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AMERICAN ORTHODOXY'S LUKEWARM EMBRACE OF THE HIRSCHIAN LEGACY, 1850-1939

Samson Raphael Hirsch died in Frankfurt on December 31, 1888. His family and followers had prepared for this eventuality after the great sage took seriously ill about a month prior to his passing.¹ News of Hirsch's death spread quickest in his native Germany and reached the rest of Europe in short order. Journalists swiftly drafted lengthy editorials that expressed just how tragic Hirsch's death was to their Orthodox communities. Yet, while America's Jews received the news days after Hirsch's death, few leaders in that country were moved to pay tribute to Hirsch and his cause.

Born in 1808, Hirsch was one of German Judaism's pivotal figures and Orthodoxy's most articulate spokesman during the nineteenth century.² In his lifetime, Hirsch's voluminous writings were the centerpiece of German Orthodoxy's educational system. While the system had its critics, Hirsch's methods bred a new type of Orthodox layperson who was more knowledgeable of Jewish and German culture than his or her grandparents had been. In the Frankfurt *Realschule*, Hirsch's school, young boys and girls studied Jewish and secular subjects, as per Hirsch's *Torah*

This is the first of two essays on the migration of the Hirschian legacy to the United States. I acknowledge my gratitude to Jonathan Sarna and Hillel Davis for reviewing previous drafts of this essay. As well, my thanks to Elliot Bondi, Shnayer Leiman and Shimon Steinmetz for providing me with some useful sources and perspectives on Hirsch in America.

¹ Eliyahu Meir Klugman, *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Architect of Torah Judaism for the Modern World* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1996), 340.

² On Hirsch's formative years and early leadership roles, see Isaac Heinemann, "Samson Raphael Hirsch: The Formative Years of the Leader of Modern Orthodoxy," *Historia Judaica* 13 (1951): 29-54; and Robert Liberles, "Champion of Orthodoxy: The Emergence of Samson Raphael Hirsch as Religious Leader," *AJS Review* 6 (1981): 43-60.

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im Derekh Erets philosophy.³ The school was one of the first institutions that Hirsch founded when he came from Moravia in 1851.⁴

Outside of the schoolhouse, these students and their parents read and listened to their rabbinic leader's impassioned pleas for his separatist ideology, *Austritt*. In order to gain political recognition apart from Frankfurt's Reform Jewish community, Hirsch called on his followers in 1876 to divest from the established Reform-led *Israelitische Gemeinde* and join his separatist Orthodox *kehillah*, the *Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft*. While he began his *kehillah* with about a hundred families, according to the most generous estimates, that number increased to 400 families during the 1880s.⁵

Along with his outspoken opposition to building a national homeland in Palestine, Hirsch's *Torah im Derekh Erets* and *Austritt* represented the core principles that he envisaged for Orthodoxy in his time.⁶ Tragically, the community and ideology Hirsch established in Frankfurt were annihilated by the Nazis about fifty years after his death. What remained of Hirsch's legacy was reinterpreted and adapted by his descendants and students for new geographical settings.

Those who sought to transport Hirsch's teachings to new environs faced a significant challenge. Although Hirsch wrote much about his positive views of combining Torah learning with secular wisdom, he never articulated in any clear terms a program to achieve those goals.⁷ This problem was not insurmountable, however. Although no rubric was ever

³ For a nuanced study of Hirsch's *Torah im Derekh Erets* approach and secular studies, see Shnayer Z. Leiman, "Rabbinic Openness to General Culture in the Early Modern Period in Western and Central Europe," in *Judaism's Encounter with Other Cultures: Rejection or Integration?*, ed. Jacob J. Schacter (Northvale: Aaronson, 1997), 180-201.

⁴ Robert Liberles, *Religious Conflict in Social Context: The Resurgence of Orthodox Judaism in Frankfurt Am Main, 1838-1877* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985), 112.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶ On Hirsch's views on the resettlement of the Holy Land, see Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Hirsch Siddur: The Order of Prayers for the Whole Year*, trans. Gertrude Hirschler (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1972), 138, s.v. *teka*. See also Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel: Being a Spiritual Presentation of the Principles of Judaism*, trans. Bernard Drachman (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), 79-97.

⁷ See Isaac Breuer, "Samson Raphael Hirsch," in *Jewish Leaders, 1750-1940*, ed. Leo Jung (New York: Bloch, 1953), 168; and Mordechai Breuer, *The "Torah-Im-Derekh-Eretz" of Samson Raphael Hirsch* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1970), 7. Originally printed in Hebrew in *Ha-Ma'ayan* 9 (Tishrei 1969): 1-16; and *HaMa'ayan* 9 (Tevet 1969): 10-29.

set in place, Hirsch's grandson, Isaac Breuer, had success transplanting his grandfather's teachings to Israel.⁸ In contrast, bringing Hirsch's *Torah im Derekh Erets* across the Atlantic to the United States was a far more complicated affair. Although one commentator has called Hirsch "the intellectual godfather of modern Orthodoxy" in America, that statement is highly questionable.⁹ Proponents of German Orthodoxy struggled mightily to implant Hirsch's teachings into the ethos of American Orthodoxy. There were, of course, many factors at play in the immigration of ideas and Orthodox Jewish values to the United States. Tracing the Hirschian ideology from the time it first disembarked on American shores is certainly no exception. Despite the hurdles, tracking Hirsch's ideology in America is a worthy undertaking. Understanding the complexities of American Orthodoxy's reception of Hirsch is an important study that sheds light on the difficulty Hirschians had in securing a foothold in the United States and, more broadly, reflects important trends in the development of twentieth century American Orthodoxy.

It is impossible to estimate how many German Jews followed Hirsch's literary career after they immigrated to the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Surely some did, as Hirsch published anonymous exchanges with American Jews and wrote about some relevant news items in his monthly journal, *Jeschurun*. However, most German Jews who settled in America, like philanthropist Jacob Schiff, who attended Hirsch's *Realschule* from 1853 to 1861, abandoned Hirschian Orthodoxy in favor of quasi-traditional, Reform, or secular brands of Judaism.¹⁰ Even less likely to find interest in Hirsch's German writings were the children of German immigrants who grew up in America as English speakers during the mid-nineteenth century. For this generation, the *Asmonean*, New York's first Jewish weekly, was also the first to bring Hirsch's writings to American Jewry.¹¹ Appearing in two installments in March, 1850, editor Robert Lyon published "Vocation of Judaism," an

⁸ See Matthias Morgenstern, *From Frankfurt to Jerusalem: Isaac Breuer and the History of the Secession Dispute in Modern Jewish Orthodoxy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 78-81; Aryei Fishman, *Judaism and Modernization on the Religious Kibbutz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 44-45; and Isadore Grunfeld, *Three Generations: The Influence of Samson Raphael Hirsch on Jewish Life and Thought* (London: Jewish Post Publications, 1958), 106-10.

⁹ David Singer, "Voices of Orthodoxy," *Commentary* 58 (July 1974): 56.

¹⁰ Naomi W. Cohen, *Jacob H. Schiff: A Study in American Jewish Leadership* (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1999), 99-101.

¹¹ See Barbara Straus Reed, "Unity, Not Absorption: Robert Lyon and the *Asmonean*," *American Journalism* 7 (1990): 77-95.

abridged, English version of Hirsch's *Neunzehn Briefe über Judenthum*.¹² Soon after, Isaac Leaser, the foremost leader of America's traditionalist Jews during that time, translated another of Hirsch's essays. Leaser, who staunchly opposed religious reformers in the pages of his *Occident*, viewed Hirsch—in Leaser's own words, as “one of the most eminent living Israelites”—as his European counterpart. Leaser happily received the inaugural edition of Hirsch's *Jeschurun* in 1854 as a sign that the German Orthodox leader was “laboring in the same cause with us, and in the same manner.”¹³ A decade earlier, Leaser had publicly supported Hirsch's candidacy for the post of Chief Rabbi of England.¹⁴ And, after apologizing “for not having [previously] furnished ... extracts from the works of Rabbi Hirsch,” Leaser provided his readers with a thirteen-page translation of Hirsch's “*Der Jude und seine Zeit*”—the second English rendering of Hirsch's works.¹⁵

Even so, it was another German Jewish theologian, Zacharias Frankel, the head of the *Judisch Theologisches Seminar* in Breslau, whose writings were the most influential on Leaser's crusade against Reform. Leaser referred to Frankel as “the leader of the Orthodox party” who opened “the eyes of the people to the evil tendencies of the new ideas on religion.”¹⁶ This was no doubt a higher accolade than the one Leaser offered to Hirsch in 1856. Upon reading Hirsch's polemic against a Paris conference that supported moderate reforms in France, Leaser supported the Frankfurt rabbi's crusade while at the same time acknowledging the biases and political limitations of someone “the world calls the [the defender of] the hyper-orthodox party, and that he is from his point of view opposed to changes not founded on the nature of our laws, and therefore necessarily unfavorably disposed to the French or any modern

¹² Samson Raphael Hirsch, “Vocation of Judaism,” *The Asmonean* (March 15, 1850): 161-62; and (March 22, 1850): 169-70. Although he did not give credit, Lyon republished the translation, with very slight modifications, from the English newspaper, *Voice of Jacob*. See “The Vocation of Judaism,” *Voice of Jacob* (September 23, 1842): 18-19; (September 30, 1842): 25-26; and (October 7, 1842): 33-34.

¹³ Isaac Leaser, “Literary Notices,” *The Occident* 12 (December 1854): 439-54, esp. 441-42. See also Isaac Leaser, “Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch,” *The Occident* 10 (October 1852): 368.

¹⁴ “The Chief Rabbi of England,” *The Occident* 1 (October 1844): 38.

¹⁵ Isaac Leaser, “Literary Notices,” *The Occident* 12 (December 1854): 439-54, esp. 441-42. See also Isaac Leaser, “Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch,” *The Occident* 10 (October 1852): 368.

¹⁶ “The Second Rabbinical Meeting,” *The Occident* 3 (September 1845): 306-7; and “Proposed Conference of Jewish Theologians,” *The Occident* 4 (November 1846): 402.

conference.”¹⁷ Still, Leeser’s preference for Frankel’s teachings over Hirsch’s is most apparent from the stance he took in 1861. That year, Hirsch publicly questioned Frankel’s orthodoxy, taking issue with various ambiguities in Frankel’s *Darkhei ha-Mishnah*. Hirsch ultimately called on Frankel to declare his outright allegiance to traditional Judaism.¹⁸ Refusing to weigh in on the debate, Leeser declared that “the high position which both these great men occupy in Israel renders the controversy, which has sprung up in the German Jewish publications, one of the most painful occurrences which we have witnessed during our long editorial career.” His readers could no doubt detect Leeser’s shock at the accusation, even by someone like Hirsch, “a stout defender of our faith.”¹⁹ Although Leeser hoped that Frankel would clarify his views, he made it clear that he never doubted Frankel’s traditional theology.

Notwithstanding his overall preference for Frankel, Leeser certainly did much to transport Hirsch’s ideas to the United States. And, to at least some degree, he had help during this so-called German period of American Jewish history. Bernard Illowy, one of the few Orthodox allies Leeser had in America, also took inspiration from Hirsch’s fight (but not Frankel’s) against German Reform. Unlike Leeser, however, Illowy, an itinerant rabbi and preacher, never sought to promulgate Hirsch’s ideas and writings on a large scale.²⁰ Moreover, just one year before he was called to Congregation Shaarei Chessed of New Orleans, a committee from that city identifying itself as the “Touro Monument Association” queried several European scholars about the Jewish legal permissibility of constructing a statue in memory of the philanthropist Judah Touro. Letters of response—all answering in the negative—came from British Chief Rabbi Nathan Adler, Zacharias Frankel, Solomon Judah Loeb Rapoport and

¹⁷ “The Conference of French Rabbins,” *The Occident* 14 (September 1856): 268.

¹⁸ On Hirsch’s criticisms of Frankel, see Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Collected Writings: Origin of the Oral Law* vol. V (New York: Feldheim, 1988), 209-314. On rabbinic opposition to Frankel, see also Shnayer Z. Leiman, “Did Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer Label Rabbi Zechariah Frankel ‘An Apostate?’,” *Tradition* 41 (Summer 2008): 145-54.

¹⁹ “Rabbi Hirsch of Frankfort-on-Main,” *The Occident* 19 (May 1861): 95.

²⁰ See Henry Illowy, *Sefer She’elot u-Teshuvot Milkhamot Elohim* (Brooklyn, 1992), 162-65; Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Responsa Shemesh Marpeh*, ed. Eliyahu Klugman (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1992), 46-47, 87, and Moshe D. Sherman, “Bernard Illowy and Nineteenth Century American Orthodoxy” (PhD diss., Yeshiva University, 1991), 243. It is worth noting, however, that Illowy served as Hirsch’s American correspondent for the latter’s *Jeschurun*. On this, see Moshe Davis, *Yahadut Amerika Be-Hitpathutah* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1951), 323.

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Samson Raphael Hirsch.²¹ Similarly, there is evidence that Moses Aronson, who came to New York's Congregation Beth Hamidrash on Allen Street in 1861, corresponded with Hirsch on halakhic matters.²² Still, Aronson, a Lithuanian-trained rabbi, was not interested in spreading *Torah im Derekh Erets*. Aside from Lyon and Leeser, then, the only other significant source available to the first generations of America's German Jews that addressed Hirsch and his ideas was Henry S. Morais's *Eminent Israelites of the Nineteenth Century*, published in 1880. Derived from research of European encyclopedias and biographical notices, Morais's work claimed to be the first English-language biographical dictionary of one hundred prominent Jewish thinkers and leaders of that century. Five of the 366 pages in the book were reserved for an entry on Hirsch, his literary output, and an account of his fight against reformers.²³

Nonetheless, these few attempts to introduce Hirsch to American Jews were muted by the pervasiveness of religious reform in the nineteenth century. Isaac Mayer Wise, no doubt America's most famous Jewish clergyman at the time, favored the ideas of Abraham Geiger and Frankel over those of Hirsch. After reviewing Leeser's translation of Hirsch in the *Occident*, Wise dismissed Hirsch's traditionalism as "hyper-orthodoxical" and out of touch with *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Jewish scholarship of that day. "We must candidly confess, that we are at a loss to comprehend how a man as highly reputed and learned as Rabbi H. could publish an article so entirely unfounded on the history of Judaism, and so void of all scientific basis."²⁴ And, as Leeser reported on Hirsch's denunciation of *Darkhei ha-Mishmah*, Wise took satisfaction in Hirsch's and his allies' exceptions to Frankel's work. "Let Frankel thank heaven that his work meets not with their favor," wrote Wise. "If it would, it certainly would be good for the museum of antiquities."²⁵ That same year, another outspoken American scholar, Jonas Bondi (who would later become

²¹ See I.J. Benjamin, *Three Years in America, 1859-1862* vol. 1 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956), 320-33.

²² Moses Aronson, *Mata'ei Moshe* vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Sulaman, 1878), 13b. For another example of Hirsch's influence on religious rulings in America, see David and Tamar de Sola Pool, *An Old Faith in the New World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 311.

²³ Henry Samuel Morais, *Eminent Israelites of the Nineteenth Century: A Series of Biographical Sketches* (Philadelphia: Edward Stern & Co., 1880), 138-42.

²⁴ Isaac Mayer Wise, "Reply to Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, of Frankfurt o. M.," *The Israelite* (December 8, 1854): 172. Compare this with the remarks of radical reformer, David Einhorn. See "Der Streit zwischen Hirsch und Frankel," *Sinai* 6 (June 1861): 148-52.

²⁵ "Protests of the Rev. Dr. Bondi," *The Israelite* (April 5, 1861): 316-17.

Wise's father-in-law), publicly denounced Hirsch for the latter's harsh opposition to the "positive and historical Judaism" of Zacharias Frankel. For Hirsch to condemn a superior scholar like Frankel, Bondi maintained, was tantamount to the mistakes of those who burned the works of the peerless Maimonides in the thirteenth century.²⁶

The reformers' dim view of Hirsch undoubtedly contributed to the Jewish media's poor coverage of Hirsch's passing, a moment one might have expected a community of Orthodox Jews to hail the rabbi's contributions to its traditionalist cause.²⁷ That Wise did not memorialize Hirsch in his *American Israelite* is unsurprising.²⁸ Yet the lack of rigorous coverage by more traditionalist Jewish newspapers is very noticeable and striking. Although they were fewer in number, traditional Jews controlled a large stake of the late nineteenth century Jewish press.²⁹ But Hirsch's death was passed over by their newspapers. For example, there is no mention of Hirsch's death or funeral in the Yiddish press, including the *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, New York's unofficial (Eastern European) Orthodox daily. Philadelphia's *Jewish Exponent* reprinted an excerpt from Morais's book below the following short remarks: "A cable dispatch a few days since brought the painful news of the demise of the venerated Rabbi at Frankfort-on-the-Main, at the age of eighty-one years. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch stood foremost among the orthodox leaders of Judaism in Germany, and his name and work were highly respected by all sides."³⁰ The *American Hebrew* briefly mourned Hirsch, describing him as "a prophet and a leader of the revolt against the methods of the reformers in Germany."³¹ This short notice was the kindest eulogy offered in America's Jewish press.

Space was made to remember Hirsch in the columns of the *Jewish Messenger* but the editors' eulogy read more like a critical review of his

²⁶ Jonas Bondi, "Dr. Z. Frankle [sic] of Breslau," *The Occident* 19 (May 1861): 89. See also "Protest of Rev. Dr. Bondi," *The Israelite* (April 5, 1861): 316.

²⁷ Ironically, perhaps the most original and praiseworthy tribute to Hirsch was published in the non-Jewish media. See "The Two Hirsches," *The Boston Independent* (January 17, 1889): 11.

²⁸ Actually, there is one unceremonious and indirect acknowledgement of Hirsch's death in Wise's newspaper. See *American Israelite* (January 12, 1889): 4.

²⁹ See Robert Singerman, "The American Jewish Press, 1823-1983: A Bibliographic Survey of Research and Studies," *American Jewish History* 73 (June 1984): 424-25, and Jonathan D. Sarna, "A History of Jewish Journalism in the United States," in *Yesterday's News Tomorrow: Inside American Jewish Journalism* (New York: iUniverse, 2004), 325.

³⁰ "Samson Raphael Hirsch," *Jewish Exponent* (January 11, 1889): 5.

³¹ *American Hebrew* (January 4, 1889): 161. See also the newspaper's misinformed report on the appointment of Hirsch's successor in Frankfurt, "Successor to Hirsch," *American Hebrew* (January 17, 1890): 242.

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life. The editorial first denounced the liberal Jewish leader Geiger, whose reformist principles reportedly led his students to “abandon everything Jewish save for the Kaddish.” Hirsch, whose traditionalism obfuscated any and all opportunities for developing a progressive philosophy, was also a failure in the eyes of the journalists. According to the *Messenger*, the only German Jewish ideologue who truly succeeded in his mission was Frankel. In the words of this newspaper, Frankel “has ushered in a new era of critical research and popular enlightenment among the Jews of Germany and every civilized land.” These journalists seized upon Hirsch’s death as a moment to excoriate his “incomplete” legacy:

It must frankly be stated that Hirsch failed to realize the promise of his early years. He succeeded, it is true, in establishing a strong community in Frankfurt, but not in popularizing his views among any large number. The debates and brochures of the day aroused fresh life in Jewish circles, and stimulated a good deal of literary activity. But ... [t]he future belongs to the school which shall strive to reconcile past and present with firmness, honesty, reverence, and knowledge. And if after patient, long-continued effort, such reconciliation is impossible, they shall not hide their failure behind a mask of phrases, but avow it openly. We, too, are as near to God as were Moses and the prophets. Judaism must be voice, not echo, in the coming age.³²

All this indicates that, while Hirsch as a popular German traditionalist was known to the deflating American Orthodox community of the nineteenth century, his teachings were not well received — a fact that would make it difficult for the Hirschian legacy to gain traction in the succeeding decades. The American Jewish press’ coverage of Hirsch’s death paled in comparison to the English media’s. In Britain, the first notice of the scholar’s death was printed in the *Jewish Chronicle* of London. The newspaper remembered Hirsch as a leader whose “ultra-orthodoxy was a conspicuous element in his character, as was his charitable disposition, which found expression in many acts of beneficence.”³³ London’s more Orthodox-leaning *Jewish Standard* provided its constituents with an elaborate account of Hirsch’s funeral. The British newspaper described the scene: “16 schoolboys, who bore the works of the Rabbi ...

³² “Samson R. Hirsch,” *Jewish Messenger* (January 11, 1889): 4. In fairness to the newspaper, it should be noted that seven years earlier the editors mentioned Hirsch’s “golden wedding anniversary.” See “Personal,” *Jewish Messenger* (November 18, 1881): 5.

³³ “Death of Rabbi Hirsch of Frankfurt,” *Jewish Chronicle* (January 4, 1889): 12.

Then followed the hearse behind which walked the members of the family of the deceased. 520 boys of the 'Real Schule' and 300 of the 'Volks Schule' came next, and behind them were the various rabbis."³⁴ The newspaper listed the names of two dozen rabbis and German delegates who participated in the ceremony and then summarized the contents of a number of the graveside eulogies.

No doubt, much of the reason for *The Jewish Standard's* far more detailed reporting on Hirsch's death compared to the American press' had to do with its closer proximity to Central Europe. Yet geography alone cannot account for the imbalance. Adjacent to the *Jewish Standard's* article on Hirsch's funeral was a report of the Sabbath sermon of Hermann Adler, the future Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, honoring Hirsch, and he was likely not the only one to speak about Hirsch from the pulpit that weekend.³⁵ Britain became fertile soil for Hirschians long before the rise of Nazism. One Orthodox newspaper there took an interest in Hirsch in 1841 when it described Hirsch as "well known not less by his able writings than his pious exertions in defence of orthodox Judaism."³⁶ Hirsch ingratiated himself further with English Jewry when he campaigned—albeit unsuccessfully—for the British Chief Rabbinate in 1844.³⁷ Later on, shortly after Hirsch's death, Jews' College's S.A. Hirsch (no relation) published a lengthy essay in *Jewish Quarterly Review* on Hirsch's philosophy, the first extensive treatment of the German leader in English.³⁸ In addition, Hirsch's son-in-law, Michael Levy, as well as the Hungarian-trained Rabbi Avigdor Schonfeld, who became the head of North London's Beth Hamidrash, were influential in transporting Hirsch's teachings to England.³⁹

Contrast this to the situation in America, where few rabbis could or would do the same in tribute for Hirsch. By and large, the Orthodox rabbinate did not establish itself in the United States until Eastern European traditionalists organized themselves in earnest during the beginning of

³⁴ "The Funeral of Rabbi Hirsch," *The Jewish Standard* (January 11, 1889): 5.

³⁵ Dr. H Adler on the Life Work of Hirsch," *The Jewish Standard* (January 11, 1889): 5.

³⁶ "Foreign and Colonial Intelligence," *Voice of Jacob* (December 24, 1841): 55.

³⁷ See favorable testimonials of Hirsch in "Election of Chief Rabbi," *Voice of Jacob* (August 30, 1844): 210-11.

³⁸ S.A. Hirsch, "Jewish Philosophy of Religion and Samson Raphael Hirsch," *JQR* 2 (January 1890): 109-38.

³⁹ See Julius Carlebach, "The Impact of German Jews on Anglo-Jewry—Orthodoxy, 1850-1950," in *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German-speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. Werner E. Mosse (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991), 405-23; and Grunfeld, *Three Generations*, 35-37.

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the twentieth century.⁴⁰ There were exceptions like Bernard Illowy, Moshe Weinberger, and Abraham Ash of the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol, but these were rare cases.⁴¹ Without a significant presence of scholars and teachers, America's Orthodox Jews were far too religiously illiterate to access the writings of someone as sophisticated as Samson Raphael Hirsch. The lone exception was Bernard Drachman, who dedicated much of his early writing career to the promulgation of Hirsch's teachings in the United States.

Upon graduating from Columbia College in 1882, Drachman was awarded a scholarship from the Temple Emanu-El Theological Seminary (Reform) to study at Frankel's rabbinical seminary. During one particular vacation from his studies, the young rabbinical student traveled to Frankfurt and had occasion to meet Hirsch, in Drachman's words "the inspired and inspiring leader in Israel."⁴²

When he returned to New York in 1885, Drachman began his transformation to a fully-identifying Orthodox rabbi.⁴³ And, through his various pulpits and rabbinical students, first at the Jewish Theological Seminary and later at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), he singlehandedly brought German Orthodox ideas to the United States at the end of the century.⁴⁴ Not surprisingly, therefore, Drachman's was the finest published eulogy for Hirsch in America. His essay, appearing in B'nai B'rith's *Menorah* magazine, announced that a "prince and a great man has fallen in Israel." While he acknowledged Hirsch's opponents and controversies, Drachman stressed that Hirsch's commitment to authentic versions of "Jewish truth, Jewish faithfulness and Jewish idealism" were to be lauded and admired by his followers as well as adversaries.⁴⁵ "He covered Orthodoxy with glory by proving that the old synagogue ritual, so bitterly attacked and described, not only best

⁴⁰ Nathan M. Kaganoff, "American Rabbinic Books Published in Palestine," in *A Bicentennial Festschrift for Jacob Rader Marcus*, ed. Bertram Wallace Korn (New York: Ktav, 1976), 235-36.

⁴¹ See David Ellenson, "A Jewish Legal Decision by Rabbi Bernard Illowy of New Orleans and Its Discussion in Nineteenth Century Europe," *American Jewish History* 69 (December 1979): 174-95.

⁴² Bernard Drachman, *The Unfailing Light: Memoirs of an American Rabbi* (New York: Rabbinical Council of America, 1948), 123-24.

⁴³ For an interesting account of Drachman's transformation, see Judah David Eisenstein, *Otzer Zichronotai* (New York, 1929), 59.

⁴⁴ For biographical information on Drachman, see Moshe D. Sherman, *Orthodox Judaism in America: A Biographical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 51-53.

⁴⁵ Bernard Drachman, *The Menorah* (January-June 1889): 151.

expressed the true spirit of Judaism,” averred Drachman, “but could be carried out in a highly dignified, impressive and aesthetic manner.”⁴⁶

Ten years later, Drachman made his major contribution to Hirsch’s legacy when he translated the *Neunzehn Briefe über Judenthum* into English. The 1899 translation of Hirsch’s opus, *Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel*, was a long time in coming, especially considering that Abraham Geiger’s *Judaism and Its History* was made available to English-speaking Americans as early as 1866.⁴⁷ The original German publication in 1836 signified Hirsch’s emergence as a spokesman for a brand of Orthodoxy that could compete with Reform in the post-Emancipation era. “Education, indeed, is not lacking,” Hirsch declared about Orthodox youngsters. “Our youth are made thoroughly capable of contending vigorously in the struggle for bread; handiwork, commerce, art, science—all of these are carefully inculcated and the mind developed.”⁴⁸ Just as the book had furthered Hirsch’s goals in Germany, Drachman hoped that an English translation of Hirsch’s polemical tract would spur his own fight against American Reform. Drachman’s work was apparently well received and continued to be a staple in Jewish homes. When it was reprinted some forty years later, a reviewer testified that the English translation “still has a fascinating appeal to many in Israel’s household.”⁴⁹ In addition, Drachman authored the entry for Samson Raphael Hirsch for English-language *Jewish Encyclopedia*, completed in 1906.⁵⁰

Drachman’s support for Hirsch’s legacy continued into the twentieth century. Knowledge of this one text, no matter how emblematic of Hirsch’s philosophies, was insufficient for Drachman. He deeply hoped that his Orthodox rabbinical students would read the balance of Hirsch’s writings in their German original. In order that “the American Orthodox Rabbi may render the best service to the greatest number of his co-religionists,” wrote Drachman, “it is essential that his linguistic knowledge, outside of the Hebrew which is, of course, most fundamental, be not restricted to the vernacular but shall include the German, either in its classical or Yiddish form, preferably in both.” With this, American Orthodox clergy would be able to teach

⁴⁶ Ibid., 161.

⁴⁷ Jonathan D. Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture, 1888-1988* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 4; and Michael A. Meyer, “German-Jewish Identity in Nineteenth Century America,” in *Toward Modernity: The European Mode*, ed. Jacob Katz (New York: Transaction, 1987), 254.

⁴⁸ Hirsch, *Nineteen Letters*, 175.

⁴⁹ Joshua Bloch, “The Year’s Bookshelf,” *Jewish Book Annual* 2 (1943-44): 11.

⁵⁰ Bernard Drachman, “Hirsch, Samson Raphael,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 417.

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the principles of Hirsch, “the heroic champion of Orthodox Judaism in Germany.”⁵¹

Aside from Drachman, very few Orthodox leaders actively sought to spread Hirsch’s teachings in America during the first decades of the twentieth century, even as thousands of traditionalist rabbis and laypeople left Europe to replant their families on American soil. This was primarily the case because this massive wave of immigration originated from Eastern Europe, where Hirsch’s name was hardly known in many Jewish sectors. To offer a sharp contrast, America’s Orthodox Jews sought to memorialize another leading rabbinic figure from Europe who died about six years earlier than Hirsch, Israel Salanter. The emerging Eastern European community in Harlem established Congregation Bnei Israel Salanter Ansei Samut in 1885 and later founded the Rabbi Israel Salanter Talmud Torah in 1909.⁵² In the case of Salanter, several of his students immigrated to America, most notably Jacob Joseph, New York’s so-called chief rabbi, beginning in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Salanter’s students and other Eastern European émigrés who belonged to the Musar school continued to settle in the United States until the 1930s.⁵³

That members of Hirsch’s German Orthodox community did not settle in America during the nineteenth century obviously precluded a reception in America similar to the kind experienced by Salanter. Moreover, the immobility of *Torah im Derekh Erets* in the eastern sections of Europe also impaired the transmission of Hirschian teachings to America. This warrants explanation. Several biographers of Hirsch have been quick to point out that Hirsch maintained correspondence with Israel Salanter and Isaac Elhanan Spektor. However, the fact that these Eastern European rabbinic elites met and respected Hirsch does not, in reality, support a claim that Hirsch’s works reached his coreligionists in the east. The simple truth is that Hirsch was introduced to these prominent rabbis while vacationing at a common site on the Lithuanian seashore. Hirsch’s trips away from Germany had little to do with communal bridge building; they were, instead, acts of salubrity. While still a young man, Hirsch contracted malaria and suffered chronic bouts of illness for the remainder of his life. As he grew older, he adhered to the prevailing medical opinion

⁵¹ Bernard Drachman, “The German Language in Jewish Life and Culture,” *Masmid* (1932): 46-47.

⁵² See “Directory of Organizations,” *American Jewish Yearbook* 2 (1900): 353-54; and Jeffrey S. Gurock, *When Harlem was Jewish, 1870-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 109-10).

⁵³ Hillel Goldberg, “Israel Salanter and *Orbot Zaddikim*: Restructuring Musar Literature,” *Tradition* 23 (Summer 1988): 37, n.8.

that the Baltic Sea could remedy his infirmed body. Thus, in 1877, Hirsch complained to Seligman Baer Bamberger—his German Orthodox rabbinic colleague and ideological opponent of *Austritt*—about his suffering health and “frequent pauses for rest.”⁵⁴ Toward the end of his life, Hirsch prefaced a responsum to a correspondent with an apology for his long delay in writing, explaining that he had been ill for two years, especially during the summertime.⁵⁵ It was due to these trips that Hirsch came to know Salanter and engaged Spektor with several isolated projects.⁵⁶ Therefore, while it is significant for Hirsch’s biography that he interacted with specific members of the Lithuanian rabbinic aristocracy, this point says little about Hirsch’s reputation in that region.

More indicative of the reality is an oft-quoted letter from Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, a German scholar and Proto-Zionist, whose significant influence on eastern Jews made him an important liaison between the two regions. In it, Kalischer listed a handful of Germany’s rabbinic leaders who championed the fight against Reform, but left out Samson Raphael Hirsch.⁵⁷ Without the help of Kalischer and others to spread his ideas, Hirsch remained relatively unknown to Eastern Europe’s Jews during his lifetime. In the subsequent decades when his followers, particularly Jacob Rosenheim, engaged in the establishment of the Agudath Israel, a political organization with designs on forming a continental union for Orthodox Jews, Hirsch’s name was mentioned with more frequency than before.⁵⁸ The outbreak of World War I once again severely limited the dissemination of Hirschian teachings, which remained relatively unread until World War II and the destruction of European Jewry.

Under these circumstances, it is no wonder that virtually none of the Eastern European immigrants to America, even those whose ideologies closely matched Hirsch’s *Torah im Derekh Erets* platform, thought of

⁵⁴ Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Collected Writings: Jewish Communal Life and Independent Orthodoxy* vol. VI (New York: Feldheim, 1997), 314.

⁵⁵ Hirsch, *Responsa Shemesh Marpeh*, 21.

⁵⁶ Spektor asked Hirsch to write an essay to counteract a campaign launched by Tsarist Russia against the Talmud in 1884. See Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Judaism Eternal: Selected Essays from the Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch* vol. I, trans. Isadore Grunfeld (London: Soncino Press, 1956), 155, n.1. Although the project never reached completion, the former also encouraged Moses Zalman Aronsohn of Kovno to translate Hirsch’s Bible commentary.

⁵⁷ Zvi Kalischer, *Ha-Ketavim Ha-Tsiyyonim Shel ha-Rav Zvi Kalischer*, ed. Zvi Kloyzner (Jerusalem: Mosad Ha-Rav Kook, 1947), 216. For a possible reason for Hirsch omission, see Jacob Katz, *Leumiyyut Yehudit: Masot u-Mekbharim* (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriyyah ha-Tsiyyonit, 1979), 286-87.

⁵⁸ Morgenstern, *From Frankfurt to Jerusalem*, 43-45.

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Hirsch when planning to rebuild Orthodoxy in the United States. One rare but very significant exception was Bernard Revel, president of RIETS and founder of Yeshiva College. While enrolled as a law student at Temple University, Revel penned an article for Philadelphia's Jewish newspaper to commemorate the centenary of Hirsch's birth. Revel portrayed Hirsch as "a powerful man [called upon] to steer Judaism through the rough waters" of Emancipation. To do this, Hirsch would have to strike a balance between modernizing Jewish practice and completely reforming it. "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch also was in favor of reform," Revel therefore contended, "but with him it was the reform of the Jews, not of Judaism." While he extolled Hirsch, one detects Revel's reservations about fully embracing Hirsch's philosophy as an acceptable one for America in the early twentieth century. Never in his essay does Revel describe how American Jewry might learn from his teachings. "His long and holy life, rich in lasting achievements," Revel wrote, "is the best proof of the truth and excellence of his method, and if any man was deserving of being termed divine, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch was that man."⁵⁹ But Revel did not move his discussion beyond that point.

Moreover, although one Jewish newspaper described Revel as an heir to Hirsch's modern Jewish thought, it cannot be said that the inspiration for Revel's modern seminary was drawn from Hirsch.⁶⁰ With the exception of the aforementioned piece, Hirsch does not appear anywhere else in Revel's published writings. And while, generally speaking, Revel much preferred to cite from talmudic sources rather than contemporary texts, it was likely that the similar cultural milieus of late nineteenth century Germany and early twentieth century America, rather than Hirsch himself, compelled Revel, a brilliant autodidact, to implement comparable educational programs to the ones espoused by adherents of *Torah im Derekh Erets*.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Bernard Revel, "Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: In Honor of the Centenary of His Birth," *Jewish Exponent* (June 19, 1908): 1.

⁶⁰ "A New Type of Leader," *Yiddishes Tageblatt*, December 12, 1915, 1.

⁶¹ Revel's biographer probably underestimates Hirsch's influence, minor as it may have been, on Revel. See Aaron Rothkoff, *Bernard Revel: Builder of American Jewish Orthodoxy* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1972), 72. See also Jacob J. Schacter, "Torah u-Madda Revisited: The Editor's Introduction," *Torah u-Madda Journal* 1 (1989): 18, n. 14. Interestingly, at the same time that Revel was writing, the *American Israelite* declared that in America "there may arise, in due time, such a thing as the fashionable Orthodox synagog [sic]." However, the newspaper concluded, "before any such movement, however, assumes importance we shall have to have our Samson Raphael Hirsch to breathe new life into the old bones." See "The Future of Jewish Reform in America," *American Israelite* (December 3, 1908): 4.

Between Revel's arrival on the American scene and World War II, the rabbis in the best positions to push for Hirschian philosophy in the United States were Leo Jung of Manhattan's Jewish Center, Phillip Klein of Congregation Ohab Zedek and Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz, head of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath. Jung was the editor and primary writer of the *Jewish Library* book series. Begun in 1928, the first five books of the eight-volume series, focusing on Jewish values and ideas for the modern individual, are sprinkled with citations from Hirsch's German works, as Jung and the other modern writers of the series made use of Hirsch's enlightened spirit to convey a modern message of Orthodox Judaism.⁶²

Jung encountered the works of German thinkers, Hirsch's among them, when he studied at the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin.⁶³ But even preceding that time, Jung was exposed to Hirschian ideas by his father, Meir Zvi Jung. Although the elder Jung never studied under Hirsch, his son testified to the fact that "Samson R. Hirsch had inspired [Meir Jung's] educational work."⁶⁴ Leo Jung followed in the footsteps of his father as an exponent of Hirschian ideas through his publications and from his Manhattan pulpit where he frequently discussed Hirsch in his Sabbath sermons.⁶⁵ Further, like Hirsch, Jung unabashedly declared himself an anti-Zionist and noted this frequently, no matter if it made him less popular among the larger sector of America's Orthodox Zionists.⁶⁶

All this notwithstanding, Jung's most substantial contributions to spreading Hirsch's legacy came later in his career, when he edited two of the final three biographical volumes of *The Jewish Library*. The book series aimed "to preserve some very precious and too little known aspects of our recent history."⁶⁷ The sixth volume, *Jewish Leaders*, featured an article by Isaac Breuer on the philosophical outlook of Samson Raphael

⁶² See, for example, Leo Jung, "What is Orthodox Judaism?," in *The Jewish Library* vol. II, ed. Leo Jung (New York: Bloch, 1930), 115.

⁶³ Marc Lee Raphael, "Rabbi Leo Jung and the Americanization of Orthodox Judaism: A Biographical Essay," in *Reverence, Righteousness, and Rahamanut: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung*, ed. Jacob J. Schacter (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 1992), 31.

⁶⁴ Leo Jung, *The Path of a Pioneer: The Autobiography of Leo Jung* (London: Soncino Press, 1980), 20.

⁶⁵ Raphael, "Rabbi Leo Jung and the Americanization of Orthodox Judaism," 43.

⁶⁶ Milton R. Konvitz, *Nine American Jewish Thinkers* (New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers, 2000), 128.

⁶⁷ Leo Jung, Preface, *Guardians of Our Heritage, 1724-1953*, ed. Leo Jung (New York: Bloch, 1958), v.

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Hirsch.⁶⁸ In the very next volume, *Guardians of Our Heritage*, Jung published a more extensive piece on Hirsch, written by Isaac Breuer's son, Mordechai Breuer.⁶⁹ Both essays, full of content on Hirsch's life and philosophies, were the first since the end of the nineteenth century to provide America's Orthodox Jews with an expansive view of Hirsch and his ideas. Unquestionably, it was Jung's devotion and fascination with Hirsch that moved him to include biographical pieces of him twice, more than any other historical figure included in *The Jewish Library*.

In contrast to Jung, another Upper West Side rabbi was far less successful, if it was ever his intention, in expanding Hirsch's sphere of influence to New York's Jewish scene. Born in Baratchka, Hungary, Phillip Klein studied at the Hildesheimer Seminary and earned a doctorate at the University of Vienna before coming to America in 1891.⁷⁰ It is also instructive to know that Klein's wife, Julie, was a granddaughter of Hirsch. Upon Klein's death in 1926, *The American Hebrew* remembered him as "a disciple of that trend of Judaism which was represented by Samson Raphael Hirsch."⁷¹ Yet, that few Hirschians wrote about Klein, during his lifetime and in the decades after his passing, indicates that he made minimal contribution to establishing a lasting American legacy for Hirsch. What contribution Klein did make is too difficult to measure. Unfortunately, few of Klein's sermons have been preserved and, since he did not engage much in the way of scholarship, the extent of his efforts to perpetuate Hirsch's teachings is impossible to know.⁷² What we do know is that, contrary to Hirsch, who believed strongly that sermons should be delivered in the vernacular of the host country, Klein, once in America, delivered his in Yiddish and Hungarian.⁷³

⁶⁸ Isaac Breuer, "Samson Raphael Hirsch," 163-77.

⁶⁹ Mordechai Breuer, "Samson Raphael Hirsch, in *Guardians of Our Heritage*, 265-99.

⁷⁰ On Klein's connection to Hildesheimer and his deployment of the latter's legacy in America, see Gil Graff, "Toward an Appreciation of the American Legacy of Rabbi Esriel Hildesheimer: The U.S. Rabbinate of Three Hildesheimer Students," *Modern Judaism* 31 (May 2011): 173-77.

⁷¹ "Dr. Phillip Klein Dies," *The American Hebrew* (March 26, 1926): 680.

⁷² Nancy Isaacs Klein, *Heritage of Faith: Two Pioneers of Judaism in America* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1987), 39. Rabbi Isaiah Levy, a descendent of Hirsch, succeeded Levy at Ohab Zedek but he died just six years later, in 1931. See Kerry M. Olitzky, *The American Synagogue: A Historical Dictionary and Sourcebook* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 254-55.

⁷³ Jeffrey S. Gurock, "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886-1983," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 35 (November 1983): 121.

Even more difficult to assess, as far as spreading the word of Hirsch is concerned, is Shraga Feivel Mendelovitz. Despite vocal opposition from his Eastern European colleagues, Mendelovitz taught Hirsch's writings to his students at Torah Vodaath and hired likeminded educators to teach at his school.⁷⁴ And, like Bernard Drachman, Mendelovitz, according to his biographer, encouraged his students to learn German in order to study Hirsch's original writings.⁷⁵ Mention should also be made of the support and encouragement lent by Mendelovitz to Philipp Feldheim, when the latter established his first bookstore on Manhattan's Lower East Side in 1939. Feldheim was most instrumental in disseminating English translations of Hirsch's writings in America, but not until a sizable German Orthodox community emerged in America.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, Mendelovitz's lasting influence on Torah Vodaath was mitigated by Eastern European elements that took control of the school and steered the institution away from Western thinkers like Hirsch.⁷⁷

In fact, it is a point of tremendous irony that, notwithstanding the presence of Drachman, Jung, Klein, and Mendelovitz, the most articulate and scholarly presentation of Hirsch's life and works in America during the first decades of the twentieth century was delivered by Max Heller, the Reform leader of Temple Sinai in New Orleans. Heller presented a paper before the Central Conference of American Rabbis at the organization's annual meeting in 1908.⁷⁸ The talk—later published in the organization's yearbook—addressed Hirsch's attitudes toward Jewish nationalism, education, Hebrew philology and German modernity. Conversant in Hirsch's major works and commentaries, Heller suggested that events in Hirsch's life likely contributed to the formation of his unique Orthodox *weltanschauung*.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ William B. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 356, n.22.

⁷⁵ Yonoson Rosenblum, *Reb Shraga Feivel: The Life and Time of Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz the Architect of Torah in America* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 2001), 198.

⁷⁶ Shnayer Z. Leiman, "Montague Lawrence Marks: In a Jewish Bookstore," *Tradition* 25 (Fall 1989): 60.

⁷⁷ Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva*, 302-4.

⁷⁸ Max Heller, "Samson Raphael Hirsch: In Honor of the Centenary of His Birth," *Yearbook of CCAR* 18 (1908): 179-216. See also Bobbie Malone, *Rabbi Max Heller: Reformer, Zionist, Southerner, 1860-1929* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 124-25.

⁷⁹ Also included in this essay are the highly critical remarks of Hebrew Union College President Kaufmann Kohler, who was educated in Hirsch's Frankfurt day school. Kohler also spoke about Hirsch after the latter's passing. See an advertisement for the sermon in *American Hebrew* (January 4, 1889): 169. On Kohler's relationship with Hirsch, see Kaufmann Kohler, *Studies, Addresses, and Personal Papers* (New York:

All told, despite the efforts of the Orthodox rabbis mentioned above, Hirsch's teachings remained relatively unknown to America's growing Eastern European Orthodox community. A survey of articles published in the first twenty years of *The Jewish Forum's* publication, a very popular and substantial American monthly that featured articles on Orthodox Judaism and its exponents, reveals just one essay that touched upon Hirsch's life and ideas.⁸⁰ Still, it is unlikely that most of America's Orthodox Jews agreed with the Jewish Theological Seminary's Louis Ginzberg, who reportedly was of the opinion that Hirsch did not contribute "significantly to the development of Jewish thought."⁸¹ Rather, Orthodox Jews knew of Hirsch but could not access his German works.

If Orthodox Jews had misgivings about Hirsch's teachings, they would have been in the realm of Zionism, an ideology to which the overwhelming majority of the Orthodox community subscribed.⁸² In addition, Hirsch's ideas were invisible to this group of Jews who had grown up in Eastern Europe without hearing his name mentioned by their rabbis and leaders. Without someone to translate his works into Yiddish or Hebrew (or English for their children), Hirsch's books remained closed to them.⁸³ It was not until the arrival of Joseph Breuer to Manhattan's Washington Heights neighborhood in 1939 that America's Orthodox Jews would finally study the teachings of Samson Raphael Hirsch, as they first became widely available in English translation. A grandson of Hirsch, Breuer would be the one chiefly responsible for the proliferation and the

Hebrew Union College, 1931), 475; and Jacob Haberman, "Kaufmann Kohler and his Teacher Samson Raphael Hirsch," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 43 (January 1998): 73-102. Another Reform rabbi, Montague N.A. Cohen of Colorado, honored Hirsch in the *American Israelite* in 1908 by comparing Hirsch pragmatism to Isaac Mayer Wise's work in America. See Montague N.A. Cohen, "Samson Raphael Hirsch," *American Israelite* (June 18, 1908): 4.

⁸⁰ H.A. Goodman, "The Agudath Israel—After Twenty Years," *The Jewish Forum* 16 (March 1933): 21-24. On *The Jewish Forum*, see Ira Robinson and Maxine Jacobson, "When Orthodoxy was not as Chic as it is Today": *The Jewish Forum* and American Modern Orthodoxy," *Modern Judaism* 31 (October 2011): 285-313.

⁸¹ Eli Ginzberg, *Keeper of the Law: Louis Ginzberg* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1966), 39.

⁸² Jeffrey S. Gurock, "American Orthodox Organizations in Support of Zionism, 1880-1930," in *Zionism and Religion*, eds. Shmuel Almog, Jehuda Reinharz and Anita Shapira (Hanover: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 219-34.

⁸³ This is a point of irony since Hirsch claimed fluency in English when he applied for the position of British Chief Rabbi in 1844. See *Report of the Committee for the Office of Chief Rabbi; with an Appendix Containing Abstracts of Testimonials, Etc.* (London: John Wertheimer and Co., 1844). The full report can be viewed in "Chief Rabbi's Elections," ACC/2805/01/02/002/001, London Metropolitan Archives.

first genuine attempt to transplant the Hirschian legacy in the United States. In the meantime, American Orthodoxy paved its way without raising Hirsch as its “intellectual godfather,” a point recognized by *The Israelite* in 1908. As traditional Judaism languished in an era defined by its progressivism and social gospel, the Reform newspaper predicted a resurgence of Orthodox life in America. But, the newspaper concluded, “before any such movement, however, assumes importance we shall have to have our Samson Raphael Hirsch to breathe new life into the old bones.”⁸⁴ American Judaism did in fact witness an Orthodox revival at this time, but it was a revival inspired by Eastern Europeans who were far more interested in recreating the Lithuanian-style yeshivot than bringing Hirsch to America’s Jews.

⁸⁴ “The Future of Jewish Reform in America,” *American Israelite* (December 3, 1908): 4.