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## “FOR MY GRANDFATHER HAS LEFT ME . . . .”

**H**ow can a grandson eulogize his grandfather? How dare he assume such a task? Will not fear and awe overtake him? Would it not be preferable to wrap himself in the silence of sorrow and the solace of tears? Can he really hope to accurately portray the departed persona or faithfully describe his personality? The eulogy must be a full and accurate description of the deceased, his personality and acts, the wonderful and unique within him. But the grandson could observe the great creative powers of his beloved grandfather only through the blurry vision of childhood, the veil of youth cast upon his eyes throughout the period of his elder's zenith. Yet, when the grandson matured and ripened, ready to receive his grandfather's bounty, it was too late, for by then the elderly figure had already begun to withdraw, slowly receding from the younger generation. The grandson could see the present, but not the past. Though a glimpse of the tower-

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This *hesped* originally appeared in Hebrew in *Alon Shevut-Bogrim*, the alumni journal of Yeshivat Har Etzion, on the occasion of the Rav's first *Yahrtzeit*. Though urged by friends to publish an English translation and wanting to do the utmost to honor and respect the memory of my grandfather and *rebbe*, I nevertheless have certain misgivings which I have not been able to completely overcome. First, it would appear from the *Gemara* in *Yevamot* [79a; see also *Ketubot* 103b and *Yore De'ra* 394:2] that *hesped* should be performed only within the first twelve months of the *petira*, as the original indeed was. Second, though the formal halakhic problem can be overcome, since it should be understood to refer to an oral *hesped* as part of the process of grief and mourning, the underlying emotional truth that the period of a grieving obsession with the departed—no matter how great or how close—should not exceed twelve months, retains its validity. Thus, my involvement with the English version lacked the sense of immediacy and directness which accompanied the writing of the Hebrew original, which was a cathartic outpouring of a grieving soul struggling to comprehend and express its sense of loss. Despite these misgivings, which I feel a need to share with readers, it was decided to proceed and publish this *hesped* in the hope that it may strike a chord in some hearts and serve as reminder of he who was amongst us and is no longer here.

ing stature was still discernible, and although retrospection is a form of vision, can it possibly compare to direct contact with the power and intensity of the fully active years?

Furthermore, how can a grandson attempt to eulogize a grandfather who was a supreme master of Torah, a figure who expressed his great personality through force of intellect and breadth of vision as he attempted to penetrate the mysterious and the deep. Who can gather the strength to describe a grandfather who defined the art of eulogy as follows: "It is the duty of the eulogist to present a full, comprehensive description of the greatness of the departed, in reasoned tranquil categories, to stress all the mysterious wonder interwoven in the concrete personal reality. . . . The eulogist is an excellent educator, the agent of the cool quiet intellect, and also an artist representing the irrational, absurd experience. . . . The eulogist explains and interprets, illustrates and creates."<sup>1</sup> Can a grandson rush in, fearless of where he treads, to comply with these rigorous criteria, which have been imposed by his own grandfather, the greatest eulogist of the generation? Even if his inferior intellect supports him in this endeavor, will he be able to control his emotions in the face of his great loss? As soon as he begins to describe his grandfather, powerful feelings will overwhelm him as he remembers their warm and loving relationship and recollects fond memories of the many beautiful hours which they spent together. Moreover, were all these emotions to be controlled, the struggling grandson will, nevertheless, be overcome by a sense of disappointment and guilt for the Torah that he lost and the wisdom which he missed.

However, in spite of all this, how can one not eulogize and lament a grandfather such as the Rav *zt"l*, a genius of halakha and a giant of spirit, a figure belonging to the select group of the Sages of our Tradition (*Hakhmei haMesora*)? Both natural human feeling and the halakhic obligations regarding human dignity (*kevod ha-beriot*) and the honor of Torah (*kevod haTorah*) require me to set forth upon this endeavor. And though I may be unable to fulfill the task of faithfully portraying his image, the *Mishna* in *Pirkei Avot* has already taught us that a person may not shy away from his charge, even though it is unexpected of him to complete it.

## I

The *Gemara* in *Baba Batra* (59a) relates: "A pipe which drains water to the yard of one's neighbor and the owner of the roof tries to stop it up,

the owner of the yard can prevent him. . . . Rav Oshaya said he has the right to prevent him; Rav Hama said he does not have the right to prevent him. They went and asked Rav Bisa, who said he has the right to prevent him. Rami bar Hama said of him, "The threefold cord is not readily broken"—this is Rav Oshaya, the son of Rav Hama, the son of Rav Bisa." The *Tosafot* remark: "There were many such that they and their fathers and their fathers' fathers were outstanding scholars, yet this is not said of them; here, however, all three saw each other."

Thus, it was not merely the fact that three generations of the same family achieved Torah scholarship that so impressed Rami bar Hama, nor was his exclamation due to the uniqueness of this phenomenon. After all, there have been many such families. Rami bar Hama felt that he was witnessing something extraordinary. Rav Oshaya was not merely a member of the group of sages who were fortunate enough to be the sons and grandsons of learned scholars; it was rather that he embodied a special combination that contained the treasures and traditions of former generations. Old and new were integrated within him. His threefold cord wove together his father's Torah learning, fully absorbed and comprehended, with his own great native forces of innovation and creativity. In his youth, he learned Torah with his father and grandfather and debated with them weighty halakhic issues; delving into difficult passages together, he acquired their mode of learning as a lasting possession. Returning as an adult to these same *sugyot*, he was able to pour new content into them as result of the personal method which he had developed and perfected over the years. The unique strength of the threefold cord is not due to its additional thickness, but to its complexity; each thread adds a new dimension to the cord. Thus, he who builds his personality and learning by combining his native powers and individual approach with those of his fathers can attain a singular level that is not to be found in those who rely solely on their own powers or depend on those of their forebears.

It is the way of the world that a son takes over from his father. One generation passes on the tradition to its successor: "Instead of your ancestors will be your children, you will appoint them princes throughout the land" (Psalms 45:17). A child receives instruction from his father, a student from his teacher. Thus, the torch of traditional learning and scholarship is passed on from generation to generation. The passage in *Isaiah* 59:21, which the *Gemara* in *Baba Metsia* (85a) interprets as referring to Torah, describes and emphasizes this process: "And this shall be My covenant with them, said the Lord. My spirit which is upon you, and the words which I have placed in your mouth, shall not

be absent from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your children, nor from the mouth of your children's children—said the Lord—from now throughout all time.” No premium can be placed upon the centrality or importance of this transmission, about which God entered into a covenantal relationship with us. Studying with and teaching one's children are the foundation of our tradition, and thus, Torah remains rooted within families. *Tosafot* inform us that there have been many learned families throughout the course of our history. A succession of three generations, a grandfather, father and grandson, all Torah scholars, is an extremely important but not a particularly rare phenomenon and does not justify an exclamation of wonder. Generations may differ or they may resemble one another; what is common to them, though, is that each member is rooted within the Torah world of his time. Whether he applies and continues his learning method as he was trained or develops a different approach, each participant is an additional link in the chain of tradition, a continuation of the previous generation. “Perets begot Hetsron, Hetsron begot Ram, Ram begot Aminadav, Aminadav begot Nahshon, Nahshon begot. . . .” Generations come and go, but tradition remains forever.

Sometimes, though, instead of the usual thread attached to the previous one at its tip—the son taking the place of the father—a unique threefold cord presents itself. A person who carries both his own talents and those of the preceding generations appears. Not only his capacities, but also those of his ancestors are evident in him. Three generations are combined within one individual. The forces of the past and present ferment within him. He succeeds in breaking the barrier of the present as he weaves together elements of the past's mighty heritage with his own innovations. He does not merely reconstruct the past, nor does he simply cling to his ancestors' Torah. Although every fiber in the layers of his personality is capable of standing on its own, his unique power is created by the integration of all three elements in a single persona. When confronted with a Rav who uses the achievements of the past to create a new method and approach, who is able to draw from the past and impress a new stamp upon it, all shall rejoice and proclaim: “The threefold cord is not readily broken.”

Rav Oshaya was such a man. When Rami bar Hama came to the *bet midrash* and found Rav Oshaya ruling—in opposition to his father's opinion—that the owner of the yard has the right to prevent the pipe from being stopped up, he sent for the opinion of Rav Bisa, the grandfather. Rav Bisa determined that the pipe cannot be stopped up unilaterally. This caused Rami bar Hama to wonder: if this is his grandfather's

opinion, what is Rav Oshaya adding? Why doesn't he simply cite Rav Bisa's ruling? Does the addition of extra names add any weight to the ruling? He carefully reexamined the issue and understood; Rav Oshaya was not merely repeating his elder's opinion, he was expressing an independent view. A new perspective was being brought to the question. Though his conclusion was identical to his predecessor's, the rationale behind it reflected his own particular approach. Thus, the old and the new were combined to form a new method.

My grandfather, the Rav, was also such a figure. He, too, was an illustrious grandson, an outstanding product of his family's Brisker school. His mastery of the rigorous analytical method and innovative approach of the "Brisker *derekh*" was complete. A full-fledged member of the inner circle of Reb Chaim's children and grandchildren, he acquired the Brisker way of learning at a very young age. While yet a young boy whose wisdom far exceeded his years, he sent his *hiddushei Torah* to Reb Chaim himself, who proudly exhibited them to others. When he grew older, he engaged in an active correspondence with his uncle Reb Velvel, the Brisker Rav. But the supreme influence upon him in the formative learning years was, of course, the constant, uninterrupted years of study with his father, Reb Moshe Soloveichik, as they sat together day and night, clarifying most of the difficult passages in the Talmud. This marvelous relationship between father and son, linked together in heart and soul, which began in a tiny Byelorussian *shtetl* and remained constant until the day of Reb Moshe's death in New York, created a Torah giant, proficient and creative in the ways of his ancestors.

Though the Rav was born in Lithuania, he died in the United States; though commencing his studies in Chaslavitch, he ended them in Boston. Though clearly a Brisker scion, he was an independent personality who stood by himself, uniquely different from all who preceded him. A threefold cord interweaving the past and the present, the old and the new, Berlin with Brisk, Boston with Volozhin—such a figure was my grandfather, the Rav.

## II

The Rav was a many-faceted individual. A great scholar in many fields, he was a master of halakha and aggada, learning and philosophy, exoteric and esoteric wisdom. However, attempting to delineate his persona and to describe his spiritual world, we must emphasize the world

of Torah study and halakha as its prime mover. If there was one feature imprinted upon the depths of his soul, if there was a single primordial experience for the Rav, it was the study of *Torah li-shma*. If I had to describe my grandfather with two words, they would undoubtedly be “Halakhic Man.” He regarded himself as a teacher surrounded by students engaging in *Torah li-shma*, a Rav instructing his congregants in the details of halakhic *sugyot* as they all joined together to form the community of tradition. His self-image was neither that of the philosopher, communal leader, or author, even though all these were part of his personality and achievements. Before the holidays he would bless his students that they should be able to experience the *kedushat ha-yom* through the study of its *halakhot*. It was Torah study that supported him during the difficult years in the aftermath of his wife’s death, enabling his bleeding soul to find some repose. The enormous energy that he poured into teaching and disseminating Torah protected and preserved him; it may be said of this period that “the Torah of duress is what stood by me.” A particularly striking instance of how deeply ingrained Torah was in the Rav’s personality is worth relating. In the immediate aftermath of surgery, when medication loosened the grip of his stern, conscious self control and his inner self freely expressed itself, a series of solutions to difficult *Rambams* poured out! The qualities of Halakhic Man, so brilliantly depicted in his great essay, were firmly imprinted upon the depths of his soul.

Let us begin, therefore, with a description of his halakhic enterprise. The rigorous Brisker approach of strict analysis and clarification of concepts, well known throughout the modern Torah world, was masterfully continued and developed by the Rav. All areas of halakha were illuminated by his penetrating analysis. Issue after issue, from the beginning of the *Shas* to its end, were examined, taught, and interpreted.

Actually, he was not alone in this endeavor. Reb Chaim’s method, itself a combination of elements long existing in the world of halakha with the vigor and vitality of the new tools of systematic analysis and criticism, was securing for itself the central role in the Lithuanian Torah world. Although surrounded by only a handful of close students throughout most of his teaching career, Reb Chaim’s approach rapidly won over the hearts of the learning public. Despite encountering initial opposition on the part of the senior *rabbanim*, within a generation his method reigned supreme in the Lithuanian yeshivot. All those familiar with the works of the so-called “*Roshei Yeshivas* generation” are well acquainted with the Brisker influence. Thus, the Rav was a partner in an enterprise that many others were also participating in. [Some of the *hid-*

*dushei Torah* which he wrote as a youth and declined to publish, as befitting an authentic member of Brisk, were subsequently published by others who had independently arrived at similar conclusions.] Nevertheless, he was superb in this endeavor, producing Torah of the highest quality. An understanding of Reb Chaim's method and its characteristics will enable us to explain and demonstrate the Rav's achievements in this respect.

There are many ways to approach the methodology developed by the Rav's grandfather, Reb Chaim Soloveitchik of Brisk, and it is certainly not our intention here to provide a comprehensive analysis. However, if we limit ourselves to a single point, the core of the method consists in shifting the center of interest from the intent and goal of the halakhic ruling to its actual manifestation in practical terms (*nafka mina*). It is not a hidden rationale or biblical intention (*ta'ama di-kra*) that provides the point of origin for the discussion, but the phenomenon in and of itself. The student places his interest in the fruit of the tree rather than its roots. Thus, unsubstantiated hypotheses relating to hidden matters are eliminated and scholars are prevented from speculating about unverifiable issues which cannot be judged by concrete halakhic phenomena. Torah study is, therefore, placed upon firm ground and criticism established as the cornerstone of the learning activity. Purely speculative hypotheses (*sevarot*) are subordinated, as reasoning is required to account for halakhic manifestations in actual practice. Principles are not accepted unless they grow directly and organically out of the details in the *Gemara* and *Rambam* and are capable of being criticized by them. Disagreement among the *rishonim* must be explained, and if a theoretical distinction is suggested, it must provide a practical manifestation that illustrates the difference. There should be no phenomenon without an explanation and no explanation without a phenomenal expression.

This principle is obviously analogous to the scientific revolution of the early seventeenth century. Here, as there, there is a shift of interest from the "why" to the "what" and "how," from the final cause to the effective cause. In the same manner that the change in scientific outlook led to far reaching achievements, so, too, did the new critical approach of Reb Chaim do so in the sphere of Torah study. The Brisker revolution is the Copernican revolution of the halakhic world.

Part of this process is the increased emphasis placed upon *Rambam* by the followers of Brisk. As long as Torah study focused upon the supposed theoretical reasoning underlying a Talmudic passage, a gap existed between the Talmudic commentators *ad locum* and the *Mishne*

*Torah*, which is essentially a book of applied halakha. Thus, a commentator would ordinarily devote his time and effort to the study of other commentaries dealing with the same text, while a *posek* of practical halakha would deal with the relevant halakhic literature, each remaining within his specific field. [This is obviously a generalization and is not meant to be absolute.] However, as soon as the interpretation of the Talmudic passage itself becomes dependent upon its practical implications, it is imperative to systematically examine the various practical conclusions which may be derived from it. This, of course, is where the *Mishne Torah* enters the picture, for it is the monumental review of the conclusions which have developed out of the Talmudic passages, and, therefore, ideally suited for Reb Chaim's purposes.

To be totally clear and to prevent any misunderstandings, I would like to point out that the emphasis upon the halakhic conclusions of the *sugya* is not meant to arrive at any conclusions regarding practical behavior, but is a purely interpretive enterprise. Therefore, the interest is not necessarily in the final conclusions, but in the halakhic manifestations throughout all stages of the discussion. The aim of the Brisker approach is the conceptual formulation, not the prescription of behavior, and in this, too, it resembles the scientific attempt to derive abstract laws and concepts from concrete phenomena. However, the abstraction and conceptualization must be sought through the practical manifestations dictated by the Talmudic passage and subject to their criticism. Therefore, the method is equally applicable in all areas of the Talmud—*Kodashim* and *Taharot* as well as *Mo'ed* and *Nashim*. This, according to Reb Chaim's method, is the real meaning of "*le-asukei shemateta a-liba de-hilkheta*": the interpretation of the *sugya* based upon its halakhic implications, regardless of our actual ruling regarding practice.

This approach, which is the foundation of Reb Chaim's method and which gives it its unique quality, also poses a danger. If we focus on the "what" rather than the "why," we have remained faithful to the facts and have been careful not to proceed beyond what is warranted. However, focusing upon the pure structural logic within a *sugya* without examining the plausibility of the conclusions, erecting a halakhic paradigm based upon the concrete details regardless of whether it is reasonable or not, is as serious a defect as pure speculation detached from the details. Both the "speculative fallacy" and the "logical fallacy" must be avoided. The "what" must also withstand the criticism of the "why." Even though two separate alternatives can function as two facets of a halakhic investigation (*hakira*), explaining differences of opinion and enhancing various details, they cannot be accepted if there is no ratio-

nale behind them which is reasonable in the context of their topic. The relationship between these two factors must be a mutual one, each engaging and critical of the other element. The point of contact between these two elements is where the problematic aspect of the Brisker approach is exposed. The heavy emphasis placed upon the analytical element may easily undermine the delicate balance between the two factors, since any investigation which postulates two sides to a question and demonstrates their practical implications can be accepted without any further ado.

It is this very point of encounter which enables us, it seems to me, to comprehend the unique quality of the Rav's learning (aside, of course, from his natural intellectual ability). Indeed, many followed Reb Chaim's footsteps and attained important achievements. However, even the most capable of his disciples were not always able to avoid the "logical fallacy." Radical formulations which were logically possible but opposed to any reasonable standard of plain halakhic thinking were adopted on occasion, creating conclusions which were highly implausible, even though valid if judged by *a priori* logic alone. Others, who were not satisfied with merely explaining the phenomena, abandoned Reb Chaim's method altogether and lost the critical anchor of the concrete halakhic expression (*nafka mina*).

The Rav avoided both extremes. Fundamentally faithful to his grandfather's method, his ideas were subjected to the critical control of the actual halakhic case. He was careful not to rashly charge into areas where he could not exercise such control. Nonetheless, he took care to examine the results of his inquiry into the actual halakhic manifestation in the light of simple logic. When one of his students mentioned to him a well known (and seemingly self evident) *hakira* to him, the Rav's response was, "I have no idea what the second option could possibly mean." I vividly remember this tension dramatically expressing itself the first day I was in his *shiur*. We were learning the issues of *gezeila* in the ninth chapter of *Bava Kama* that year. The first *shiur* began with the following statement by the Rav: "There is a well-known inquiry into the nature of the obligation to return stolen property. I don't like it since it is obvious to me that one of the possibilities should be rejected; however, what can I do, it is clear that both sides are represented in a debate between the Ba'al haMa'or and Ramban" [*Sanhedrin* 72a]. Personal logic and common sense must have their say, but if the evidence in the sources indicates otherwise, the evidence must be accepted.

What should be emphasized, moreover, is that the Brisker method was not, for the Rav, an acquired technique or a scholarly method

which he received from his mentors. His natural thought patterns were forged out of analytic understanding. His initial reading of a *sugya* was an analytic one; intrinsically, he read the passage in such a manner. The prism through which he viewed all issues was an analytic one, exposing the conceptual structure of the text as a matter of course. Thus, his manner of learning was not the application of a technique or the utilization of acquired tools, which may be occasionally employed and occasionally forgotten, accepted at times and neglected at others. His learning was not founded upon sudden flashes of insight or based upon an intuitive reasoning as fleeting as it is sudden. The Rav's Torah was based upon the rock-solid foundation of an internalized systematic thought process, steady and sure, analytic and innovative. Therefore, the Rav's learning did not distinguish between greater or lesser issues, minor or major *sugyot*; whatever he studied was subject to his scholarly critique and intellectual discipline. Brief and minor issues were analyzed in the same manner as weighty, intricate and well-known passages, since the same inner logic applies to them all. Great or small, weighty or trivial, all matters were treated equally.

It is worth noting in this context that the Rav's scholarly net was spread over all areas of Torah learning. I do not mean to claim that he devoted a great amount of time and energy to relatively neglected halakhic sources such as the *Yerushalmi* or the *Sifrei* or that he had a phenomenal memory, but rather that he trained his scholarly eye even upon sources which are not generally considered deserving of halakhic attention. Thus, he gleaned pearl after pearl from the *siddur*, *kinot* and *piyyutim* and interwove them into his halakhic presentations. My memory still retains, in all its vividness and freshness, the wonderful *shiur* which he gave upon the structure of *tefilat musaf* of the *shalosh regalim*, weaving together the relevant *sugyot*, passages from the *siddur*, *keviat haTorah* and *Sefer haMitsvot*. The *Yahrtzeit shiur* on the issue of *mehikat haShem* (which was later published in *Shiurim leZekher Abba Mari*) ended with a fundamental distinction (*hiluk*) between two aspects of *yud-he* as a *shem*, which was based, in part, upon a *diyyuk* in *Targum Onkelos*. With his sharp eye, the Rav was able to identify and transform such non-halakhic material, utilizing it for his purposes time after time.

The systematic thought that analytically penetrated everything it took in—great or small, classic or unconventional sources—is what gave the Rav's learning its authority and force. However, a systematic critical ability was not the only quality which characterized his Torah. The Rav was also blessed with an abundance of creative and innovative powers. These burst forth from the depths of his personality, forming a fountain

of learning creativity, flowing along the lively new paths of Torah through which their creator channeled them. What he claimed about Halakhic Man—“[he] received the Torah from Sinai not as a simple recipient, but as a creator of worlds”<sup>2</sup>—he was able to achieve in his own person, and what he added there, that “the power of innovation is the basis of tradition,” can be seen as an accurate description of his own endeavor, a Torah which is original and innovative, yet deeply rooted in the continuity of tradition.

Thus, the Rav remained firmly rooted in the family tradition of Brisker learning, through his adherence to the mutually controlling relationship between cause and effect, concrete phenomena and analytic conceptualization. The additional quality which he added as a third thread to the existing cord of tradition was an involvement in halakhic areas which unite cause and effect into a single learning unity. The establishment of areas and issues which entwine the two together, in contrast to the usual Brisker opposition between cause and effect, is what characterized his unique contribution. Addressing issues of halakhic import whose primary motive is to be found in the religious experience, he was able to combine his analytic Brisker approach with his philosophical powers, as he interwove the religious rationale with the concrete details to create a unified halakhic entity. The greater the link between halakha and aggada, the more he felt at home in that area. Thus, he laid new foundations in areas such as *berakhot*, *avelut*, *keriat haTorah*, *gerut*, *tefilla*, *mo'adim*, *kiddush ha-hodesh*, and many others. Totally new concepts were created in this manner. This trend can be clearly discerned in some of the opening passages of the book of *hiddushei Torah* which he co-authored with his father, Reb Moshe *zt"l*, while still a youth. This combination would fully blossom later in the *shiurim* which the Rav would deliver on these topics as part of his teaching routine, and attain its most outstanding expression in the *yahrtzeit shiurim* which he would deliver in memory of his father. Anyone perusing the two volumes of his book, *Shiurim leZekher Abba Mari*, will clearly see what achievements were realized in these areas and how unique he was in this, both in contrast to his Brisker predecessors and his contemporary colleagues.

Nonetheless, it is important to reiterate that this development did not entail an abandonment of the basic Brisker method, neither in terms of his self image nor in actual substance. Development and innovation are found here, but not a renunciation or disclaim of the fundamental system. This is the secret of the threefold cord.

### III

The Rav's halakhic achievement, his bright white threefold cord, was accompanied by an additional strand of *tekhelet*, the colored thread whose associations remove man from his personal world and garment to contemplate the sea, skies and Heaven, reaching up to the Heavenly throne itself. The personal *tekhelet* which my grandfather affixed to his halakhic *lavan* was a philosophical and experiential acceptance of the natural physical world in which man was placed by God, as well as an involvement with man's complex relationship towards this world as he strives to present himself before his Creator. The majesty and greatness of a dignified human existence accompanied with the proper sense of humility and respect, an ongoing dialogue between man and the Almighty [and between the covenantal community of Israel and its Divine companion], the place of man within a technological society, these and similar dilemmas all appear in his writings. Such were the topics which the Rav dealt with and wrote about, and such were the issues which he experienced in his inner being.

The interweaving of both strands, the blue thread of philosophical enquiry with the white one of Torah scholarship, combined to create a special personality and philosophical approach. Since a eulogy is not the place to deal with the specifics of my grandfather's philosophical outlook, we will confine ourselves here to the essence and aims of his approach. The linchpin of the system is to be found in the synthesis of halakha and philosophy and the Jewish and general worlds which serve both to establish the topics of consideration and as source material for the actual discussions. It is this unique combination which gives the Rav's teachings their vitality and force. The mastery which the Rav achieved in both halakha and Jewish philosophy is itself a notable phenomenon, worthy of mention in an evaluation of his works. Anyone who wants to form a complete impression of the Rav's achievement and versatility must take into account his occupation with such diverse sources as the teachings of Habad (which included *shiurim* which he gave on *Likkutei Torah*) and his epistemological, metaphysical work, *Halakhic Mind*.

However, it must be made clear that it is not the coincidental presence of halakhic and philosophic profundity within a single personality which we are discussing, but rather the fusion of the two into an integrated Torah perspective. Rav Soloveitchik is not a halakhic *gadol*, unaware of the dilemmas of general culture, nor a religiously observant philosopher; he is a master of both fields who is able to illuminate both of them with

the light of his Torah. An artificial division between the rabbinic and philosophical element within his personality is inconceivable. The two are mutually compatible and complementary. The dilemmas and acts of the God-fearing Jew receive, in the Rav's world, assistance and enhancement from general knowledge, if used with the proper care and attention, while the Torah has within it the capacity to solve questions of pure philosophical interest.

Thus, the Rav portrays Halakhic Man as imposing his Torah upon the natural world which he encounters:

When halakhic man approaches reality, he comes with his Torah, given to him from Sinai, in hand. He addresses the world by means of fixed statutes and firm principles. An entire corpus of precepts and laws guides him along the path leading to Being.<sup>3</sup>

Halakhic Man addresses not only uniquely Jewish questions or those of interest to a general religious philosophy, but also tackles issues of philosophical import such as epistemology, the status of nature, and other similar topics. All are reviewed and examined, since the answers to these general perplexities can be found in the Torah which God presented to man at Sinai. Not only were righteous laws and religious messages handed down to Israel, but also Divine wisdom which reveals and interprets the world of experience to humankind: “. . . the path leading to Being.” The treasury of Torah and mitzvot contains within it remedies for epistemological and ontological problems. The Rav does not merely utilize general wisdom to harness its information for the purposes of Torah, as the medieval Jewish philosophers did; rather, he attempts to fuse the two in a manner that allows each to illuminate the other. Though the rabbis have taught us that wisdom, if not Torah, is to be found amongst the nations, wisdom itself cannot satisfy its own needs without the assistance of the Torah. This very issue was addressed by the Rav at the conclusion of *Halakhic Mind*, where he wrote the following:

To this end there is only a single source from which a Jewish philosophical *Weltanschauung* could emerge; the objective order—the Halakhah. . . . Problems of freedom, causality, God-Man relationship, creation and nihility would be illuminated by Halakhic principles. A new light could be shed on our apprehension of reality.

Out of the sources of Halakhah, a new world view awaits formulation.<sup>4</sup>

This aspect of the Rav's philosophical enterprise, that which may be called from "Volozhin to Berlin," is a distinctive feature of the Rav's philosophy, not to be found amongst his contemporaries. For though this approach to the relationship between Judaism and general philosophy was also attempted by other Jewish thinkers in the early twentieth century,<sup>5</sup> these figures did not belong to the world of the *bet ha-midrash*, while the Torah scholars, even those who were aware of developments within the general world, did not see the Torah as providing solutions to philosophical problems.

There is, of course, another aspect—the purely religious one. Metaphysical and ontological issues were not the only ones which concerned the Rav. His primary interest was the existential state of the religious individual in the modern world. Actually, his involvement with philosophical concepts was mainly due to their significance for the religious experience. His writings—"Halakhic Man," "U-Vikkashtem miSham," *The Lonely Man of Faith*, and others—are the cry of the believing individual searching for existential meaning as he approaches his Creator in all his loneliness, greatness, pettiness and confusion. These essays reflect and express man's quest for experiential meaning and a living faith within this world, and, unlike *Halakhic Mind*, are not limited to a search for ontological recognition. Thus, the Rav makes the following existential claim in *The Lonely Man of Faith*:

The trouble with all rational demonstrations of the existence of God, with which the history of philosophy abounds, consists in their being exactly what they were meant to be by those who formulated them: abstract logical demonstrations divorced from the living primal experiences in which these demonstrations are rooted. For instance, the cosmic experience was transformed into a cosmological proof, the ontic experience into an ontological proof, et cetera. . . .

Maimonides' term *le-yda* (*Yesodei haTorah* 1:1) transcends the bounds of the abstract *logos* and passes over into the realm of the boundless intimate and impassioned experience where postulate and deduction, discursive knowledge and intuitive thinking, conception and perception, subject and object, are one. Only in paragraph five [of *Yesodei haTorah* ch. 1], after the aboriginal experience of God had been established by him as a firm reality, does he introduce the Aristotelian cosmological proof of the unmoved mover.<sup>6</sup>

This is the essence of the approach which he advocates to the sensitive

