

Rabbi Levi is Professor of Physics/Electro-optics and Rector Emeritus at Jerusalem College of Technology.

TORAH 'IM DEREKH ERETS IN OUR TIME

INTRODUCTION

There are times in our lives when we must turn inward and minimize our involvement with society and nation in order to develop our own selves. Then again, there are times when we are obliged to turn outward and become more involved with the economy, with government, with general culture. Both of these behaviors are Torah obligations, and it is a matter of judgment which is incumbent on us at any time.¹

If ever there was a time for turning outward, our time appears to be such a one. Before our eyes, on the one hand, the secularist philosophies and their institutions—the once-great forces which defied the Torah—are collapsing all around us; and, on the other, the Torah camp is experiencing a resurgence almost unparalleled in our history. The time seems ripe for applying Torah to all aspects of our environment, in general, and the society we live in, in particular—ripe for turning the Jewish people into “a [model] nation of farmers and businessmen, of soldiers and scientists.”² This policy of involvement with the world around us has been called *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*.

Our claim that secularist ideals are crumbling needs some elaboration. After all, by the beginning of this century secular humanism was firmly entrenched as the cornerstone of Western culture and the source of its morality. Having been inculcated with absolute faith in human reason, Western man envisioned himself as inevitably destined to ascend to moral perfection and to achieve the universal peace of the millennium. Who needed Torah?

But fifty years ago, the shattering experience of the Holocaust left this illusion in ruins. Suddenly, a highly cultured nation “reverted” to a level below that of the caveman of the humanist myth, and humanism stood revealed as a worthless fraud, its vision of man’s almighty reason and inevitable ascent a mere mirage. That experience left in its wake a moral vacuum; the smashing of its false god led to a spreading rot, the slow decay of Western culture. We are seeing the symptoms of that decay today, in the form of family instability, drug abuse, and the proliferation of violent crime.

More recently, the pride and joy of many humanists—communism and

socialism, which were to bring salvation to mankind—have started to crumble before our eyes. Modern man is frightened.

At this critical juncture, when secular culture is floundering and groping for direction, Providence has turned the Torah camp into a powerhouse unsurpassed (at least numerically) in recent Jewish history. Torah study and adherence to its precepts are on the upswing, not only numerically but also in terms of vitality. What was a self-effacing, defensive periphery has become a powerful, assertive, almost aggressive force in Jewry.

With the secular world ideologically adrift,³ and the Torah community ready and able to provide moral guidance, the stage seems set for the Jewish people to redeem itself from its spiritual exile by establishing a model state. Yes, the stage is all set; but where is the action? Why is this Torah elite not going out into the market place, the universities, the communications studios, the city halls—all the places where the business of life-in-this-world is carried on? If Torah is meant to direct and guide life in this world, why are those who know the Torah so well not more involved? The potential is there; why does it remain a mere potential?

A further question needs to be asked, for if the Jewish people is to assume its role of a light unto the nations, it must first unite under the banner of Torah. This in turn cannot be until the large secularized segment of Jewry is introduced to its momentous heritage. Yet despite the unprecedented numerical⁴ and spiritual power of its elite, Torah Judaism is meaningful to only a small fraction of Jewry. With the secular world, and non-committed Jewry in particular, sensing its need for guidance more and more, and with Torah Jewry capable of providing it, we would have expected a veritable torrent of return to Torah Judaism. All we have is a trickle. The Torah camp is not dedicating itself to carrying its message beyond its own narrow enclaves, in proportion to its power. Why?

The cause of this self-imposed introversion is the perception that the Torah community is still in a stage preparatory to that of achieving its final purpose. Indeed it is safe to say that just this introversion is what made possible the unprecedented flourishing of Torah study today. Just as a developing baby needs the protective environment of its mother's womb to reach the point where it can face the outside world, so the Torah camp needed a period of self-imposed isolation to recuperate from the cruel decimation it suffered during the Holocaust—to regain the strength needed for it to become the guiding force of the Jewish people.

Has the time come to leave the protective womb? Is the Torah community ready to go out into the world and tackle its heroic task? Now with the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state in *Eretz Yisrael* representing such an obvious challenge, deep involvement with all aspects of the nation's life carries a potential greater than ever. Has the time come to realize this potential? That is the question facing the spiritual leadership of the Torah camp today. Whosoever deals with this momentous question, will, in

effect, be dealing with the principle of *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*.

This principle is usually associated with the brilliantly successful battle of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch for Torah Judaism in the nineteenth century, when the emancipation of Western European Jewry confronted them with unprecedented challenges and trials, and—together with the great dangers—with vast opportunity. However, this term also expresses a fundamental Torah concept, guiding us in our interaction with the general environment.

Our purpose here is to define the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle, to identify the areas where it becomes most evident in our halakhic and agadic literature, and to offer representative examples. We trust that this will make the public more aware of these ideas, which are largely dormant today in the Torah world.

There is an additional purpose. All along, there have been outstanding Torah authorities who felt that the excessive isolation from worldly activities typical of recent generations was an unjustified and unwarranted deviation from the Torah's principles. To their disciples, the material presented here should be welcome encouragement to be steadfastly loyal to their spiritual guides. Granted, the great majority of Torah leaders have endorsed the isolationist approach; but this does not invalidate the minority view. In the words of the Hazon Ish,

It appears that the rule of following the more restrictive opinion [in case of doubt] concerning a Torah law applies only if neither of the [disputing authorities] is one's *rav*. If, however, one of the authorities is one's *rav*, he should follow [that opinion] even if it means being lenient. [An authority] is called one's *rav* if one is personally close to [the authority] and always listens to his teachings in most mitzvot. . . . This rule applies both during the lifetime of one's *rav* and after his death. As long as his decisions and halakhot can be known through his disciples or his publications, people are permitted to follow their *rav*, even to the extent of leniency about a Torah law, even if those who disagree are the majority. [This is so] as long as there was no *bet din* session where both sides argued their position and they arrived at a [final] halakhic decision.⁵

If this "pluralistic" stance applies to a lenient position, how much more to a more stringent one such as *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*, which attempts to put all aspects of life into the service of God and thus aspires to the highest level of sanctity—as is discussed further on.

WHAT IS TORAH 'IM DEREKH ERETS?

Definitions

The term *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* may be applied to any of several different concepts, and failure to distinguish which one is being referred to may give

rise to much confusion. Often the term is applied to an Orthodox movement which was widespread among Western European Jewry starting in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is also applied to the educational system established primarily by Rabbi S.R. Hirsch at that time. Thirdly it is applied to the Torah principle underlying both the movement and the educational system. Torah authorities are divided in their opinions about the educational program, but the underlying principle is, I believe, largely accepted in the Torah world.⁶ (The disagreement between “activists” and “isolationists” referred to earlier is not a conflict of principles but a simple disagreement as to the applicability of *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* under the present circumstances.) Here I would like to elucidate at some length the (generally accepted) Torah principle, as distinct from the (disputed) educational system.

Torah 'Im Derekh Erets—Torah combined with worldly endeavors⁷—refers to our obligation to imprint upon the world the ideas of the Torah.⁸ In the words of R. Y. Y. Weinberg, the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle sees the world as raw material which is to receive its form as described in the Torah.⁹ In terms of a more modern metaphor, God created Torah and world as one system, with Torah constituting the plan and the world providing the tools for its implementation; or using computer terminology, the world is to function as the hardware and Torah as the software. Either component by itself is not functional; only by introducing the software into the hardware—by applying the Torah to this world—can we fulfill the Creator’s purpose, that creation should attain completion and perfection. In brief, the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle expresses the centrality of the world’s role in Torah life.

Let us now investigate the validity of this principle from the Torah viewpoint.

The Torah and This World

Our Sages teach us: “*Ikar Shekhina betahtonim* (God’s presence is primarily on earth)”; it was so immediately after creation and returned to this state in the days of Moses,¹⁰ “because God loves the earth as his main abode.”¹¹ This is the essence of the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* concept, which defines the relationship between Torah and this world. And what, indeed, is this relationship?

According to our Sages the first verse of the Torah implies that the world was created for the sake of the Torah, which is called “beginning.”¹² How is it that the perfect Torah needs this imperfect world? Our Sages answered this question in a revealing Agadah.

When Moses ascended to Heaven to receive the Torah, the angels protested to God: “This concealed treasure, which You kept hidden for 974

generations before the creation of the world, You wish to give to man?" God then asked Moses to answer them. He responded:

What is written in the Torah? "I am God, your God, Who brought you out of Egypt." Have you gone down to Egypt? Were you enslaved by Pharaoh? What is the Torah to you?

. . . What else is written there? "Do not swear falsely in My name." Do you conduct business [that you need to take oaths]?

What else? "Remember the Shabbath to keep it holy" Do you work, that you need to rest?

What else? "Honor your father and your mother" Do you, then, have parents?¹³

We may paraphrase Moses' arguments as follows: The Torah has full significance only to those who are exposed to the vicissitudes of history and the culture of nations, who engage in business and work, who marry and have children. As another Midrash sums up the matter:

God told the angels: The Torah cannot be fulfilled among you. There is among you neither procreation, nor impurity or purification, nor sickness or death [which are the framework of Torah life].¹⁴

But then, just as the Torah is meaningless for the angels, if anyone among men tries to avoid the demands of this world, to the extent that he isolates himself from it, the Torah tends to lose its meaning for him. Although, as the angels argued, the Torah existed before the world, yet as Moses demonstrated, it lacked its full significance until the world was created for its sake.

A similar idea is expressed by Scripture when it says that man was put into the Garden of Eden "to work it and guard it," which according to the Sages means that Adam (even before the sin) was not permitted to eat until he did work.¹⁵ And, in conjunction with another verse: "[Adam, before the sin] was made a serf, who, if he does not work, will not eat."¹⁶ All this implies that the *original* creation plan called for man working; that, indeed, mankind was created in such a way that it must work and develop the world in order to survive. Even more explicit are the words of the *Netziv* (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin): "[Adam] came to be a worker of the land, and thereby *the purpose of Creation was completed.*"¹⁷ The shaping of the world as the goal of the Torah is also expressed in such Talmudic statements as "The greatness of [Torah] study is that it leads to action"¹⁸ and "Not study, but actions are paramount."¹⁹

All this clearly indicates that the interaction of man with his environment is central to the purpose of Creation, and thus to Torah ideology.

Torah and world together constitute Creation, and any effort to separate them is nothing less than an effort to subvert the purpose of Creation.

IMPLICATIONS OF TORAH 'IM DEREKH ERETS

Having examined the principle of *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*, we can see how the Torah differs radically from both Greek philosophic and Christian religious ideology. Greek philosophy places human reason at the center of things; not action but primarily contemplation and study are praiseworthy. On the other hand, Christianity idolizes feeling and faith. In fact, neither of them really needs this world in any positive sense.

And so it is with anyone who wishes to elevate himself spiritually; he is likely to fall into either the trap of emotionality, as the gentile religions do, or of rationality, as the Greek philosophers did. Both fail to appreciate the importance of action and this-worldly involvement. Only the Torah can guide man to a proper synthesis of spirit and the material world, and only the Jewish people, who received the Torah, can appreciate the world's profound importance. The Torah teaches them that they need not escape from the world or avoid its challenges; for in facing such challenges they are doing God's will. And they trust that the same Torah that asks them to confront the world will guide them well along its paths.

We must keep in mind, however, the fundamental role that in-depth Torah study plays in any effort to live according to *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* in its full sense. Knowledge of *halakha* alone does not suffice to mold the world in accordance with God's will. While the *Shulhan Arukh* gives us the knowledge to build a kosher *sukka*, it does not guide us in choosing a profession. To answer this latter question requires far more extensive—and intensive—Torah knowledge. So let the emphasis given to worldly matters in what follows not mislead the reader on this point.

Let us now explore further some implications of the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle.

The Role of Natural Law²⁰

To many thinkers, and especially to adherents of the non-Torah religions, the laws of nature are at best an illusion and at worst a veil, hiding Divine providence. To these theologians, the suspension of natural law through miracles is the ideal way for the world to function—a view that perfectly reflects their effort to play down the importance of physical reality. Not so Judaism; the Torah and *derekh erets* are parts of a single system, in which the Torah assigns the laws of nature a central role. The Torah calls upon us

to use the world in the service of God, and such usage presupposes that there are reliable laws underlying the world. In the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Were it not for My covenant, day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth."²¹

These laws are in fact tools, necessary for the implementation of the Torah's program. Consider: if the moon and the sun did not obey strict laws, we could not fulfill the first mitzva given to the Jewish people, to establish a unique lunar-solar calendar, which requires the calculation of the passages of moon and sun.²² How could we fulfill the last commandment of the Torah, to write a Torah scroll,²³ if the ink were to one day adhere to the parchment and another day roll off it? Were the world to behave haphazardly, we could not foresee the results of our actions, nor plan any accomplishment.

The Torah's positive view of the laws of nature is well expressed by the great medieval scholar Rabbenu Nissim (popularly known as Ran): "It is God's wish and desire to maintain the 'custom' of the world whenever that is possible; nature is in fact dear to Him, so that He deviates from it only when it is necessary. . . . Events do not occur according to individual causes but general causes, because God does not wish nature to change according to [the needs of] every individual."²⁴ We find the same idea expressed in *Hovot haLevavot*: "Let [man] work with [natural] causes, thereby to fulfill the mitzva of the Creator Who commanded man to work through the [laws of nature]."²⁵ Even Ramban, who perhaps more than any other medieval authority held that God interferes with nature for the sake of very saintly men,²⁶ writes that normally God wishes the laws of nature to remain undisturbed: "The Torah commands us to conduct our lives according to [the demands of] *derekh erets*, and [God] performs miracles . . . [only] covertly. He does not wish to change the nature of the world except when no other sort of salvation will do, or occasionally to make His Name known to His adversaries."²⁷

Clearly Jewish thought has a certain reservation with respect to miracles. Our Sages teach us this when they repeatedly point to God's restraint in deviating from the laws of nature. For example, the Gemara alludes to this restraint when it states: "If someone steals a measure of wheat and sows it in the ground, by right it should not grow. But the world goes according to its 'custom', and the fools who have done perversely will later on have to render account."²⁸ That thus is God's will explains also why our Sages censure those who pray for a supernatural miracle and label such prayer as "vain."²⁹

It should be understood that belief in the reliability of natural laws does not in the least deny the complete power that God has over the world; nor does it imply that He refrains from leading it surely through history, along the course that He planned for it. In the words of *Meshekh Hokhma*:

When man walks justly—that is, in God’s ways—he can reap blessing in a natural way too. That is how the Jewish people were blessed: ‘If you walk in My ways’ then the laws of heaven and earth, too, will go justly. For Divine wisdom has arranged the ways of nature so that they run parallel to the ways of Torah and mitzvah.³⁰

In the Torah’s view, natural laws do not possess an existence of their own; they are simply an expression of the consistency with which God runs the world.

Scientific Knowledge³¹

The Sages held science in high esteem. “Every one of the seven scientific wisdoms is praiseworthy and esteemed in the eyes of the Sages, who loved each of them. You will not find in any Aggadah whatsoever—neither in the Babylonian Talmud, nor in the Jerusalem Talmud, nor in any midrash—that they deprecated any wisdom.”³² There are a number of reasons for the Sages’ position, as we will see. One of these follows directly from our discussion of the laws of nature: if they are to be efficient tools in our hands, we must know them.

According to the Talmud, anyone familiar with astronomical calculations and does not make them is considered deficient in his fear of God: “Concerning him Scripture declares: ‘The work of God they will not behold and His handiwork they have not seen. [Therefore was My people exiled . . .]’³³”. Rambam, discussing the mitzvot of love and reverence of God, elaborates on this point:

And how can we attain love and reverence of Him? When a person contemplates His great and wonderful works and creatures, and perceives therefrom His infinite, limitless wisdom.

. . . It is well known that the love of God enters a man’s heart . . . only if he recognizes [God in nature]; and [the depth of] the love will be proportional to the recognition. Therefore a person must devote his mind to understanding and comprehending the wisdoms and sciences that reveal his Maker to him.³⁴

In later times, the Vilna Gaon’s grandson applied to scientific knowledge the words of the Mishnah: “If there is no *wisdom*, there is no reverence [for God].”³⁵

The Sages even declared scientific study an obligation: “From where do we know that it is a mitzva to make astronomical calculations [beyond those needed for calendar computations]? As it is written: ‘For this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations’. . .”³⁶ The level of respect that Israel enjoys from the nations of the world is an important

determinant of its success in being a light to them. Here the Torah teaches us that we will earn respect according to our wisdom in general and our scientific knowledge in particular. In brief, the mitzva of *kiddush ha-shem*, sanctifying God's name, obligates us to study science.

To a certain extent, scientific study is a prerequisite for Torah study itself. "The seven wisdoms are a ladder by which one can ascend to the wisdom of Torah;"³⁷ or, in the words of the Gaon of Vilna, any lack of scientific knowledge seriously limits our ability to understand Torah, for "Torah and scientific knowledge go together."³⁸ Special care is required here, however, as R. Hirsch warns: "It is our duty to know all aspects of worldly life and to be involved with them, because this is an important prerequisite for Torah study. But here, too, we should minimize our efforts, if we wish to reserve the time, mental clarity and tranquility required for Torah study."³⁹

Then there is the vital role that this knowledge plays in fulfilling the Creator's wish, that man should develop the world he lives in—a wish he expressed immediately after creating the first man and woman by telling them to "fill the earth and conquer it ." Clearly, "conquering the earth" requires a knowledge of its functioning. Thus from the very beginning of Creation, God indicated to man that his task on earth requires familiarity with the laws of nature.⁴⁰ We elaborate on this point in the section on "work. "

Let one example serve to illustrate the lengths to which our Sages went to acquire scientific knowledge. The Gemara relates that Rav spent a year and a half living with shepherds in order to learn the pathology of *mumin* (physical defects that make first-born male cattle permissible for use outside the Sanctuary).⁴¹ Occasionally one hears the suggestion that the Sages deduced their scientific knowledge from the Torah itself. This account of Rav's methods, however, disproves any such suggestion. It can also help clarify the boundaries between Torah and science; R. Yosef Rozin (the "Rogoczover") deduced from here that scientific study, even if needed for halakhic decisions, is not part of Torah study proper.⁴² It is an important adjunct to the Torah; but it is not itself Torah.

Knowledge of the World and of Human Nature

But mitzva fulfillment requires a knowledge of the world around us that goes far beyond knowledge of the laws of nature. A person may, on the one hand, be fully aware of how an emulsifier functions and know all about the *halakhot* of forbidden foods, and yet, on the other, be unable to judge the permissibility of a certain food product. He must first know what particular type of emulsifier that company is using at that time. Or a person may know exactly how electricity works, and also be thoroughly familiar with the laws of Shabbat, but still be unable to decide whether a particular

instrument may be used on Shabbat, unless he knows which technology that model employs, or what temperature a given component attains.

This is one of the basic problems of applying Torah in everyday life. The *Hazon Ish* understood it perfectly:

Clarifying the practical application of a law involves two investigations. First we must thoroughly analyze the appropriate paragraphs of the Torah's law. Then comes the second investigation: a penetrating scrutiny of the present case in all its details and conditions . . . to permit its application to the proper halakhic paragraph.

Significantly he adds: "And the pitfalls of an improper correlation are greater than those involved in clarifying the halakhic basis."⁴³

Especially in the area of interpersonal relations, "knowing the world" may be very difficult. Here the facts are frequently well camouflaged, so that much astuteness and perceptiveness may be required to uncover them; establishing the facts is often more difficult than clarifying the pure halakha.

The Gaon of Vilna makes the same point in reference to the judicial process. Referring to the Torah's commandment to the court to "search, investigate, and inquire thoroughly," he notes that "the judge must be both wise in Torah . . . and expert in *derekh erets* [i.e., astute], lest judgment be deceived."⁴⁴ Pointing out that bribery is said to "blind the astute," and, in another verse, to "blind the wise," he explains that

"The wise" refers to Torah [knowledge], while "the astute" refers to worldly matters . . . for the judge must be outstanding in both of these. As for Torah, he must be proficient in all areas of Torah knowledge, and as for worldly matters, he must be familiar with all forms of cunning, in order to recognize the truth.⁴⁵

But even outside the court, there are certain mitzvot which require deep personal insight, and that will be difficult to come by unless we make a conscious effort to study human personality. Among these mitzvot is the prohibition against hurting a fellow man's feelings⁴⁶ and the commandment to admonish him when necessary.⁴⁷ Rabbi El'azar ben 'Azarya evidently alludes to this difficulty when he says: "I doubt that there is anyone in this generation who knows how to admonish [effectively]."⁴⁸

The Importance of Work⁴⁹

We have already seen that the world was created in such a form as would compel man to work for a living, thereby insuring its further development;

and that when man works the land he thereby fulfills the purpose of Creation.⁵⁰ First let us discuss this “creative” aspect of work; later we can address the role that earning a living plays.

The Torah values work greatly: “He who enjoys the fruits of his hands’ labor is greater than one who fears Heaven.”⁵¹ We are not to regard work as merely a tolerable necessity; the Mishna teaches us to “love work,”⁵² and the Sages further elaborate: “What should a person do if he has no work? If he has an uncultivated yard or a fallow field, let him busy himself with it.”⁵³

Concerning the Mishna’s teaching, Maharal comments: “He who ‘enjoys the fruits of his hand’s labor’ will of necessity achieve love [of God] as well . . . since he is joyful and loves his hands’ toil, he will surely come to love the one Who granted him this.. . *for work is man’s perfection.*”⁵⁴ According to Maharal’s insight, the Mishnah’s message is a double one. First, we were created to do work, which explains our natural tendency to love and feel fulfilled by creative acts: “Work is the perfection of man.” Second, the joy attendant upon work is an important aid towards the major spiritual attainment of love of God.

But why was man created to do work? The Sages imply that work has an objective value far beyond any personal benefit, proclaiming “God did not let His Presence rest among Israel until they did work” (by erecting the Sanctuary).⁵⁵ The implication is clear: work is central to life in this world and it is a condition for the Divine Presence. The concept can be understood on the basis of another pronouncement, placing work in the category of walking in God’s ways.

“You shall walk after God” Is it possible, then, for flesh and blood to walk after God? . . . At the beginning of Creation God occupied Himself first of all with planting [the Garden of Eden] . . . so you, too: when you enter Erets Yisrael, occupy yourself first of all with planting.⁵⁶

Work, then, is not merely an evil necessary for man to maintain himself in this world; rather, it is dear to God because He desires the development of the world.^{56a} By doing work we become, in a sense, partners with God in creation. It is not hard to see that such partnership is a precondition for having the Divine Presence among us. This view of work also explains why the construction of the Sanctuary is taken as the prototype of work, as far as Shabbat is concerned.⁵⁷

From the Jewish national point of view, these considerations take on added significance. Rabbi Hirsch points out that the professions and crafts are an integral part of Israel’s role to serve as a model—“a kingdom of *kohanim*”—to the nations . It was for this reason that when our Patriarch Jacob blessed his children, he assigned to them various professions. R. Hirsch writes: “Israel’s mission is to be a nation of agricultural workers, mer-

chants, warriors, and scientists, thereby demonstrating that humankind's mission, as revealed by the Torah, is not restricted to certain occupations."⁵⁸

In a different context but in the same spirit, the *Hatam Sofer* writes:

"You shall gather in your grain". . . to fulfill the mitzva of settling the Land of Israel. . . . [This includes] not only agricultural work but learning all the trades. This will further the settling and honor of the Land of Israel—lest it be said that in all the Land of Israel there is no shoemaker, no construction worker, or the like, and that these must be imported from abroad."⁵⁹

Making a Living

After all the natural affinity to work with which man was endowed, the major impetus to work is still the need to support oneself and his family. Indeed, this is so central to the concept of *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* that the term "*derekh erets*" frequently refers specifically to a livelihood.⁶⁰

The Talmud derives our obligation to learn a trade from the verses of the Torah itself,⁶¹ and our Sages encouraged people, in extreme terms, to support themselves, rather than taking their support from others.⁶² Post-Talmudic authorities, too, classify making a living as a mitzva. Rabbenu Tam is quoted to that effect,⁶³ and Rashbatz even classifies it as a divine commandment.⁶⁴ Rambam writes that "it is the way of sensible people that a person first establish himself in an occupation which will support him, then that he acquire a house, and only afterwards that he marry."⁶⁵ The *Tur* and the *Shulhan Arukh* devote a whole section (albeit a brief one) to this obligation.⁶⁶

Here we have only touched on a few highlights, and the reader may refer to other sources⁶⁷ for a more extensive discussion of relevant ideology. A special appendix to this article treats the halakhic aspects of making a livelihood.

Joy in Living

Torah 'Im Derekh Erets preaches the value of *joie de vivre*, living zestfully and taking joy in doing so. Already earlier, when we discussed the importance of work, we saw that a sense of satisfaction and joy is an important means to attaining the highest level of sanctity—love of God. This affirmation of joy is characteristic of Judaism.

A hassidic rabbi was wont to say: "It is a great mitzva always to be in a joyful state," and this maxim has even become a popular song. I used to wonder where this mitzva was written. Where in the Torah is there an explicit command to be always joyous?

Of course I was aware of the fact that joy is beneficial to man, and is in fact recommended by our Sages; and I knew the importance of "the joy of a mitzva." But where are we *commanded* to be joyful? Then I saw in Rabbi Hirsch's commentary on the Torah⁶⁸ that this mitzvah is derived directly from the verse "you shall be (*hayita*) only joyful." In contrast to the commandment to *rejoice* on the festivals, this commandment to "*be joyful*" is a constant obligation, as implied by the verb "*hayita*", from "*hayo*", which signifies a lasting state. Indeed, Rabbi Hirsch repeatedly stresses the central place in Torah thought occupied by the joy of living, contrasting it with the preoccupation with death and mourning that is found in many religions, and so central to them that it is expressed even in the black garb of their clergy and their holy men and women.⁶⁹

Upon the loss of a close relative a state of mourning is inevitable, and therefore the Torah decrees one day of full mourning for an *onen*, a person who has suffered such a loss.⁷⁰ The *onen* is debarred from partaking of a sacrifice, nor may he serve in the Sanctuary, if he is a *kohen*.⁷¹ Service in the Sanctuary and feasting as a guest at "God's table" are meant to be uplifting experiences, and the sadness that prevails in an *onen* prevents him from fulfilling this purpose.⁷²

Guarding Our Health⁷³

Physical well-being is an essential part of *derekh erets*, of living in this world. The emphasis on this point is evident in the Sages' declaration that endangering our physical well-being is considered worse than transgressing a prohibition.⁷⁴ As for saving a life, it overrides all Torah prohibitions (except idolatry, immorality, and murder).⁷⁵

Here too, the same idea is continued in post-Talmudic literature. Commenting on the verse: "It is vain for you to arise early, to sit up late," the Taz points out that a scholar who goes to sleep early will be well rested for his study program the next day, and can probably learn in one hour as much as another scholar, who studied late into the night, can learn in two. Consequently, the former, who appears to indulge himself, earns the same reward as the other, who mortifies himself physically.⁷⁶

The Torah's stress on maintaining physical well-being is strikingly revealed in its high regard for medical science and practice. There have been those who argued that practicing medicine is tantamount to working against the will of God, Who sent the disease. To them, Rambam retorts with a classic *reductio ad absurdum*: "According to their superficial and corrupt opinion, [consider this:] When a person is hungry and eats bread, he will surely recover from this serious illness—the illness of hunger. [According to their opinion] he thereby showed lack of trust in God."⁷⁷

Ramban, as cited in *Tur* and *Shulhan Arukh*, calls the practice of medi-

cine “a major obligation,” adding that “anyone familiar with the practice of medicine . . . who desists from it, is guilty of bloodshed.”⁷⁸

The medieval *Sefer Hasidim* goes even further, implying that there may even be a duty to study of medicine :

“Do not be excessively righteous and do not be overly clever.” A man once said to his son, “Study medicine with me.” [The son refused, fearing to be overly occupied and put upon.] His relatives told him: “Had you known medicine [a number of people] would have lived. Because you could have studied and practiced, but did not do so, it is as if you killed them.”⁷⁹

Especially noteworthy is Rambam’s comment: “Medical practice is very important for developing one’s personality, knowing God, and attaining true bliss; hence the study and practice of medicine are among the greatest ways of service [of God].”⁸⁰

A medieval authority even explained regulations regarding the forbidden foods as being motivated in part by the Torah’s concern for our health:

For the body is the instrument of the soul; through it she acts, and without it she could never accomplish her work . . . for the body is in her hands, like the tongs in the hands of the blacksmith, with which he produces his works. Obviously, if the tongs be strong and well aligned to grasp the object, the artisan will produce good things; but if the tongs be not good, the objects will never attain good balance and beauty. Similarly, if there be damage of any kind to the body, the mind’s work will be hindered in proportion to the damage; and therefore our perfect Torah removes us from whatever causes damage. On a similar basis, apparently, rest all laws concerning forbidden food. . .⁸¹

The Torah also values physical strength. In fact, the Sages say that prophecy comes only to a person who is “strong, wealthy, wise and unassuming.” Rabbi Hirsch makes a special point of the fact that physical strength is listed first.⁸²

Property

There is a popular Christian precept that love of money is the root of all evil. How does the Torah view money? We just noted that our Sages mention “strength, wealth, wisdom, and being unassuming” as preconditions for attaining prophecy.⁸³ It is easy to understand the importance of the latter qualities, since they signify intellectual and spiritual perfection; but why strength and wealth, which are strictly material? According to the *Torah ‘Im Derekh Erets* principle, which attaches significance to both physical strength and economic power, there is no puzzle. Having discussed the importance of physical health, let us now investigate the importance of property to

mitzvah fulfillment.

Just a few Torah regulations will suffice for demonstration. For instance, only one who has a house, of a certain minimum size, with door and door frame, can fulfill the mitzva of *mezuzah*. Only if one owns a field can he give the statutory tithes for the poor. If a person is bringing his first fruits to the Sanctuary and meanwhile his tree was damaged so that it is no longer capable of producing fruit, he may not read the required biblical passage.⁸²

On Sukkot, when we are to take the four species, the Torah requires that we own them; evidently, here the sense of ownership is essential to the fulfillment of the mitzva.⁸⁵ The mitzva of Sukka seems to be of the same nature: only he who lives in a proper house, and leaves it to dwell in a Sukka, fulfills the mitzva completely, while at the other end vagabonds and travelers are free of it. Only a "settled resident" is obligated.⁸⁶

These examples demonstrate that whoever scorns property scorns the means of fulfilling God's commandments, in direct contrast to many other religions which idealize poverty to the extent even of denying the wealthy access to heaven.

The Torah Scholar as Statesman and Economist

One of the most telling signs of the Torah's involvement with world and society is its view of the Torah scholar as the man most qualified to administer the community. The separation of state and "church" is a strictly un-Jewish concept. The Torah's spirit and laws are meant to inspire and regulate all aspects of society. More than anyone else, the Torah scholar will be aware of this, and be inspired to become involved with the community. So when Rav Papa asked Rava, "Who is greater, the Persian or the Roman emperor?" Rava was appalled: "Has this man been hiding out in the woods all his life, that he is not aware of the power of the Roman empire?"⁸⁷

Significantly, the physical maintenance of the town, and especially its thoroughfares, was traditionally the responsibility of the rabbinic court.⁸⁸ The great Rabbi and *Rosh Yeshiva* of Sura, Rav Huna,⁸⁹ is an illustration *par excellence* of this. He personally surveyed the streets of Sura before the stormy season, inspecting buildings and condemning those that were dangerous.⁹⁰ Today, the idea of an eminent Rabbi or *talmid hakham* taking on the tasks of a building inspector seems preposterous, which by itself shows how much we have become influenced by the surrounding culture, which differentiates sharply between the unworldly scholar and the man of the world. In fact, however, Rav Huna was simply following in the footsteps of his forefather, Jacob, who established market days (or public baths, or coinage) for the people of Shekhem when he came to live there.⁹¹

When the Talmud discusses the broad rights of townsmen and trade

union members to establish and enforce regulations restricting the individual, it gives the townsmen sweeping powers—with one condition: if there is a Torah sage in town, they must obtain his approval. Obviously the presumption is that a sage is best qualified to evaluate, and pass on, such proposals.⁹² Rambam codifies this halakha as follows:

Townsmen may set up price controls and the necessary fines. Tradesmen [may establish restrictive regulations] and the required sanctions. But all this applies only to a city that does not have an eminent sage, who orders the city's affairs and sees to its efficient and just functioning. But if there is an eminent sage in the city, [the people's] regulations are void . . . unless he approved of their decrees and they acted with his consent.⁹³

This affirmation of the scholar's responsibility toward the community at large also explains the fact that at the famed Yeshiva of Volozhin, the prototype of today's large Yeshivot, students possessed broad general knowledge on current events. The author of *Torah Temima* reports: "Quite a few students read daily, weekly, and monthly papers in various European languages. . . so that it became proverbial that [at Volozhin] Torah and *derekh erets* (i.e., general education) went hand in hand."⁹⁴

Solitude

In many philosophies and religions, solitude is the hallmark of piety. But Judaism opposes excessive solitude. In the words of Rabbi Akiva: "You shall love your fellow as yourself"—this is a great rule of the Torah.⁹⁵ And Rabbi Yossi: "A sword upon the isolationists, and they shall become stultified—a sword [shall come] upon the Torah scholars who sit in isolation and study Torah."⁹⁶ And the great Rabbi Shim'on ben Yohai, when he finally was allowed to leave the cave to which he had been exiled for twelve years, had to return to it for another year because he had looked with disdain upon worldly endeavors.⁹⁷ The eighteenth-century Torah giant, Rabbi Moshe Sofer (the *Hatam Sofer*), proclaimed:

It is not God's wish that we be recluses, that we should go to desolate places, deserts and forests, to investigate and contemplate God's awesome works. "He did not create [the world] desolate; He formed it to be settled." It is God's wish that we love [His] creatures . . . and even if that would mean that we thereby limit our efforts toward self-perfection, nevertheless it is God's wish that we love [His] creatures.⁹⁸

In many cultures the busy marketplace is seen as a distraction from self-perfection or divine service. In the Torah's view, however, this is not

necessarily so. King David exclaimed: " 'Let me walk in the land of the living'—that is the marketplaces."⁹⁹

At first sight, the seclusive contemplation (*omphaloskepsis*) of Greek philosophy and the hermitism of Christianity and other systems might seem to be the ideal road to perfection. But Judaism, in line with its principle of *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*, teaches otherwise: "It is not good for man to be alone."¹⁰⁰

Beauty and Art

Human involvement with this world extends beyond the physical and social spheres: esthetics, too, is an important part of *derekh erets*. In contrast to the traditionally ascetic moral schools, Judaism esteems beauty and art as valuable tools—though certainly not as ends in themselves.¹⁰¹ The Sages instituted a special blessing upon seeing beautiful creatures,¹⁰² and they recount how even personal beauty may be an inspiration¹⁰³ rather than "the work of the devil."

A great *rosh yeshiva* commented on this point:

It is the way of a great person to live with all his powers. Therefore, as he grows in stature all his sensitivities become more alert and alive, and his sensitivity to beauty develops more fully. He is inspired and excited on seeing a magnificent natural spectacle, on hearing a harmonious melody; and when he sees a most beautiful creature, he becomes inspired.¹⁰⁴

The repeated descriptions of beautiful individuals in history,¹⁰⁵ attest to the significance of personal beauty. Especially moving is the report by Shim'on the Righteous concerning a young man who had taken a Nazirite vow requiring him to shave off all his hair: "I saw that he had beautiful eyes and a comely appearance, and his hair grown in curls. I said to him: 'My son, what made you decide to destroy this beautiful hair of yours?'"¹⁰⁶

The Torah recognizes beautiful surroundings as conducive to both mental health and intellectual accomplishment.¹⁰⁷ The importance of music in this respect is directly based on Scripture, where the prophet Elisha requested the services of a musician to help him attain prophetic inspiration.¹⁰⁸ No wonder that our service in the Sanctuary was accompanied by music;¹⁰⁹ that we are enjoined to beautify the mitzvot;¹¹⁰ and that anyone with special artistic talent is encouraged to devote it to the service of God.¹¹¹ Such esthetic considerations have even been suggested as explanation why *kohanim* with *mumim* (physical defects) are disqualified from service in the Sanctuary.¹¹²

Yetser Hara'

The *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle can also explain the Torah's astonishing attitude toward the *yetser hara'*, the "evil inclination." The Sages ex-

plained: "God saw all He had made, and behold, it was very good"—'very good', that is the *yetser hara'*. Were it not for the *yetser hara'*, no one would build a house, or marry, or have children or do business."¹¹³ Clearly our sages saw this *yetser* as a most powerful force driving human progress. And although it is called "evil," yet it is in essence very good.

More surprising still is another Talmudic statement: "God says: I have created the *yetser hara'* and the Torah as a spice for it"—not a remedy or antidote, but a spice that makes the food fit for consumption! "That you may enjoy the pleasures of this world and not fall into transgression."¹¹⁴ The *yetser hara'* is a vital tool in Torah life; it is one of the strongest forces in society, of primary importance in its functioning. But there is a problem; the *yetser* is pungent and tough, and unmodified is likely to do more harm than good; it needs the Torah to make it fit for consumption.

Educating Children to *Emuna*

The *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle can also guide us in educating our children. It implies that we must teach them that the world runs according to fixed laws, so that they learn that it is our duty to live within reality. "It is God's wish and desire to maintain the 'custom' of the world whenever that is possible; Nature is dear to Him."¹¹⁵ If, in describing events, we assign too central a role to the miraculous, we implicitly teach children to rely on miracles, and they may fail to develop a healthy respect for the natural way in which God runs the world. Beyond this, an overemphasis on the role of miracles in everyday life may cause them to imagine the impossible to be true, thereby compromising their mental health. Consider what Rambam has to say about the dangers of magicians' sleight-of-hand: "it causes great damage, because imagining impossible things as possible is very harmful to . . . children and may damage their minds."¹¹⁶

Certainly, teaching children about the great miracles that God did for us, as told in the Torah, is vital to educating them to *emuna* and *bitahon*; but anything more than that surely requires careful consideration. Here, too, the above words of Rambam call upon us to walk the middle road.

Torah Study

The implications of *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* for Torah study are two-fold. Obviously, broad Torah knowledge is required if we are to apply Torah principles successfully to the endless variety of constellations presented by the world and society. But beyond this, the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle teaches us that Torah (from "*hora-ah*," guidance) must be studied for the sake of practice; thus it guards us from turning our study into a barren acad-

emic exercise, indulged in for the sake of knowledge alone. This is the message of the *mishnayot* stressing that study should be for the sake of practice, and that practice, rather than learning, is paramount.¹¹⁷

Furthermore, knowing that our life requires the Torah's guidance is the best motivation for study. A person who studies out of a mere desire to know will find it difficult to dedicate himself to his studies with the same enthusiasm as one who knows that his whole success in life, both in this world and the next, depends on his study.

The awareness that Torah is for life can also direct us to the most proper—and effective—study practices.¹¹⁸ As Rabbi Hirsch says:

Our task in life has no greater enemy, and there is no greater cancer on our present state, than ignorance. Study Torah thoroughly—Torah, the Prophets, *Ketuvim* (Hagiographa), Talmud and decisors. And do not study out of a desire to be a Rabbi. Study Torah as a businessman, a tradesman, an artist, a doctor, or a scientist. You are to learn Torah for life.¹¹⁹

“The Day That the Torah Was Given”

According to the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle, we may view the Torah as an instruction book for managing the world. Without the Torah, any use we make of the world may be harmful; with it, every aspect of the world is potentially significant and beneficent. This seemingly simple idea explains a number of curious mitzvot concerning the Shavu'ot festival.

We find in the Mishna that the Tanaim disagree about the obligation to be joyful on the Torah's festivals. In one place Scripture implies that festival days should be devoted to God, but another verse implies that they are for ourselves. On this basis Rabbi Eli'ezer concludes that festivals should, if possible, be devoted to God exclusively (i.e. to Torah study);¹²⁰ whereas Rabbi Yehoshu'a concludes that they should be divided between God and ourselves.

In the Gemara, R. El'azar states that regarding Shavu'ot even R. Eli'ezer agrees that we should devote the festival to ourselves in part. Why? “It is the day on which the Torah was given.”¹²¹ An amazing argument! Surely this ought to be the reason for R. Yehoshu'a to agree that the day be devoted exclusively to Torah study—not the reverse. But once we have grasped that the Torah gives meaning to this world and teaches us how to use it in the service of God, the argument becomes eminently understandable; especially on Shavu'ot we should serve God with this-worldliness, for it is Shavu'ot that made this world usable for such service.

Another regulation unique to Shavu'ot concerns *hametz* and *matza*, which, in Torah thought, symbolize materialism and spirituality respectively.¹²² All year *hametz* is relegated to the “private table” in our home and

matza appears on the “divine table”—the altar in the Temple. (All flour-offerings must be matza.) Only on Pesah, the “festival of matzot,” is our private table to be free of *hametz*; and conversely, only on Shavu’ot is *hametz* offered in the Sanctuary, in the form of “the two loaves.”¹²³ Only the this-worldliness of the Torah can explain why of all days the “time of the giving of the Torah” becomes the festival of *hametz* and the material world.

Turning to animal sacrifices, we discover another anomaly unique to Shavu’ot. The voluntary sacrifices are of two types, *’olah* and *shelamim*. The *’olah* is given over completely to God, being burned on the altar. The *shelamim*, in contrast, are mostly eaten by the offerer and his guests, who thereby consummate the offering. *Shelamim*, with their physical enjoyment, are brought as a rule only by private individuals. Most public sacrifices, and all voluntary public sacrifices, are of the *’olah* type—totally spiritual in nature. The public does not bring *shelamim*. There is just one exception, only one *shelamim* sacrifice brought by the public; and that is on Shavu’ot.¹²⁴ Only “on the day that the Torah was given” must the nation as a whole indulge in a this-worldly *shelamim*—as if to confirm the concept of *Torah ’Im Derekh Erets*.¹²⁵

TORAH ’IM DEREKH ERETS AS TOTAL SANCTITY

The *Torah ’Im Derekh Erets* principle never entirely negates any physical, worldly matter. This is one of its outstanding features, causing it to reject extremism and making it intrinsically moderate. Lest the reader mistake this moderation for compromise, it is important to point out that quite to the contrary, the blending of Torah with *derekh erets* demands from the Jew total dedication—emotional, intellectual, and physical. In the words of Rabbi Hirsch: “Look upon yourself and all that is yours as My property, and devote yourself wholly to Me, with every fraction of your property, every moment of your time; with mind, feeling, bodily strength and material means, with word and action.”¹²⁶ Such total dedication—to account for every moment of our lives, every penny of our possession, every small pleasure we derive from the world; to devote ourselves completely to the service of God—that is the peak of sanctity, and that is what *Torah ’Im Derekh Erets* expects of us.

Such sanctity demands a proper use of the means which the world puts at our disposal. That is a conduct far more difficult to attain than merely refraining from improper use of our means, with the limited sanctity that that produces. *Mesilat Yesharim* sees in this the superiority of sanctity over purity; for purity, he says, requires no more than self-restraint, whereas sanctity means action—the proper use of each thing in the world. The *Sefat Emet* even declares the proper use of material means to be the primary activity of man.¹²⁷

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The State of Israel

The Torah declares that the world's salvation will come only through a Torah state established in Erets Yisrael and the fulfillment of Isaiah's vision, when "the mountain of God's house will be established . . . and all the nations will flow there . . . for Torah will come forth from Zion and God's word from Jerusalem."¹²⁸ When we devote our time and effort to *derekh erets* in a foreign environment, we are, in effect, supporting and developing a non-Torah society and economy, and our contributions are significant only on the individual level. On the Torah-national level our efforts are of no value. In Erets Yisrael, however, where *derekh erets* may be a part of the development of a Torah state, worldly endeavors take on a far greater significance. Indeed, both Rabbi Ya'akov Emden and the *Hatam Sofer*¹²⁹ point out that *derekh erets* is of special importance in the Land of Israel.

In times past, Providence limited our *derekh erets* efforts to such foreign environments. But our generation is privileged to participate in "the settlement of our people in its own state in the Holy Land."¹³⁰ The working of Providence is slowly unfolding before our eyes. Two hundred years ago our poor and persecuted people was largely deprived of the *derekh erets* of the surrounding modern culture and was in no condition to set up and run a state. The emancipation changed all that by granting Jewry access to surrounding culture, which, together with its grave dangers, offered huge potential benefits. Then, after the Jewish people had had a chance to become familiar with foreign culture and learn how to evaluate modern *derekh erets* came the real challenge: an opportunity to set up a Torah state in the framework of this *derekh erets*.

True, the opportunity was not handed to us on a silver platter. What we did receive, to start off with, is far from being a Torah state—but it is the germ of one; or, in the words of Rav Velvel of Brisk, "a smile from Divine Providence."¹³¹ The task of bringing this germ to fruition is awesome, even overwhelming; but there it is, staring us in the face, challenging us. This is recognized not only by the Torah scholars associated with the Zionist movement, such as Rabbi Joseph D. Soloveitchik (cf. his *Kol Dodi Dofek*), but even by those classified as anti-Zionist. Thus R. Dessler, the late spiritual mentor of Yeshivat Ponevich, referring to "the settling of our people in its own state in the Holy Land," warns: "Woe to him who comes to the Day of Judgement and is still too blind to see this concrete fact."¹³² Or, as an eminent *rosh yeshiva* put it, the responsibility for converting the present, essentially secular state into a Torah state rests squarely on the shoulders of the Torah community: "The healthy elements of the Jewish people bear a great responsibility . . . for the maintenance of the Jewish state."¹³³ Under these circumstances, all the above forms of involvement—social, political, economic,

and professional—on the part of the Torah community, are the call of the hour, if this “Divine trial balloon,”¹³⁴ the State of Israel, is to become a Torah state and succeed in its ultimate mission of being a model to the nations.

The Situation in the Torah World Today

When we view the Divine challenge facing us, the call of the hour, in conjunction with the situation in the modern Torah world, we note certain discrepancies. The Torah world is, today, concentrated primarily in the higher yeshivot and *kolelim*. After all that we have seen in the preceding pages, we would confidently expect to find these institutions firmly and extensively involved in every kind of worldly activity, especially political and social ones. Yet the yeshivot and *kolelim* tend to evade, even disparage, worldly endeavors. Can it be that outstanding Torah authorities would deny a basic Torah principle?

There seem to be two major reasons for this puzzling conduct. Firstly, the undeniable fact that in the past the study of philosophy and science has harmed many who devoted themselves to it. This has given rise to the erection of protective fences to guard against the harmful effects of secular studies.¹³⁵ The need for such fences is still with us.

There are also reservations about taking out time from full-time learning to acquire a livelihood of any sort, and most especially an academic profession. This seems to be a recent development, not evident in our past. When, for example, Rashba temporarily banned the study of Greek literature by the young, he explicitly excluded the study of medicine, which is practical and necessary, and therefore to be encouraged;¹³⁶ and as recently as sixty years ago the eminent *roshei yeshiva* still emphasized that working for a living is a mitzva.¹³⁷

Whence, then, this sudden reservation about learning a profession? I asked a number of Torah authorities about it, and they all explained it as a temporary emergency measure (*hora-at sha'ah*—see Appendix). After the Holocaust extinguished the major Torah centers of the world, it became necessary to deviate somewhat from Torah principles in order to restore the proper balance between Torah scholars and the general public, lest the Torah be forgotten from Israel. Fear of harmful social influences may also be part of this consideration. In any event, all of the Torah authorities agreed that, according to the normative Torah law, it is preferable that everyone be self-supporting as long as this does not prevent him from being learned in Torah. (See the Appendix, which discusses this issue at length.)

Rabbi S.R. Hirsch's Contribution To *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*

We have concluded here that the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle is, and always has been, an integral part of the Torah—perhaps even one of its

foundation stones. If that is so, what was the contribution of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, whose name is usually associated with this principle?

It appears that his contribution was a dual one.

The unnaturally restrictive circumstances that prevailed for centuries in the Jewish ghettos had greatly limited *derekh erets* activities, with the natural result that awareness of their significance atrophied somewhat. When the emancipation opened the gates of general culture to the Jewish population, Rabbi Hirsch realized the great potential this situation held in terms of restoring *derekh erets* to its proper role. He also realized the urgency of the matter—without *derekh erets*, Judaism turns into form without substance. The mistaken belief, prevalent early in the era of emancipation, that Torah is incompatible with modern *derekh erets* had caused a mass flight from Judaism to Reform and even to Christianity. By demonstrating that the Torah affirms all that is true in modern culture, Rabbi Hirsch made his first contribution: substantially stemming the tide of desertion and showing the way to the rejuvenation of classical Judaism.

But he went further than that. In order to remedy the estrangement from *derekh erets*, Rabbi Hirsch developed an educational system combining secular studies with a Torah education. This second contribution was, however, something of an innovation in Jewish terms, and it may be argued that it was a *hora-at sha'ah*, a temporary measure (though even if we grant this, there may be good reason to maintain that its time has not yet passed).¹³⁸

If R. Hirsch's contribution to *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* was limited, then, to but two areas, his accomplishments in these two areas were truly gigantic. Perhaps this contribution is capable, even today, of healing our sorely troubled nation of its spiritual crisis. However, anyone who thinks that Rabbi Hirsch originated the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle is surely mistaken.

CONCLUSION

The special circumstances prevailing in our days demand that the Torah world constantly re-evaluate its cultural strategy. We have seen here that the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle, which demands involvement—social, economic, and political—with the world, is fundamental to the Torah ideology, and furthermore seems to be the especial need of the hour. It is not an innovation, and certainly not an emergency measure. On the contrary, the present widespread deviation from it is an emergency measure, that was apparently necessary, at one time, to save the Jewish people spiritually, but whose time may have passed.

With the establishment of the State of Israel, the importance of involvement with society and economy has multiplied manifold. This adds a special urgency to the question of encouraging *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets*. On

the one hand, such a decision has to be in the hands of the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people; on the other, our Sages have taught us that “the leader is suited to the generation,”¹³⁹ implying that rank and file, too, have an impact on the quality of their leadership.

Let us, then, strengthen Torah and *derekh erets* (and both of them need constant re-enforcement),¹⁴⁰ and so strengthen the hands of our Torah leaders as they guide us on the path to the final redemption.

APPENDIX MAKING A LIVING—THE HALAKHIC VIEW

Introduction

Our generation has been privileged to witness a revival of Torah learning unrivaled in modern Jewish history. Cities like Jerusalem, Bene Berak, and New York have become Torah centers probably dwarfing (in size) anything that existed in Europe. In great measure, this revival is due to the brilliant and dedicated efforts of Torah luminaries such as R. Aharon Kotler and the Rosh Yeshiva of Ponevich; and one cannot but stand in awe of their accomplishments. However, if this resurgence is to carry on to a total renewal of Judaism, we need to remember that circumstances change continually, and that in the wake of change we must re-examine the foundations of our policy.

The inherent tension between making a living and studying Torah “day and night” is an essential element of Judaism. There is a strong trend nowadays to avoid dealing with this tension by providing all Torah students with financial support to enable them to study undisturbed. This is generally justified as an emergency measure (*hora-at sha’ah*) called for by the special circumstances under which we live. Unfortunately, there is much confusion over this issue. The present appendix is an attempt to clarify it.

It is not my intention to offer guidance to anyone, only to investigate what is normative halakha and what is *hora-at sha’ah* (temporary injunction) in this matter.

Hora-at Sha’ah

One might ask what difference it makes whether a decision is based on an emergency situation or on “normative Torah.” In fact there are a number of important differences. The one that has the greatest interest for the Talmud student is that a responsum referring to normal halakha can increase our understanding of Torah. For a halakhic decision is significant not only for its practical substance, but also for the insight it gives us into the underlying *sugya*—the original Talmudic passage and the interpretation given it by the early decisors. But this is so only when the decision is based on normative Torah.

Occasionally, however, when danger threatens the Jewish community, our spiritual leaders may be forced to make a decision contrary to normal halakha. Such ad hoc decisions are referred to as *hora-at sha'ah*—temporary injunctions.¹ Since they are not based on a halakha, these injunctions cannot provide insights into a *sugya*. On the contrary, any effort to reconcile them with the words of the Talmud and earlier authorities is likely to distort our understanding of the *sugya*.

Knowing what is “normative halakha” is important for another reason as well. A person who is prevented by circumstances from abiding by the *hora-at sha'ah* decreed by the sages of his time, and instead follows the normative halakha, may mistakenly see his life as worthless, with all the harmful psychological consequences of such a view. This issue is well illustrated by the answer given by Rabbi Y. Hutner to a letter from an alumnus of his yeshiva. The young man complained bitterly of leading a double life: his whole day was wasted on his professional activities, he said, and only in the evening did he live as a Torah Jew. Rabbi Hutner rebuked him severely for his distorted view. “A person who has one room as a regular domicile, and on occasion rents another room in a hotel, leads a double life. But if he acquires a second room adjoining his domicile, he will lead a fuller life, not a double life.”²

Halakhic Issues Regarding Earning a Livelihood

There are primarily three *sugyot* relating to making a living:

- (1) The obligation to earn a livelihood versus our duty to study Torah day and night.
- (2) The obligation to learn a trade and, especially, to teach one's son a trade.
- (3) The prohibition of using the Torah to make a living.

Each of these *sugyot* needs to be discussed individually in order to develop a comprehensive picture of the Torah's position.

The Obligation to Earn a Livelihood

The major passage dealing with the conflicting demands of studying Torah and making a living is in *Berakhot*.³

Our sages have taught: Why does Scripture tell us “And you shall gather in your grain”? Because it says: “This book of Torah shall not depart from your mouth,” and so we might have thought that this is meant literally; therefore we are taught “and you shall gather in your grain”—deal with [Torah study] in a down-to-earth manner (*minhag derekh erez*). These are the words of R. Yishma'el.

R. Shim'on ben Yohai says: "Could it be that a man should plough at ploughing time, sow at sowing time . . . and winnow when the wind blows? What would become of the Torah? Rather, when Israel do God's will their work is done by others, as Scripture says: "And strangers will stand up and pasture your flock."

. . . Said Abaye: "Many have acted according to R. Yishma'el, and succeeded; [and many have acted] according to R. Shim'on ben Yohai, and did not succeed." Rava said to the sages: "Please do not appear before me [in the yeshiva] during the Nisan [grain harvest] and Tishre [wine and oil pressing and sowing] seasons, so that you will not be distracted by your livelihood the whole year." [Working during these two periods provided enough income to study undisturbed for the rest of the year.]

Since both Abaye and Rava support R. Yishma'el's position—to deal with Torah in a down-to-earth manner—it is not surprising that the major halakhic summaries, both *Tur* and *Shulhan Arukh*, adopt his opinion. We read in the *Shulhan Arukh*: "When one leaves the synagogue [in the morning], he should go to the study hall. . . . Afterward he should go to his occupation, because all Torah that is not combined with work will eventually fail and cause sin."⁴ Ba'al HaTurim, R. Yosef Karo, and Rema all concur here.

Many aggadic passages in the Gemara stress the overriding importance of Torah study, and many others extol the virtues of work. We should, of course, study all these passages and also heed the Talmudic recommendation to make our "Torah permanent and our work temporary."⁵ But aggadic passages are outside the scope of this short treatise; as we stated at the outset, we will limit ourselves to the unanimous halakhic conclusion: "Deal with [the Torah] in a down-to-earth manner."

One should not quote non-halakhic writings and *mussar* works in clarification of a halakhic issue. Nevertheless, we may permit ourselves to mention just one remarkable comment by R. Haim of Volozhin, which has aroused great interest. (Even the Hafetz Hayim quotes it, though only as background material and not as halakha.)⁶ R. Haim addresses Abaye's statement: "Many acted according to R. Yishma'el and succeeded; [and many have acted] according to R. Shimon ben Yohai, and did not succeed." He interprets it to mean that when the many acted according to R. Yishma'el, they succeeded; however, if many followed R. Shim'on they did not succeed, because his approach is tenable only for the select few.

Despite his novel interpretation, however, nowhere does R. Haim in fact challenge the *Shulhan Arukh's* ruling that one should work for a living, or its halakhic consequences.^{6a} (Furthermore, even if Abaye's position did not support R. Yishma'el, the halakha would still be according to the latter, since Rava's opinion supports him and, as a rule, Rava's opinion overrides that of Abaye.)

In our generation, R. Moshe Feinstein affirmed this decision: "A man must certainly work to earn a living to meet all his needs and those of his wife and of his household, and he should prepare enough not just for one day but for a long period."⁷

The Obligation to Learn a Trade (*Umanut*)

The obligation to learn a trade for a livelihood is derived either from the verse, "See life with the woman you love"⁸ or from "You shall choose life."⁹ Rambam codifies this obligation as follows: "It is the way of a sensible person first to find steady work which supports him, then to buy a house to live in, and afterwards to marry."¹⁰

Among the obligations of a father to his son is to teach the son a trade so that he need not be an unskilled laborer.¹¹ This requirement has been codified in at least two undisputed halakhic rulings, which are incorporated in the standard halakhic compendia. First, arranging for one's son's apprenticeship to learn a trade is considered a "spiritual matter" (*heftse shamayim*) and is therefore permitted on Shabbath;¹² second, a father may strike his son in the course of teaching him a trade, and if he accidentally causes his son's death he is not exiled, because this happened while he was doing his duty.¹³

The Prohibition Against Using the Torah to Make a Living

The Mishna states: "Do not make [the Torah] a crown to glorify yourself with, nor a hoe to dig with . . . He who uses the crown [of Torah] will perish. This teaches us that whoever derives benefit from the Torah removes his life from the world."¹⁴ R. Ovadia of Bertinoro comments: "He who does so abuses the sanctity of the Torah, and deserves the death penalty from the Heavenly Court." His phrasing alludes to the Talmudic teaching that one who makes use of the Torah is like King Belshazzar, who was killed because he made use of the holy vessels that had been taken from the Temple in Jerusalem.¹⁵ This Mishna, too, has been accepted as halakha. Rambam writes:

Anyone who decides to study Torah and not to work but to be supported by charity has desecrated God's name [the most grievous transgression in the world]; he has degraded the Torah, extinguished the light of the Law, brought evil upon himself, and removed his life from the world . . . Furthermore, the [Sages] commanded us: "Love work and hate *rabbanut* . . ."¹⁶

This too is cited in both *Tur* and *Shulhan Arukh* (in the latter only by Rema).¹⁷ However, Rema continues by bringing two other, more permissive opinions: one permitting the rabbi of the town to accept a salary from his

community, and another allowing every sage and his students to receive stipends from private donors.

These lenient views have long prevailed, and Torah authorities have gone to great lengths to justify the apparent deviation from a perfectly clear halakha. As early an authority as the classical commentator on Rambam, *Kesef Mishneh*, wrestles with the problem. He rules that a scholar who cannot otherwise support himself may accept payment for teaching, responding to Torah queries, and judging between litigants. In conclusion he writes: "Even though we admit that the halakha is according to [Rambam], perhaps the sages throughout the generations agreed [to depart from it] because of "et la'asot laShem, heferu toratekha"—under emergency conditions, one may deviate from normative Torah. This is in agreement with the first lenient view cited above, permitting payment for services rendered.

The most permissive opinion is that of Rashbatz,¹⁸ who bases himself on the concept of compensation for work-hours lost (*sekhar batala*). This has a basis in the Gemara, which reports how Amoraim asked for compensation for their lost income when they were requested to sit on a court.¹⁹ Rashbatz expands this principle to include functionaries, such as rabbis and *dayanim*, who obviously are forgoing their opportunity for a secular profession to serve the community.

He also rules that students are permitted to receive stipends. Since there the concept of *sekhar batala* does not apply, this permission appears to be an emergency measure.

An interesting personal note is Rashbatz's account of his own experience in this matter:

On this basis we ourselves accept a stipend from the community to be its rabbi and *dayan*. . . . We clearly did not study Torah in order to become [rabbinic] leaders, for we were propertied, having studied medicine, a profession which provides a good livelihood in [Christian Spain]. But persecutions forced us to flee those countries; and if the practice of medicine would suffice to support us in this country where we have settled, we would not have come to this deplorable state of affairs.²⁰

As a matter of fact, the permissibility of accepting payment for Torah as an emergency measure, required by current circumstances, is cited by a number of additional authorities, such as R. Yitzhak Abarbanel,²¹ the Hatam Sofer,²² and R. Moshe Feinstein.²³ Maharshal, too, writes: "Indeed, otherwise Torah would by now have vanished from Israel."²⁴ In practice, since the Middle Ages Torah functionaries have most often been permitted to accept payment.

The devastation of most of the major Torah centers during the European holocaust has added a new dimension to this emergency measure. As R. Moshe Feinstein put it:

Every *ben Torah* and yeshiva student should remember the great destruction of Torah that was visited upon the world. This imposes a great obligation upon all Torah students in the yeshivot to try to be great Torah scholars and guides and G-d-fearing men in their place.²⁵

This sense of urgency explains the current proliferation of *kolelim*—which were rare in pre-war Europe.

There may, of course, be additional reasons for the stronger emphasis on exclusive devotion to Torah study today; but the above is what I have found.

Conclusions

The Torah obligates every Jewish man to establish a livelihood for himself. In the words of R. Moshe Feinstein: “A man is not only permitted, but obligated to do business and work for his livelihood, and he is forbidden to say that even if he does nothing [to support himself], God will provide for him somehow.”²⁶

Preferably, this livelihood should be from a trade or a profession, and every father is obliged to teach his son a trade. According to the normative halakha, one may not derive material benefits from Torah knowledge. However, when strict adherence to this rule would endanger the very perpetuation of Torah knowledge, one may accept payment for promulgating Torah and, possibly, even for studying it.

Many contemporary Lithuanian *roshei yeshivot* contend that today’s special situation calls for an abrogation in many, or even most, cases of the obligations engendered by the three *sugyot* we have discussed. Their position is well illustrated by the following statement of R. Moshe Feinstein: “As for those who wish to pretend to piety by adopting the Rambam’s position, this is the advice of the evil inclination, to stop his Torah study and involve him with a profession or business, until in the end he forgets even the little he has already learned and cannot set aside even a little time to study Torah.”²⁷

On the other hand, my revered *rav*, Rabbi Joseph Breuer, believed that a person can prepare for a livelihood, and go on to be a professional or a businessman, without ceasing to study Torah. He maintained that there would always be those who “make their Torah fixed and their work incidental,” and from them our spiritual leadership would emerge. In other words, he felt that on the whole normative halakha could be implemented today.

It is important to be aware that this dispute concerns only the need for a *hora-at sha’ah*. May we soon see such a revival of Torah and wisdom as to make all such measures unnecessary.

NOTES

This is an expanded version of a Hebrew article which first appeared in *Hama-ayan*, Nisan-Tamuz, 5751.

1. This idea was expressed by Hillel as follows: "If you see a generation to whom the Torah is dear, spread [Torah]—[a generation] to whom Torah is not dear, turn inward." *Berakhot* 63a.
2. R. S.R. Hirsch, Commentary to Genesis 48:3-6.
3. Irving Kristol, in the lead article of *Commentary* (Aug. 1991), writes: "Secular humanism is brain dead even as its heart continues to pump energy into all of our institutions."
4. The Midrash states: "Normally, [of] one thousand entering [the study of] Scripture.. one hundred [enter the study of] Mishnah . . .ten [enter the study of] Talmud . . ." (*Vayikra Rabba* 2:1). This implies that ordinarily only 1% of the population receiving Torah education becomes Talmud students. In Israel, the proportion of Jewish youths entering serious Talmud study today is close to 10% of the total Jewish student population. Hence our reference to "the unprecedented numerical strength of the Torah elite."
5. Hazon Ish, *Yoreh De'a* 150:1. According to Torah law, the majority opinion is binding only after the disputants convened, so that each one heard—and weighed—the arguments of the opposing authorities; see *Responsa Yehave Da'at* 5:305. There, among others, are cited to this effect: Rashba, *Get Pashut*, Maral Ibn Haviv, and Maharyk.
6. This principle may be the subject of a dispute between Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel (see Malbim beginning of *Parshat Hukat*, s.v. *ukevar*, end), with the halakha decided in favor of the latter, who accept the principle.
7. The expression is based on the Mishna (*Avot* 2:2), which states "yafe talmud Torah 'Im derekh erets"—Torah study combined with worldly endeavors is beautiful.
8. Rabbi Josef Breuer, personal communication.
9. Rabbi Y.Y. Weinberg, "Torat Hayim," in *HaRav S.R. Hirsch, Mishnato veShitato*, Jerusalem (5722), p. 192.
10. *Bereshit Rabba* 19:7 and *Bamidbar Rabba* 12:6.
11. "Ki HKB'H mehabev et hatahtonim"—*Yefe Toar* to the former.
12. *Bereshit Rabba* 1:1.
13. *Shabbat* 88a-89b.
14. *Yalkut Shim'oni*, Psalms no. 639.
15. *Avot deRabbi Natan* 11 on Genesis 2:4.
16. *Bereshit Rabba* 14, end.

The meaning of "to work and guard it" is subject of dispute in another Midrash (cited in *Yalkut Shim'oni* No. 22). There the first opinion which takes the expression literally, is disputed by a second opinion, which interprets it to refer to Torah study and mitzvah fulfillment. Since apparently all early authorities commenting on this verse [R. Avraham ibn 'Ezra, Redak, Hizkuni (all *ad loc.*) and Ramban (to Genesis 2:8)] agree with the first opinion, I have adopted this here.

17. *Ha'amek Davar*, Genesis 2:4.
18. *Kiddushin* 40a-b.
19. *Avot* 1:17.
20. The principles described here and in the following five sections are treated far more extensively in my book *Torah Study* (Part 1, chapter 1 and Part 7, chapter 2).

In fact we do find in Judaism, even among the early authorities, an occasional effort to down-play the importance of the laws of nature. Perhaps the most important spokesman of this position is Ramban who writes:

When the Jewish people as a whole is perfect, they function—physically and nationally, individually and as a group—not according to nature at all . . . so that they will have no need for physicians at all . . . and thus did the righteous people

conduct themselves in the days of prophecy; even when, because of a sin, they did fall ill, they did not turn to a physician, but rather to a prophet. (Commentary to Leviticus 26:11. Cf. also his commentary to Genesis 12:10, end; also to Genesis 18:19 and Job 36:7.)

However Ramban himself seems to apply this principle only in a very limited sense. He was the first to state that the practice of medicine is not only permissible, but a holy obligation of the highest urgency (see below, ref. 76), and, in general, often points out that the Torah requires us to take full account of the laws of nature and to function within their framework. Cf. his commentaries to Numbers 1:45 and 13:2 and to Deuteronomy 20:9.

Laws of nature are a restriction that God imposes upon Himself voluntarily. When we lose sight of their importance, we may become impatient with this "restriction" on God. We must resist this impatience, lest we transgress against the *Torah 'Im Derekh Erets* principle.

21. Jeremiah 33:25.
22. Exodus 12:2; *Rosh HaShana* 22a; Ramban *Hil. Kiddush haHodesh* 1,7.
23. Deuteronomy 31:19; *Sanhedrin* 21b.
24. *Derashot haRan* VIII (Feldman Ed., pp. 129 & 140).
25. *Hovot haLevavot, Sha'ar haBitahon* 3, end.
26. Cf. Ramban's commentaries to Genesis 12:10, end, and Leviticus 26:11.
27. *Ibid.* Deuteronomy 20:9; Numbers 1:45.
28. *'Avoda Zara* 54a.
29. *Berakhot* 9:3. Cf. the elaborations of this by *Gevurat Ari, Ta'anit* 19a and *Iggerot Moshe, Orah Hayim* II, no. 111.
30. *Meshekh Hokhma*, Leviticus 26:1.
31. See Ref. 20, above
32. Rabbi Ya'akov Provenceali, "Responsum Concerning the Study of the Wisdoms" in *Divre Hakhamim*, Rabbi E. Ashkenazi, ed.; p. 71. Note that Rabbi Ya'akov was a very highly regarded authority; the XV Century author of the authoritative *Sefer haAgur* asked him for his approval (*haskama*) of this work.
33. *Shabbat* 75a, quoting Isaiah 5:12
34. Rambam, *Hil. Yesode haTorah* 2:22 and *Teshuva*, end.
35. Rabbi Ya'akov Moshe, *Ayil haMeshulash*, Second Introduction, end, commenting on *Avot* 3:17.
36. Deuteronomy 4:6; *Shabbat* 75a; the parenthetical explication is based on Rashi and Maharsha *ad loc.*
37. *Netivot 'Olam, N. HaTorah* 14, from Rabbenu Bahya to *Avot* 3, end. This metaphor is used also by the grandson of the Gaon of Vilna, *loc. cit.* 35 above.
38. Quoted by Rabbi Barukh of Shklov in his translation of Euclid. Two other disciples of his cite him to this effect: R. Yisrael of Shklov (*Peat haShulhan*, Introduction) and R. Hillel of Shklov (*Kol haTor* V 2:6 and 12). Doubt has been raised concerning the authenticity of the latter work; however the former two works are beyond suspicion.
39. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, Commentary to *Pirke Avot* 6:6.
40. Genesis 1:28. According to R. S.R. Hirsch's commentary there, this is a commandment. But even if we interpret it as a blessing, it still is an expression of the Creator's will and, as such, is obligatory upon us; cf. Chapter 3, Section 1 in my book *Torah Study*, part 2.
41. *Sanhedrin* 5b.
42. R. Yosef Rozin, Responsum, published in *HaMa'ayan* (Nisan 5736, pp. 1-9). It is discussed in my book *Torah Study* Part 7, Chapter 5. His deduction is based on the fact that knowledge in this area was certified by the Babylonian Exilarch and not the *Nasi* in Erets Yisrael.
43. *Iggerot Hazon Ish* I, no. 31.
44. *Aderet Eliyahu* on Deuteronomy 13:15.
45. *Ibid.* 16:19, referring also to Exodus 23:8.

46. Leviticus 25:17.
47. *Ibid* 19:17
48. 'Arakhin 16b and Rashi *ad loc.*
49. See Ref. 20, above.
50. See Ref. 17, above.
51. *Berakhot* 8a.
52. *Avot*, 1:10.
53. *Avot deRabbi Natan* 11.
54. *Derekh Hayim* on *Avot* 1:10.
55. *Avot deRabbi Nathan* 11.
56. *Vayikra Rabah* 25:3.
- 56a. *Yefe Toar ad loc.*
57. E.g., *Shabbat* 31b and 49b. Cf. also R. S.R. Hirsch, commentary to Exodus 35:1-2, s.v. *ele hadevarim*.
58. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch, Commentary to Genesis 48:3. See also *ibid.* 17:6.
59. *Torat Moshe* on *Shoftim*, s.v. *mi ha-ish*. Similarly in his commentary to *Sukka* 36a, s.v. *domeh lekushi*.
60. Cf. , *Avot* 2:2 and the major commentaries *ad loc.*; also R. Yishma'el's pronouncement, *Berakhot* 35b .
61. According to R. Yishma'el the obligation to make a living is derived from Deuteronomy 11:14 (see above, note 58), and that the livelihood be by means of a trade, from Deuteronomy 30:19 (see J. Talmud, *Peah* 1:1); a *baraita* brought by Rav Yosef derives the importance of having a trade from Exodus 18:20 (*Bava Metzi'a* 30b and Rashi *ad loc.*); Hizkia derives it from Ecclesiastes 9:9 (*Kidushin* 30b).
62. "It is better that he hire himself out to idolatry, rather than accept support from others" (*Bava Batra* 110a); this is interpreted as recommending accepting degrading work, incompatible with one's station. "Turn your Shabbath into a week day, rather than accepting support from others" (*Shabbat* 118a); this is interpreted as forgoing the required third Shabbath meal.
63. Quoted by Mordekhai (*Shabbat* 1:258), *Tur* (*Orah Hayim* 248 end), and *Shulhan Arukh* (*loc. cit.*, gloss).
64. *Magen Avot* 1:10.
65. Rambam, *Hil. De'ot* 5:11.
66. *Orah Hayim* 156.
67. Cf. my *Torah Study* (Feldheim, 1990); Part I, Chap. 1.
68. Deuteronomy 16:15.
69. R. S.R. Hirsch, *Gesammelte Schriften* 3:29-33.
70. *Zevahim* 101a. Rabbinic decree has extended this period to seven and thirty days (in case of parents, twelve months).
71. Cf. *Zevahim* 15:2; Rambam, *Hil. Bait Mikdash* 2:7-8.
72. Cf. R. Hirsch, *Horeb* Sec. 313.
73. See Ref. 18, above.
74. *Hulin* 10a.
75. *Ketubot* 19a.
76. Taz on *Even Ha'Ezer* 25, note 1, commenting on Psalms 127:2.
77. Rambam, Commentary on the Mishnah, *Pesahim* 4, end.
78. Ramban, *Torat haAdam* (Chavel Ed., p. 42). *Shulkhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De'a* 336. This position is especially noteworthy in view of Ramban's general emphasis on divine interference with natural processes, on behalf of the righteous, even to the exclusion of the practice of medicine; cf. his comments quoted in Ref. 18, above.
79. *Sefer Hasidim*, no. 1469 (Berlin Ed.), commenting on Ecclesiastes 7:16..
80. Rambam, *Shemona Perakim* (introduction to *Avot*), Chapt. 5.
81. *Sefer haHinukh*, No. 73. This should be contrasted with Rambam's statement: "It is obvi-

- ous that the destruction of the soul causes the thriving of the body and the thriving of the body causes the destruction of the soul." (Comment. on Mishna, Intro.—p. 55c in Vilna Ed., p. 22b in R. Y. Kapah's Ed.)
82. *Nedarim* 38a; R. S.R. Hirsch on Exodus 2:11.
 83. *Nedarim* 38a. Rambam (*Shemona Perakim* 7) interprets "strong" and "wealthy" in a spiritual sense according to the mishna (*Avot* 4:1). But Ran (*Derashot* V) challenges this interpretation on the basis of the wording in the Talmud there, and interprets both terms literally.
 84. *M. Bikurim* 1:6.
 85. Lev. 23:40; *Sukka* 41b.
 86. Cf. *Sukka* 28b and *Hidushe Rashba*, there. He cites Ramban as saying that only an "ezrah ra'anan" can fulfill the mitzva. R. Leib Haiman (pers. comm.) explains, by means of this, the wording of the Gemara (*Sukka* 2a): ". . . leave your permanent dwelling and live in a temporary abode," where the first clause seems to be superfluous. (The expression *ezrah ra'anan* alludes to Psalms 37:35.)
 87. *Shevu'ot* 6b and Rashi *ad loc.*
 88. *Tosefta Shekalim* 1:1.
 89. *Kethubot* 106a.
 90. *Ta'anit* 20b.
 91. *Shabbat* 33b and Rashi on Genesis 33:18.
 92. *Bava Batra* 9b and 10a.
 93. Rambam, *Hil. Mekhira* 14:9-11. *Kesef Mishneh* (*ad loc.*) cites Rivash (Resp. No. 399) explaining that the agreement of the Torah sage is not required for city ordinances, only for labor union regulations. On the other hand, Maharytz ("New" series, No. 199) and others question this limitation. See *Pithe Teshuva, Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat* 231, note 6, at length.
 94. R. Barukh Epstein, *Mekor Barukh*, fol. 1012a.
 95. J. Talmud, *Nedarim* 9:4.
 96. Jeremiah 50:36; *Berakhot* 63b.
 97. *Shabbat* 33b. The Talmud (*Berakhot* 35b) records a dispute between R. Yishma'el and R. Shim'on. The former interprets Scripture to require us to interrupt our Torah study in order to attend to the demands of our livelihood, while R. Shim'on challenges this position. On the basis of a number of statements of R. Shim'on in other contexts, *Sede Hemed* (vav 15, s.v. *ve-li*) suggests that R. Shim'on withdrew his opposition, and started endorsing working for a livelihood, as a result of his experience on leaving the cave (as recounted in *Shabbat* 33b).
 98. Hatam Sofer, beginning of *Parshat Kedoshim*.
 99. Psalms 116:9; *Yoma* 71a.
 100. Genesis 2:18. Cf. also *Tur, Even Ha'Ezer*, beginning.
 101. The Mishna (*Avot* 3:7) states that a person who, while on the road, interrupts his Torah study to admire the beauty of nature, is as if he had forfeited his life.
 102. *Berakhot* 58b. 13
 103. When the great Rabban Shim'on ben Gamliel accidentally saw a beautiful gentile woman, he exclaimed: "How great are Your works, O God!" (*Avoda Zara* 20a, quoting Psalms 104:24).
 104. R. Y.Y. Bloch, *Shi'ure Da'at* I, pp.193-4.
 105. E.g., *Bava Metzi'a* 84a; *Bava Batra* 58a.
 106. *Nedarim* 9b. Note that Shim'on the Righteous concurred when the youth explained his motivation to gain control over his erotic inclinations.
 107. "Three things restore the mind: [musical] sound, sight, and fragrance." And three others "broaden the mind: a beautiful home, a beautiful wife, and beautiful furnishings" (*Berakhot* 57b).
 "When in a depressed mood, one should rid himself of it by listening to songs and various forms of music and by walking in orchards and magnificent edifices . . . and by contemplating beautiful paintings" (Rambam, *Shemona Perakim* 5).

See also the following.

108. *Berakhot* 57b; II Kings 3:15; *Pesahim* 117a.
109. *Sukka* 50b; *'Arakhin* 11a.
110. *Bava Kamma* 9b.
111. *Midrash R. Tanhuma*, Re-eh no. 12 and *Sefer Hasidim* no. 129.
112. *Sefer haHinukh* No. 275.
113. *Bereshit Rabba* 9:7.
114. *Kiddushin* 30b; Maharsha *ad. loc.*
115. See Ref. 24, above.
116. *Sefer haMitzvot*, Prohib. No. 32.
117. *Avot* 4:5 & 1:17.
118. Cf. my *Torah Study*, Part 5, for an extensive review of the opinions of Torah authorities on this issue.
119. *Gesammelte Schriften* 5:225 and *Horeb*, Sec. 493.
120. *Betsa* 15b.
121. *Pesahim* 68b.
122. A familiar example is the expression, "The leaven in the dough," referring to the physical in our nature, the *yetser hara'* (*Berakhoth* 17a).
123. *Leviticus* 23:17.
124. *Leviticus* 23:19.
125. Rabbi Josef Breuer, oral communication; a similar thought is brought by *Meshekh Hokhma* to *Exodus* 20:18.
126. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb*, Sec. 4, presumably based on *Tur* and *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayim* 231.
127. *Mesilat Yesharim* 26; *Sefat Emet*, 'Ekev 5633.
128. *Isaiah* 2:2-3
129. R. Y. Emden (Ya'avets), *Migdal 'Oz*, *'Aliyat HaBinyan*, sec. 11 and R. Moshe Sofer, *Torat Moshe*, *Shoftim*, s.v. *mi ha-ish*. Cf. also a similar idea brought in his commentary on *Sukka* 36a (s.v. *domeh lakushi*), where he alludes to the idea that in the diaspora—in contrast with Erets Yisrael—the strengthening of *derekh erets* comes at the expense of spiritual growth, confirming in the strongest terms our contention that *derekh erets* is far more significant in Erets Yisrael.
130. R. E. E. Dessler, *Mikhtav meEliyahu* III p. 352.
131. R. Velvel Soloveitchik concerning the U.N. resolution endorsing the partition of Palestine; quoted by R. S. Wolbe, *Ben Sheshet le'Asor*, p.145.
132. *Loc. cit.* 126.
133. R. Eliyahu Meir Bloch, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Telze, "Bulletin Union of Students of Yeshiva Telze-Cleveland," *Tevet* 5747.
134. R. Yosef Kahaneman, *Rosh Yeshiva* of Ponevizh, Closing Oration of the Third *Kenesia Gedola* of Agudath Israel in 1937.
135. Note that already Rav Sa'adya Gaon (10th century) (*Emunot veDe'ot*, Introduction—Section 6 in R. Y. Kapah's edition) refers to "those who oppose [the study of science] for in their opinion such study leads to heresy;" he dismisses them however with: "this is the opinion of the ignorant." But, as time went on, these dangers became more pronounced so that Rashba (13th century) felt compelled to issue a 50-year ban on the study of Greek literature by youths, excluding only medicine; see next note.
136. Rashba, *Responsa* I, nos. 415, 416.
137. E.g. R. Elhanan Wasserman, responsum, *Kovets Shi'urim* II, no. 47. Even R. B.B. Leibowitz in his famous responsum against university study (*Birkat Shemuel* *Kidushin*, No. 27) states that having a trade is a mitzva. See Appendix for additional references.
138. Today science and technology play an increasingly pervasive role, as we rely more and more on technological devices for our daily needs. Hence all that our sages have said about the importance of scientific knowledge applies today with even greater force.

It would therefore seem that R. Hirsch's *hora-at sha'ah*, issued 150 years ago, is no less applicable now. However, any decision on this issue must be made by those rabbinic leaders who are shouldering the responsibility for the community's spiritual welfare.

- 139. *'Arakhin* 17a.
- 140. *Berakhot* 32b.

NOTES TO APPENDIX

1. For a review of the various forms of rabbinic decrees contra dicting Torah law, see my article in *HaMa'ayan*, Nisan 5242.
2. R. Y. Hutner, *Pahad Yitzhak, Iggerot uMikhtavim*, No. 94.
3. *Berakhot* 35b.
4. *Orah Hayim* 155-6.
5. *Berakhot* 35b.
6. *Nefesh haHayim* I 8 and *Beur Halakha, Orah Hayim* 156, s.v. *sofah*. That *Beur Halakha* is meant as background material, see introduction to *Mishnah Berura*.
- 6a. Cf. refs. 12 & 13, below.
7. R. M. Feinstein, *Moriah*, nos. 133-6, p. 106.
8. *Kidushin* 30b from Ecclesiastes 9:9.
9. J. Talmud, *Peah* 1:1 from Deuteronomy 30:19. l5
10. Rambam, *Hil. De'ot* 5:11.
11. *Kidushin* 29a.

This halakhic *sugya* (in the first chapter of *Kiddushin*) should not be confused with a non-halakhic passage at the end of *Kiddushin*, which discusses *recommendations* concerning the trade to be taught. There we find the much-cited statement of R. Meir—that one should teach a “clean” and light trade—and that of R. Nehorai: “I abandon all trades and teach my son only Torah.” This seems to imply that R. Nehorai shirked the obligation to teach his son a trade. However, there is much evidence that this obligation is undisputed and that R. Nehorai also agrees that one is obligated to learn a trade. Indeed, all the classical commentators say so. Among them: Maharsha, (*Kiddushin* 82a), R. Ya'akov Emden (*Lehem Shamayim, Avot* 3:17), Rav Sheneor Zalman of Ladi (*Shulhan 'Arukh haRav, Talmud Torah* 3, *Kuntras Aharons*. s.v. *ve-hineh*), *Pene Yehoshu'a* (*Kiddushin*, end), Hida (*Kise Rahamim, Sofrim* 16, begin), *Nahal Eshkol on Sefer Eshkol* (Part II p. 137), *Imre Shefer* (No. 52), R. elhanan Wasserman (*Kovets Shi'urim* II, no. 47). The first authority, I found, to assume that there is a dispute, is *Beur Halakha* (*Orah Hayim* 306:6)—but unfortunately he does not relate to the above authorities, nor to all the evidence that there is no dispute concerning this obligation.

We should be very careful not to misuse R. Nehorai's words. *Sefer haBerit* writes:

The fathers [taught their sons Torah exclusively] for the sake of Heaven, and relied on the words of R. Nehorai . . . they did not realize that this is part of the evil inclination's devices to cloak things that are not good in the garb of saintliness . . . they did not realize that this is not at all the opinion of R. Nehorai, as Maharsha has explained. . . . No doubt, anyone who transgresses the words of our sages in this matter, and does not teach his son a trade will have to render account before the Heavenly Court and he will be punished (*Sefer haBerit* II 12:10).

In citing the words of *Sefer haBerit*, we are following in the footsteps of *Sede Hemed*, who praised them greatly and even copied the whole chapter (on the importance of having a trade) into his work! (*Sede Hemed, Kelalim, Aleph* 230 & *Peat haSade* ad loc. no. 160).

12. *Shabbat* 150a; Rambam, *Hil. Shabbat* 24:35; *Orah Hayim* 306:6.
13. *Makkot* 8b; Rambam *Hil. Rotseah* 5:5.

14. Avot 4:7.
15. Nedarim 62a.
16. Rambam, *Hil. Talmud Torah* 3:10, referring to Avot 1:10.
Elsewhere in his *Mishneh Torah*, Rambam writes:

Not only the tribe of Levi, but every individual . . . whose spirit inspires him and whose intelligence informs him to separate himself and stand before God to serve Him . . . becomes "holy of holies," and God will be his portion . . . He will grant him enough to cover his needs, as he granted [a subsidy] to the Kohanim and Levites (*Shemitta veYovel*, end).

Occasionally people mistake this statement as contradicting Rambam's explicit and repeated prohibition against accepting payment for Torah study. However, when we run into an apparent difficulty in the words of our classical authorities, we should, first of all, turn to the early authorities and, regarding Rambam, perhaps the greatest of his interpreters is Radbaz. He writes *ad loc.*:

God will grant him that he will be able to earn enough, but he should not impose upon the community. Refer to his commentary on the Mishnah (Avot 4:5) " . . . and not a hoe to dig therewith."

In that commentary Rambam indeed compares the privileges of the *talmid hakham* to those of the Kohanim and Levites, but without contradicting his condemnation of those who take pay for Torah study. He reiterates the gravity of this prohibition and then lists certain honorary benefits and privileges to which the *talmid hakham* is entitled, such as becoming a "silent partner" in a business and being the first to sell his wares in the market. Rambam states concerning these: "God ordained these privileges for [the *talmidei hakhamim*] just as he ordained the priestly gifts for the Kohen and the tithes for the Levite." The parallelism of this expression and that in *Mishneh Torah* obviously confirms Radbaz's interpretation. But cf. *Biur Halakha*, no. 156, s.v. *sofah*.

We do not here discuss the permissibility of pursuing a profession requiring a university education. We only note that Rabbi S. Schwab *shlita* asked this question of the Torah luminaries of the last generation and received responsa from four of them.

Three of these (R. Elhanan Wasserman, *rosh yeshivat Baranowitz*; R. A.Y. Bloch, *rosh yeshivat Telz*; and R.Y. Rozin, the "Rogochover" Rabbi) responded positively with certain restrictions. R. B.B. Leibowitz, *Rosh Yeshivat Kamenetz*, forbade it categorically. [Their responsa are reprinted in my *Sha'are Talmud Torah* and discussed in my *Torah Study* (Part 7, chapter 5).]

17. Yoreh De'a 246:21.
18. Tashbatz I 144-8.
19. Ketubot 105a. Also see Tos. Bekhorot 29a, s.v. *mah*.
20. Magen Avot on Avot 4:5, end.
21. Nahalat Avot 4:5.
22. Responsa Hatam Sofer, *Hoshen Mishpat*, no. 164.
23. *Iggerot Moshe*, Yoreh De'a II, no. 116.
24. *Yam Shel Shelomo*, Hulin 3:9. Also *Devar Shemuel* (no. 138) cited by *Beur Halakha* (no. 231).
25. *Iggerot Moshe*, Yoreh De'a III, no. 82. Even though R. Moshe, there, makes no explicit reference to *hora-at sha'ah*, he does make such a reference in another responsum (Ref. 23 above).
26. *Iggerot Moshe*, *Orah Hayim* I, no. 111.
27. Ref. 23, above.