

ONE VISIONARY, MANY VARIED MOVEMENTS



The Frankfurt Judengasse in Rav Hirsch's day



REVISITING THE LEGACY OF RAV SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH, ZTZ"l, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH

Two hundred years ago, Germany saw the birth of a child whose vision still shapes the world we live in today. From his earliest years, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch succeeded in capturing the hearts and minds of a nation in peril of losing its heritage to the tidal wave of Reform. He led his community with a finely calibrated approach, creating firmly defined boundaries to shut out unwanted elements, while simultaneously investing his considerable talents and passion to ensure that the Orthodox lifestyle would be so fulfilling and enriching that his flock would never feel compelled to seek pasture elsewhere. Rav Hirsch's influence extended far beyond the confines of his own small rabbinical post and limited lifespan. Indeed, his prescient vision still surges strong, with ripples that have spread along virtually the entire stream of Torah Judaism

by Rabbi Yitzchok Frankfurter

Some years ago, during a mundane tax-return preparation, an unexpected exchange ensued over the calling and teachings of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, ztz"l. Since my accountant, in addition to his professional skills, was a consummate narrator, anxiety-inducing queries regarding my past expenditures were constantly interspersed with fantastic ponderings and heartening tales. These narratives were relayed in a sweet Milwaukee accent, which was somehow buttressed by the storyteller's soft-yet-piercing chassidic eyes. This revered tax-return preparer, Rabbi Motel Twerski, z"l, had a knack of lifting one up in the middle of a bookkeeping session to some far-flung place where life seemed a lot purer than number-crunching and noisy New

York, particularly when he spoke about his mother's eminent younger brother, the late Bobover Rebbe, Rav Shlomo Halberstam, *ztz"l*.

We were sitting together reviewing some perplexing check stubs, when Reb Motel stared up at a framed picture of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, *ztz"l*, that was hanging on my wall, and asked whether I had received a postgraduate degree. For a moment I failed to comprehend the implied connection. To me, that well-known portrait of Rav Hirsch, where he seems to be eyeballing the distant future, simply depicts one of Jewry's greatest leaders, who "dedicated his entire life to the dissemination of Torah and through his strength and efforts succeeded in restoring the Jewish religion to its original beauty and turning the hearts of thousands upon thousands of Jews to our Father in Heaven," as Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, *ztz"l*, proclaimed.

"Ah, you must be alluding to Rav Hirsch's philosophy of *Torah im Derech Eretz*, whereby one should pursue a secular education alongside Torah study, so that he may develop into a *mentsch Yisrael*," I understood Reb Motel to be asking. "Well," I mused, "I doubt Rav Hirsch had the few grades of secular education in a local chassidic cheder in mind when he promulgated his views regarding one's ideal educational *bildung*."

What draws countless individuals, such as myself, to Rav Hirsch and his writings, I proceeded to expound, is not the educational method that Rav Hirsch advocated, but simply the greatness and keen mind of that eminent educator. Way before one ventures to even understand the deep rabbinical and philosophical allusions

contained in Hirsch's works, the religious pathos that burst forth from every word of his writings is enough to stimulate one to heed his call: To forget all prior studies; to read the Torah as though you have never read it before. And when Rav Hirsch leads you by the hand into the enchanting world of nature, to the endless expanse of skies and stars, to the rolling hills of blooms and blossoms, and gently prods you to examine yourself in comparison with a blade of grass or a rumbling peal of thunder, he once again uplifts you as no one ever before did. So much so, that when Rav Hirsch demands of you to understand Judaism organically "*aus sich selbst heraus*," in accordance with the inner spirit permeating its original literary sources, it suddenly all seems so very easy.

Reb Motel then relayed how his mother too was drawn to the high religious and literary value of Rav Hirsch's writings, and would study Rav Hirsch's commentary on *Tehillim* in the original German. Notwithstanding our meeting of minds, *Torah im Derech Eretz* was for Rav Hirsch by no means a temporary dispensation of the rigid demands of the halachah, nor is it a peripheral aspect of this great thinker's worldview. Yet, it nevertheless remains one of the most misunderstood of all the

concepts that he propagated. According to Rav Hirsch, Torah and culture are not two coexisting ideas, as they appear to be in the modern concept of *Torah u'Mada*. Rather, culture must be subservient to the Torah, and formed and transformed by Torah's flames.

If you take a look at some of the contemporary research on Rav Hirsch, what you'll most likely gather is that Rav Hirsch was the father of Modern Orthodoxy. This statement, though widely disseminated, is only partially accurate and extremely misleading. Hirsch's philosophy is at odds with the Modern Orthodox worldview of a synthesis and fusion between two competing ideas and distinctive lifestyles. For him, if there is a fusion here, it is only, as Professor Mordechai Breuer points out, a synthesis in the Hegelian sense: two powers that contrast each other and negate one another subsequently merge transformed on a higher plane.

Rav Shimon Schwab, *ztz"l*, the late Rav of the Hirsch *kehillah* in New York, once had this to say: "What is happening today makes me weep, literally. Of late, Hirsch has become the property of the left-of-center 'Modern Orthodox' movement. They have changed the image of Hirsch from that of a vigorous fighter for *Toras*

The Jewish community in Hamburg, one of the newest in Germany, had become one of its largest and most affluent at the time of his birth



Germany, Oct. 18, 1931:
Rows of ships are docked in Hamburg's Harbor due to high unemployment.

FATHER OF SECESSION:

Rav Hirsch's Role in the Secession of Hungary's Orthodox Community

Rav Hirsch's relentless drive to secede from the Reform in Frankfurt, a movement which he vigorously argued has no relationship to the Jewish religion, is well known. What is less known is the role Rav Hirsch played years before that, between 1868 and 1869, in the Hungarian secession of the Orthodox from the general Jewish community for the same halachic and practical reasons. He was one of the ideologues and architects of that secession, and when the Orthodox delegation petitioned the Hungarian Crown to permit them to secede, they did so by presenting Hirsch's reasoning.

Professor Yaakov Katz, who wrote an authoritative book on the Hungarian and Frankfurt secessions, fully documents Hirsch's active involvement in both, and writes as follows: "One of the big surprises that I stumbled on while tracing the unfolding of events in Hungary was the involvement of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt in the drive towards secession, in the articulation of the ideology that required the Orthodox to secede from the general communities and in the assistance he contributed to the actualization of this request. The argument to secede that evolved in Hungary, which Hirsch had a hand in drafting and promoting, went further than

Hirsch's original goal in his city of Frankfurt. The matter was no longer limited to the prevention of the Orthodox in assisting the establishment of sacrilegious organizations, through the payment of taxes to the general community — the original objective of secession in Frankfurt — but the drive in Hungary was towards complete communal independence."

Frankfurt's great crusader for Torah, who was called on countless times by Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spektor, *ztz"l*, and other Lithuanian *gedolim*, to lend them a hand in their battles with the heretics and reformers, was also of assistance to the Ksav Sofer of Pressburg, the Yetev Lev of Satmar, and the Maharam Schick, *ztz"l*, among others in their heroic struggles for the preservation of Hungarian Jewish Orthodoxy.



Illustration of Hirsch from 1868.
The caption is incorrect; Hirsch was never a doctor

Emes, into that of a docile, dove-like apologist for a watered-down version of convenient Judaism."

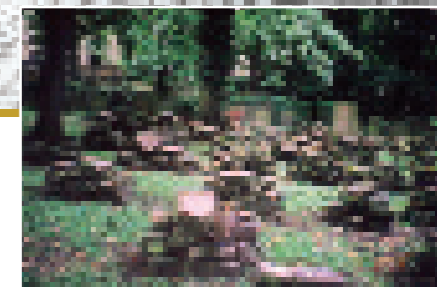
Nevertheless, it is fair to say that virtually every trend and movement in contemporary Orthodox Judaism can trace their roots to the teachings of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch. From Modern Orthodoxy, which embraces Western and secular culture, on the far left of the spectrum, all the way over to the Eidah HaChareidis and Satmar, which decry every contact with the heretical world, on the right. All have their origins in the thought and deeds of that venerable thinker and leader. And it goes without saying that the Agudath Israel and Bais Yaakov movements are but direct outgrowths of his outlook and actions. And if this comes somewhat as a surprise to some, perhaps it no longer will be, once we take a closer look at some of the facts of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch's spellbinding life and times.

The Young Visionary It all began 200 years ago, on 25 Sivan, 5568 (June 20, 1808), in the teeming and contentious port city of Hamburg, Germany, where Sam-

son Hirsch was born. The Jewish community in Hamburg, one of the newest in Germany, had become one of its largest and most affluent at the time of his birth. However, it was most abruptly undergoing a radical change in values. The French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, which suddenly perforated the walls of the Jewish ghettos both inside and outside of France, brought about a frenetic and irrational call for reform, which had disastrous consequences for Judaism and Jews throughout Europe. Driven to prove themselves worthy of emancipation, Jews began very rapidly to abandon the observance of Torah and mitzvos in order to appeal to the values and aesthetic sensibilities of their Christian compatriots. Due to a convergence of factors, Hamburg, a former stronghold for the followers of false messiah Shabbetai Tzvi, became one of the primary centers of reform and heresy.

Rav Hirsch's father, Raphael, a highly learned and G-d-fearing person, endeavored together with other upstanding members of the community to halt this intense sacrilegious onslaught. While Reb Raphael was a merchant, young Samson's

Frankfurt, Judengasse, 1868



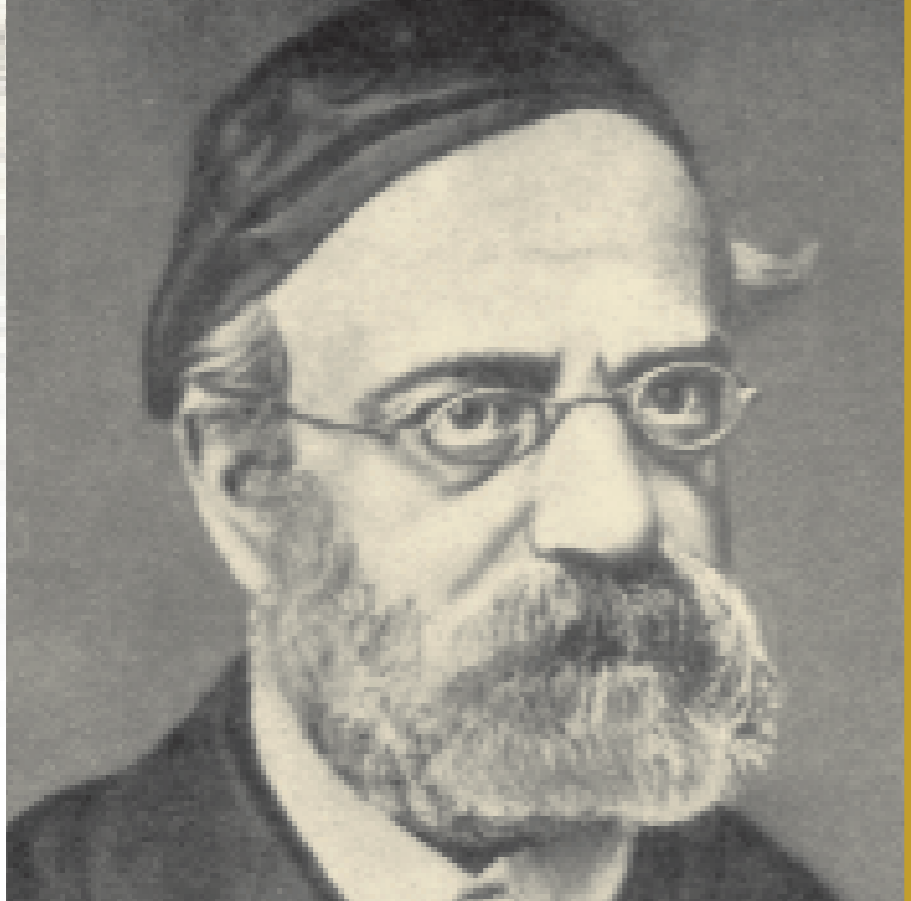
Frankfurt am Main's old Jewish cemetery



Breuer Yeshiva in Frankfurt



Rav Hirsch built schools for both boys and girls to ensure the future of Am Yisrael



“I learned to recognize and admire Hirsch’s outstanding speaking abilities, his sharp mind, and his clear and quick comprehension.... I valued his remarkable moral character, his strict ethical behavior, and I loved the goodness of his heart”

grandfather, Rav Mendel Frankfurter, was a renowned *talmid chacham*. Rav Mendel was the founder of the Hamburg Talmud Torah and an unsalaried Dayan of the neighboring congregation of Altona. (Reb Raphael had changed the family name from its original “Frankfurter” to “Hirsch.” His son, though, would later sign most documents with the double surname, “Samson the son of Raphael Hirsch-Frankfurter.”)

The year Hirsch became bar mitzvah, Rav Yitzchak Bernays, *ztz”l*, was appointed Rav of the Orthodox *kehillah* of Hamburg. Chacham Bernays, as he preferred to be called so as to be distinguished from his Reform counterpart, was one of the first truly pious rabbis of Germany with an extensive academic background, and he exerted an enormous influence upon the young and brilliant Hirsch. The Torah and

Talmudical education he received from Bernays, combined with his Rebbe’s influence, led Hirsch to determine not to become a merchant, as his parents had desired, but to choose instead a rabbinical vocation, a vocation that would alter the face of the modern era.

But first Hirsch had to continue his studies of Talmud under the distinguished and famed *gaon* Rav Yaakov Ettlinger, *ztz”l*, the author of the *Aruch L’Ner*, who most likely ordained him. Additionally, the future leader of Orthodoxy, who was to stand up to the Reform with such profound scholastic brilliance, also needed to acquire a secular education. During this period, Hirsch met his future adversary, Abraham Geiger, who was later to become the leader of the Reform movement, and they left Mannheim together for Bonn to attend the university there. Geiger describes Hirsch in his diary in the most glowing of terms: “I learned to recognize and admire Hirsch’s outstanding speaking abilities, his sharp mind, and his clear and quick comprehension.... I valued his remarkable moral character, his strict ethical behavior, and I loved the goodness of his heart.”

Hirsch abruptly left the university, after just a year and a half of study, never acquiring any academic degree, to become the chief rabbi (Landesrabbiner) of the principality of Oldenburg. The departing rabbi of Oldenburg, Rav Adler, *ztz”l*, had written a letter to the

Oldenburg authorities recommending Hirsch for the post, while lavishly praising “the character, demeanor, scholastic ability, proficiency in German, and skill in homiletics” of the merely twenty-two-year-old Hirsch. His rabbinic mission thus began.

Though Hirsch complained about his loneliness in Oldenburg, the decade of isolation that he spent there was one of the most fruitful and creative periods in his life. During this period Hirsch wrote his *Horeb*, a textbook on Jewish laws and observance, with particular emphasis on their underlying ideas. In many ways it has proven to be Hirsch’s most decisive work, representing a milestone in the return to halachah (Jewish law) as the pivot of Jewish life. Hirsch also wrote there the *Neunzehn Briefe uber Judentum* (*Nineteen Letters on Judaism*) which used a fictional correspondence between Naftali, a young rabbi and philosopher, and Benjamin, a youthful, perplexed Jewish intellectual, to present Judaism in a new light. The reaction to the *Nineteen Letters*, which was published first, was simply sensational. It proved to be a prelude for his future influence.

Some of the intelligentsia, who had abandoned the study of Talmud, now returned to it with new vigor. Young men of scholarly attainment, such as the future historian Heinrich Graetz, were “electrified” by the *Briefe* as they found in it “a view of Judaism ... never before heard or suspected.” Graetz described in his diary his reaction to the *Briefe* as follows: “I avidly devoured every word. Disloyal though I had been to the Talmud, this book

reconciled me with it. I ... determined to use my utmost efforts to pierce its depths.... I set about my task at once, beginning with the first folio, *Berachos*, and the first book of Moshe. I dwelt upon every point with pleasure, treating them not as remnants of antiquity but as books containing Divine help for mankind.” He subsequently studied Torah under Hirsch for three years. The first blow to their relationship occurred, however,

when Graetz introduced his young wife to Hirsch with uncovered hair and received a stern reproach from the master.

Hirsch remained in Oldenburg until 1841, when he was elected chief rabbi of the Hanoverian districts of East Friesland and the northern part of Westphalia, including Osnabruck, with his residence being in Emden. Here he employed for the first time his motto of *Torah im Derech Eretz*. In 1846, Hirsch was called to the rabbinate of Nikolsburg in Moravia, and



Rav Yaakov Ettlinger



Rav Hirsch's spectacular shul in Frankfurt



The city of Oldenburg: Site of Rav Hirsch's first rabbinical post



Kehillah shul in Frankfurt am Main

in 1847 he became chief rabbi of Moravia and Austrian Silesia, where he remained for five years. However, Hirsch's two decades in the highly prestigious positions as the Landesrabbiner were but the foretaste for things that were about to come.

Frankfurt am Main A small Orthodox separatist group in Frankfurt am Main, which recently had split from the general community, asked Rav Hirsch whether he would be willing to leave his post of Landesrabbiner to become their rabbi. He responded with an enthusiastic yes. Rav Hirsch explained his fervent acceptance of this relatively minor rabbinical post in his letter of resignation to the minister of religious affairs of Austria, as follows: "I've been called from Frankfurt to help out what is indeed but a small group, but a group which its very founding is in my eyes, pursuant to my life ambitions, the happiest occurrence for the Jewish people that took place in the last few decades. For this very first time a Jewish community has been overtly founded around a holy principle, on the territory that they have successfully captured from those who

have gone astray. And what can I do, as this holy principle is what I have determined to dedicate my life to spread and disseminate." At the age of forty-three, with a wife, five sons, and four daughters, Hirsch left Nikolsburg to head a group of religious dissenters known as the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft (Israelite Religious Society).

To comprehend the catastrophic decline of the Frankfurt Jewish community, whose documented history goes back to the twelfth century, and which was one of the oldest and most important Jewish communities of Germany, is to understand the tragic state of affairs that existed then throughout Europe. In the past, some of the most famous Talmudic scholars served the Frankfurt Jewish community as rabbis. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was still a city filled with Torah and *emunah*; it was still the city of the Haflaah, Rav Nosson Adler, and the Chasam Sofer. Yet, over the course of a few short years, this centuries-old, Torah-true community dissipated, leaving but one or two individuals who still put on tefillin every day, while almost everyone else had joined the Reform movement.

As the Reformers pressed vigorously ahead with their devastating assaults on all things sacred, tensions in the community mounted. In 1849, a group of eleven G-d-fearing people decided to act and petitioned the German Senate to permit them the establishment of a special communal organization, since by law all the Jews of each city belonged to but one Jewish association and community. The Senate, while disallowing the formation of a separate community, granted them the right to organize a religious association, which became known as the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft.

Hirsch's first years in Frankfurt were marked by his outstanding effort to transform the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft from a humble local association into one of national importance. Within a relatively short time after his arrival,

through his gifted oratorical skills and outstanding organizational faculties, Hirsch started to attract many new members, including some of the Rothschild family, who donated money towards the erection of a large new shul.

Of his many major achievements, perhaps the most important was the founding shortly after his arrival of elementary schools in Frankfurt. Hirsch viewed the education of girls to be virtually of equal importance as that of boys, and therefore established both boys' and girls' schools with the dual curriculum of *limudei kodesh* and *chol*, under the principle of *Torah im Derech Eretz*. Having succeeded in establishing his elementary schools, Hirsch proceeded to establish secondary schools based on the same principle and with a similar program.

In order to carry his message of revitalization even beyond the confines of Frankfurt, he embarked on a new project, a monthly Orthodox publication which he named *Jeschurun*, authoring most of the pages himself. During the years 1867–1878, Hirsch published his magnum opus, his German translation and commentary on the Chumash and, four years later, his translation and commentary on *Tehillim*. His literary and scholarly endeavors were but additional means to save Judaism from the clutches of the Reform and to restore it to its original glory.

In addition to his ardent campaign against the Reformers, Hirsch also expressed strong opposition to the emerging Jewish nationalist movement headed by Rav Zvi Hersh Kalischer, *ztz"l*, voicing identical arguments as today's anti-Zionistic Satmar. In his commentary on the sidur, which was published posthumously, he writes: "During the reign of Hadrian when the uprising led by Bar Kochba proved a disastrous error, it became essential that the Jewish people be reminded for all times of an important, essential fact, namely that [the people of] Israel must never again attempt to restore its national independence by its own power; it was to entrust its future as a nation solely to Divine Providence." These words best articulate his strong anti-Zionistic stand, despite the great love for the Land of Israel that is palpable in his writings.

Secession Hirsch's success in building and developing the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft into a self-sufficient organization, whose influence spread throughout every city in Germany and beyond, brought to the forefront the injustice in faithful Orthodox Jews being legally compelled to belong to the general sacrilegious Gemeinde, which served by law as an umbrella organization for all Frankfurt Jewry,

and to continue contributing towards its maintenance. Hirsch believed that this arrangement was not only grossly unfair, but also halachically prohibited, since the religious community was in effect supporting the aberrant acts of the Reform.

Hirsch's opportunity for action came with the ascension of Bismarck as chancellor of Germany. Wishing to break the power of the Catholic Church, Bismarck, along with others, promulgated the Law of Secession, which permitted one to leave his church and form an independent one. This law, however, did not apply to the Jewish people. Edward Lasker, a Jewish parliamentarian in the Prussian Landtag, objected to the discriminatory nature of this law. Hirsch took up Lasker's cause in the name of freedom of religious conscience, and prevailed upon him to exert pressure to make the Law of Secession apply to the Jews as well. Soon enough their efforts saw fruit; in July 1876 the German parliament ruled that the Austrittsgesetz applied also to the Jews, thereby enabling Hirsch's Religionsgesellschaft to secede from the Frankfurter Gemeinde.

Hirsch hailed the passing of the law — despite the severe opposition of the Reformers — as a most spectacular event, marking the liberation of Torah-true Jews from the yoke of the heretics. However, to his utter disbelief and great disappointment, the predominant majority of his heretofore loyal community — at least seventy-five percent — refused to secede. Thus Rav Hirsch suffered a serious setback at the hands of his very own flock.

As Hirsch tried relentlessly to persuade his congregants into agreeing to secede, which required that every member who chose to secede take an oath to that effect in a German courthouse, his community divided into Austritter (secessionists) and Kompromissler (compromisers, or anti-secessionists). A respected scholar in the community, Rav Moshe Mintz, issued an opinion that since the Gemeinde, which was trying to prevent the secession, was now willing to make concessions towards their community, allowing them to be fully in charge of their own religious affairs, secession was no longer necessary. Rav Mintz obtained the backing of Rav Seligman Baer Bamberger, the Wurtzburg Rav, who dismissed Rav Hirsch's ruling, openly declaring that the members of the Frankfurt Religionsgesellschaft were not obligated to abide by it as it purportedly lacked all halachic validity. A heated polemic now ensued between these two leaders. Rav Hildesheimer of Berlin sided with Rav Hirsch, but declined to openly take his side. Then the Maharam Schick wrote a responsa criticizing Rav Bamberger's ruling, and stating that Rav

Hirsch was in the right: secession from the heretical Reformers was obligatory.

Only after the passing of Rav Hirsch, during the rabbinic tenure of his son-in-law and successor Rav Shlomo Breuer, *ztz"l*, did Hirsch's community fully secede from the Gemeinde. The preceding schism, however, caused a terrible rift in the Orthodox Jewish community, which lasted until the ultimate destruction of the Frankfurt Jewish community by the Nazis. If Rav Hirsch was not as successful as he would have liked on his home turf and within his own community — which in his open letter to Rav Bamberger he stated "made his heart gush blood" — we can only react with Rav Hirsch's own words regarding Moshe Rabbeinu: "Moshe had the bitter feeling that his life-work for the Jewish people had been in vain, since they still stood against him as stiff-necked anarchists whose ears are shut from listening and rebuff all attempts at persuasion ... However, like an angel who sanctifies G-d's name, G-d's unyielding messenger covers his eyes and feet, and through the strength of the purpose of his mission he does G-d's work, ignoring all of his own personal disappointments" (Commentary on *Bamidbar* 20:12).

Indeed, despite this setback with the majority of his community, which failed to abide his ruling regarding secession, Rav Hirsch's communal work continued unabated. During the final years of his life, Hirsch put his efforts in the founding of the "Freie Vereinigung für die Interessen des Orthodoxen Judentums" (Free Union for the Interests of Orthodox Judaism), an association of independent Jewish communities.

Paving the Way What should chronologically come at this juncture of our narration is undoubtedly the passing of Rav Hirsch in 1888, at the age of eighty, in Frankfurt am Main, and his burial there. But that is not where our recounting is headed. Simply because the story of his life does not end with his death. The legacy of Rav Hirsch, who stood up to the threats that the ravages of time unfurled against the Torah, announcing that the Torah is not deferential to time but that time is subservient to the Torah, lives on in every Jewish home where the light of Torah and its mitzvos shine. It was Rav Hirsch who paved the way for future generations confronting the same challenges as did his generation. The triumphant

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Rav Shlomo Breuer, ztz"l,
son-in-law of Rav Hirsch



Rav Dr. Joseph Breuer, ztz"l,
grandson of Rav Hirsch

battles that he waged against modernity still pulsate everywhere.

Today's international Orthodox Agudath Israel is but the evolution of his organization, the Freie Vereinigung that Rav Hirsch founded in 1886 to unite the chareidi communities of Germany. When the noted scholar and historian, Rav Yitzchak Isaac Halevy, ztz"l, left Volozhin, Lithuania, for Germany and joined the Freie Vereinigung, thus expanding its influence worldwide, he asked its chairman, Rav Yaakov Rosenheim, z"l, to change its name to Agudath Israel, which Rav Yaakov did. Hirsch's Freie Vereinigung is still in existence, relevant and vibrant today, just under a different name and banner, that of Agudath Israel.

And when that young Jewish seamstress from Poland, Sarah Schenirer, resolved to revolutionize the education of Jewish girls, and founded what is today the worldwide movement of Bais Yaakov, what was the source of her inspiration and whom did she seek to emulate? The answer, once again, is Rav Hirsch and his writings. On Shabbos Chanukah 1915, Sarah Schenirer heard a lecture from Rav Hirsch's grandson, in which he quoted his venerated grandfather. Rav Hirsch's words so impressed her that she began reading Hirsch's writings, delving diligently into *Horeb* and *Nineteen Letters*.

The outcome of this study was her idea to establish a school for girls on the model of Rav Hirsch's school in Frankfurt, using the same curriculum that he

had instituted. Feeling a need to carry the teachings of Rav Hirsch and his message even further, when Sarah Schenirer opened her school in 1917 in Cracow, she taught her pupils Chumash with Rav Hirsch's commentary and gave courses on the *Nineteen Letters*. So that the students would understand Hirsch's writings without translation, she required that the girls learn the German language. The one school she initially opened mushroomed into the worldwide Bais Yaakov network, with hundreds of thousands of students and alumni, all byproducts of Rav Hirsch and his philosophy.

In a recent article in *Mishpacha*, commemorating the 60th *yahrzeit* of the Imrei Emes, ztz"l, journalist Aharon Granevich-Granot quotes the Imrei Emes as saying: "When I arrive in the Heavenly *beis din* and they ask me, 'What did you achieve in your lifetime in this world?' I will answer, 'Agudas Yisrael, the Yesodei Hatorah Talmud Torah, and the Bais Yaakov schools!'" Ironically, two out of the three items that this chassidic giant cited as the biggest accomplishments of his lifework are directly linked to Rav Hirsch: Agudath Israel and Bais Yaakov.

It is noteworthy that Rav Shimon Schwab related that the Imrei Emes once told him that "the Tzaddik of Frankfurt [Rav Hirsch] was a *leibidege mussar sefer* [a living morality text]." The Gerrer Rebbe's assessment and awe of Rav Hirsch should now come as no wonder.

And that is not the extent of his influence. The Eidah HaChareidis of Yerusha-

layim was founded through Rav Hirsch's words and ideas. When the Jewish population in Eretz Yisrael united under the Knesses Yisrael organization, many elements of the Old Yishuv under the leadership of Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, ztz"l, sought to secede and establish their own independent community. They thus naturally turned to Rav Yitzchak Breuer, z"l, the grandson of Rav Hirsch, the "father of secession," to assist them in their struggle. In response, Breuer authored an entire book explaining the reasons behind the Ashkenazic community's request for independence from the Mandate government, echoing many of his grandfather's ideas and arguments. Breuer also visited Eretz Yisrael in the days of the chareidi struggle for independence and worked side by side with its leader, Rav Sonnenfeld, successfully establishing the Eidah HaChareidis.

And of course, when an Orthodox scientist or doctor today reflects on his role model and teacher, he most likely thinks of Hirsch. The many disciples of Rav Hirsch may be different from one another, but they all have one thing in common: the insubordination and absolute ascendancy of the Torah over all of the tribulations and temptations of modern times.

We may conclude with Rav Hirsch's own words: "Even when the descendants of the one Jew, Yisrael, have grown to 600,000 men they were still all members of one house, sons of one man, stamped in spirit and heart with the same stamp, bearing one mission, one destiny as their heritage through the ages. And in the midst of this fundamental sameness and unity and under its influence, the greatest diversity of tribal and family specialties of traits and dispositions was diligently and carefully nurtured, so that the great one task of humanity as shown by the Torah is to be demonstrated as a model for the whole human race, as being in no way dependent on any specialty, but applies to every diversity of character, tendency, profession, or position in life." ■

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The Judengasse
Museum
in Frankfurt