraic ideology. He may have rationalized the "gods" as symbols of the various attributes of the One God, and tolerated their cults as the worship of the One God embodied in the symbol of a deity. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of Solomon's tolerating image-worship. It was only the "high-places" that were built for the foreign gods (*ibid.*, 11:7). It is perhaps for this reason that these "high-places" were not torn down till the reign of Josiah (II Kings 23:13); see comment of Talmud on this in *Shabbat* 56b. That Solomon's toleration of the foreign cults was based on rationalization was recognized by Abravanel in his commentary *ad locum* (quoted by Malbim). It is very likely that Solomon had cosmopolitan goals in mind in marrying foreign women, thereby intending to expand the influence of Israel's tradition. This possibility is reflected in the opinion of R. Jose in *Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10, as well as in the writings of the Lurianic Kabbalists. See Isaiah Tishby, *Torat Ha-Ra Ve-Ha-Kelipah be-Kabbalat Ha-Ari* (Tel Aviv, 5702), p. 138.

106. This fact would explain the parallels between Egyptian and Hebrew Wisdom literature. See J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, (Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 421 ff. and references there.

107. Jeremiah 2:18.

108. *Megillah* 9b, based on Genesis 9:27.

109. Numbers 23:9; Deuteronomy 32:12; 33:28.