

Snapshots: 19th Century Judaism

1) Or Nogah (The Light of Splendor), Eliezer Liebermann (1818)¹

... Why should we not draw a lesson from the peoples among whom we live? Look at the Gentiles and see how they stand in awe and reverence and with good manners in their house of prayer. No one utters a word, no one moves a limb. Their ears and all their senses are directed to the words of the preacher and to [the recitation of] their prayers. Now judge please, you blessed of God, people of the Lord, seedlings of the faithful, how very much more there is for us to do. Are we not obligated to be most discreet and to guard our steps and the utterances of our lips when we go to the House of God? Will someone say that it is prohibited [to learn from our neighbors] for "ye shall not abide by their statutes?"² Will it occur to a man of

As regards the logic for all these calculations [concerning the position of the moon at the time of the new crescent]—why we have to add a particular figure or deduct it, how all these rules originated, and how they were discovered and proved—all this is a part of the science of astronomy and mathematics, about which many books have been composed by Greek sages—books that are still available to the scholars of our time. But the books which had been composed by the Sages of Israel, of the tribe of Issachar, who lived in the time of the Prophets, have not come down to us.

To be sure, my brethren and compatriots, tears well up in the eyes of every man of feeling when he remembers that our holy city is burnt and its gates desolate, and we must say along with the exiles, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem."¹⁷ Nevertheless, the prayer for the land of our birth, our present dwelling place, must take precedence in time and we should always pray for its safety and for the well-being of its people. . . .

When the ministers and sages [of the Gentiles] come to our places of worship to observe our customs and to hear the words of our teachers, who instruct the people regarding the path they are to follow, they hear merely the sound of noise in the camp of the Hebrews and do not understand anything. Instead of saying, "They are a wise and understanding nation,"¹⁸ they say "They are a misguided and confused people, an impetuous nation."

2) Eleh divrei habrit, Hamburg Rabbinical Court (1819)²

Law secure [against such infractions]. They have discovered a breach [of the Law] and have sought to contain it with prescriptions forbidding the three cardinal sins [of Reform]:

1. It is forbidden to change the worship that is customary in Israel from Morning Benedictions to "It is our duty to praise [the Lord of all]";² and all the more so [is it prohibited] to make any deletions in the traditional liturgy.

2. It is forbidden to pray in any language other than the Holy Tongue. Every prayerbook that is printed improperly and not in accordance with our [traditional] practice is invalid, and it is forbidden to pray from it.

3. It is prohibited to play a musical instrument in the synagogue on the Sabbath and on the festivals even when it is played by a non-Jew.

But we hoped in vain, for these men disobeyed the counsel [of their teachers] and sank into sin. They quickly built for themselves a house of prayer, which they called a temple, and published a prayerbook for Sabbaths and festivals, which has caused great sorrow and brought tears to our eyes over the destruction of our people. For they have added to and deleted from the text of the prayers according to their hearts' desires. They have eliminated the Morning Benedictions and the blessing for the Torah and have discarded Psalm 145, as well as other psalms

er than in Hebrew. Worst of all, they have perpetrated a sore evil by removing all references to the belief in the Ingathering of the Exiles. [Their deletions include] the text "Lead us with an upright bearing to our land" in the benediction "With great love,"⁴

Additional Service for festivals. They have thereby testified concerning themselves that they do not believe at all in the promise of our teacher Moses, may he rest in peace: "If any of thine that are dispersed be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will He fetch thee."⁵ This belief is one of the major tenets of our holy Torah. All the prophets have been unanimous in affirming that the God of our fathers would gather our scattered ones, and this is our hope throughout our Exile. This belief in no way detracts from the honor of Their Majesties the kings and ministers under whom we find protection, for it is common knowledge that we believe in the coming of the messiah and the ingathering of the exiles. No one has

¹ Excerpts from *The Jew In The Modern World*, Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, pgs. 162-165

² Excerpts from *The Jew In The Modern World*, Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, pgs. 167-169

3) Tzava'at Moshe (R. Moshe Sofer, Hungary, 1762-1839), excerpts

... May your mind not turn to evil and never engage in corruptible partnership with those fond of innovations, who, as a penalty for our many sins, have strayed from the Almighty and His law! Do not touch the books of Rabbi Moses [Mendelssohn] from Dessau, and your foot will never slip! ... Should hunger and misery lead you into temptation, then the Almighty will protect you; resist

temptation and do not turn to the idols or to some god of your own making! The daughters may read German books, but only those which have been written in our own way, according to the interpretations of our teachers (may they rest in peace), and absolutely no others! Be warned not to change your Jewish names, speech, and clothing—God forbid. ... Never say: "Times have changed!" We have an old Father—praised be His name—who has never changed and never will change. ... The order of prayer and synagogue shall remain forever as it has been up to now, and no one may presume to change anything of its structure (cited in W. Gunther Plaut, *The Growth of Reform Judaism: A Sourcebook of Its European Origins* [New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1965], pp. 256ff.).



ספר צוואת משה

אשר צוה כבוד רבנו משה סופר זצ"ל
בעד המחבר שית' תת"ם סופר עד ארבעה
שע לפני מותו אל בניו ובנותיו חיי' ונלוח

אתם בני ובנותי חתני ונכדי ובניהם שמעוני וחיו, אל תט לבכם לדבר רע, להתעולל עריות ברשע את אנשים פועלי און — החדשים מקרוב נרחקו מאת ה' ותורתו בעוה"ר — אל תדורו בשכנותם, ולא התחברו עמהם כלל וכלל — ובספרי רמ"ד אל תשלחו יד, או רגליכם לא ימערדו לעולמי עד —
אומן, ובו תחכמו מכלכל דרדע יהימן, ואם ח"ו התנסו בנסיון רעב וצמא ועוני, ה' יצילכם, עמדו בנסיון הצד, ואל תפנו אל הארזים ואל תפנו אל מדעתיכם — והבגיה יעסקו בספרי אשכנז, בגופן שלנו, המיוסדים על אגרת הכוזל ולא וולת כפי — ויטעו רגליכם מטרטריאות חפילה וחלילה אני' אוסרכם באיסור גמיר, ותזכו לחוות בנועם ה' ובשמחתו את בניו בכי"א —
והר"ן משינוי השם, ולשון, וסלבוש נכרים ח"י, וסימן ויבא יעקב ישראל —
יתנו לך, ולא האמרו נשתנו העתים, כי יש לנו אב זקן יהושע, לא נשתנה ולא ישנה, וכל רע לא יאונה, ותתברכו מקדם מעונה —

וסררי בתי כנסיות, כאשר היו עד היום הזה, בה יהיו ובה יקומו לצנצ'ת, וחלילה לשום אדם לשנות, הן בבנין; הן בסידור התפלה, שלוחי ציבור מאשר היו —

5) Chatam Sofer Al HaTorah, Korach

- 'Korach' was one of the officers of Eisav's offspring
- A person's name impacts their character; naming one's child the name of an evil person will impact them negatively- Korach 'took' his pure lineage and tainted it

קרח בן יצחק, חני תמכ על נדיקים בני לוי שקראו שם צנס קרח שהוא שם מאלופי עשו וקוי"ל רשעים לא מסקיין צשמייהו [יומא ל"ח:] וחזי מה עלתה צ"י, וחלילה כיינו דקמ"ל קרח דמיחסו עד לוי לימנר אעפ"י שכי' חוט המשולש מ"מ ניתק מהכרע על דאסקי צשמי' דרשע, וחזו ויקח קרח זכ' השם קרח לקח כל מה שכי' לו להתקדש ע"י שכי' בן יצחק

6) Responsa Maharam Schick (R. Moshe Schick, Hungary, 1807-1879), Y"D #169

ראיתי שראוי להשיב על הדבר אשר שאל בני אדם שמכנים עצמם בשם הגוים ומעלתו נ"י הוכיח אותם דהרי אמרו במדרש שבזכות זה שלא שינו את שמם זכינו לצאת ממצרים והם משיבים שלזה די במה שיש להם שם יהודי לקרותם בו לעלות לתורה וזה דבר הבל וטפשות כי בוודאי יש בזה איסור דאוריית' כמ"ש הרמב"ם בפ' י"א מהלכו' ע"ז דמקרא מלא נאמר בסוף פ' קדושים "ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי" ומשם ילפינן בספרי דאין רשאים לדמות להם בשום אופן וכל שהוא עושה לדמות להם עובר על מה שנאמר בתור' דאסור לנו לדמות להם וכשם שאסור לנו להדמות להם במלבושם ובהילוכם ובשאר מנהגיהם ה"ה וכ"ש דאסור לדמות להם בשמם ועלינו לעשות כמו שעשו אבותינו שנאמר בהם ויהי שם לגוי גדול ודרשו חכז"ל מלמד שהיו ישראל מצויינים שם:

- The Jews were redeemed from Egypt because they maintained their unique identity by not changing their names
- Using a non-Jewish name would be categorized under the Rambam's statement that mirroring the non-Jewish practices is a Torah prohibition

7) Derashot Chatam Sofer (R. Moshe Sofer, Hungary, 1762-1839), #8 (Tevet)

כִּי־סִי בְּגִלְוֹנֵתֵינוּ נִרְעָה כִּי הוּא כָּל יוֹכֵל וְנֹסֵס כָּל הַיּוֹת
וּמְמַלֵּא כּוֹכַל לְהַעֲדִיד עַל בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם. וְלֹא כַּחֲדָשִׁים מִקְרֹב
שְׂמוּנִים לִימֵי לֵידָת מַשִּׁיחַם שֶׁל נוֹלָדִים הֵלֵךְ יְבוֹשׁוּ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַל תַּמּוּרָה זוֹ *]

*] עַיִן דְּקָמֵן אֵיִה בְּרוּשׁ לִזְי אֵב תִּקְעֵ לְטִיָּק בְּרִיָּה בְּמִרְדֵּשׁ אֵלֶּי
זִכְרוֹת וְכוּ' בְּסוּף הַטַּמְאֵר כִּתְבֵּן מִרְן וּלְיָק: וְהִינֵן נִרְאָה בְּמִנּוּן שְׂאֵנוּ מִנּוּן
לְבִרְיֹת הָעוֹלָם זֹכְרִים אֲנַחְנוּ כִּי הָעוֹלָם מִחֲדָשׁ וְאֵי רֵאזִי לֵנוּ וְאִשְׁיָה
נִיִּינוּ מֵאֲרֻצְנוֹ, וְלֹא כְּאֹתָם חֲדָשִׁים מִקְרֹב הַמִּנּוּי שְׂכֹתִיבִים בְּרוּשׁ
מְעִלְתָּא מִנּוּן לִידָת מַשִּׁיחַ הַנִּצְרִים וְכֹתֵב וְחֹתֵם עֲצָמוֹ שְׂאֵין לִזְי הַלֵּק
בְּאֵלֶּיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵי לָהֶם כִּי נִסְלָן לְנַפְשָׁם רַעְוָה בְּתוֹרַת הוֹי מֵאִסוּר וְחֲכָמָת
מִזֵּה לָהֶם עֲבִירָה:

יעוד
אֵנוּ מוֹנִים יָמֵי הַחֲדָשׁ לִיְלִיאַת מַלְאָכֵי הַיּוֹם יוֹם אֵי בְּשַׁבַּת
גַּ' לַחֲדָשׁ הַרְלָשׁוֹן וְכוּ' רַמְבַּיִן וְהַלְרִיךְ בְּפִסְקוֹ הַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לִכְס
בְּחִמְרֵנוּ הַחֲדָשׁ הַרְלָשׁוֹן הֵיִינוּ רִאשׁוֹן לְלֵאֲתָנוּ מַמְלָכִים וְשֵׁנִי
לְלֵאֲתָנוּ מַמְלָכִים נִמְלָא מַעֲיָד עַל גִּלְוֹנֵתֵינוּ וְכוּ' רַמְבַּיִן שְׂכִיבֵי־אֵיִם
אַחֲרוּנִים הַחֲלִיפוּ שְׂמוֹת הַחֲדָשִׁים בְּיָסֵן אֵיִיר שְׂמוֹת פְּרָסִיִים
לְהִיֹּת אֹתָם עַל גִּלְוֹלָה שְׂרִיָּה מֵאֲרָץ פְּרָס עַיִשׁ בְּמַתְקָ לְשׁוֹנוֹ.
נִמְלָא כְּמָה שְׂאֵנוּ מוֹנִים לְשַׁבַּת וְלַחֲדָשׁ אֵנוּ מַחֲבִירִים אֲמוֹנָת
בְּרִיאַת עוֹלָם וְשְׂמִירַת שַׁבַּת עַם אֲמוֹנָת הַגִּלְוֹלָה. וְכַמִּיִּשׁ רַמְבַּיִן
בְּפ' דְּבִרּוֹת שְׂרִיָּת שַׁתְּלָה שַׁבַּת בִּיְלִיאַת מַלְאָכֵי שְׂרִיאָנוּ בְּעִירְנוּ

8) Responsa Maharam Schick, Y"D #171

- Does a gravestone bearing non-Jewish characters and dating need to be removed or plastered over?
- There is a disgrace to the deceased to have a gravestone bearing this language and it is there for eternity- just for the deceased it should be removed and for the bodies nearby
- The non-Jewish months do not line up with the Jewish months- this is a form of idolatry, mentioning the god of another religion

...מכתבו קבלתי ובו נשאלתי ע"ד מצבה אחת שהעמיד איש בלא רצון
הגבאים דחברא קדישא והמצבה ההוא נכתבת בלשון עכו"ם וגם פרט השנה
הוא באופן כמו שהאזה"ע מונים להנוצרי ושאל מעלתו אם רשאים להניח
המצבה ההוא שם או אם לטוחו בטיט בפרט מה שכתוב בו הזמן להנוצרי או
להשליך את המצבה החוצה... והנה גוף הדבר הוא תימה בעיני איך העיזו
האנשים ההם להעמיד מצבה בלי רשות הגבאים הרי ביה"ק הוא חצר
השותפין וקי"ל דבחצר השותפין אין רשאים להעמיד שם דבר שחברו השותף
מקפיד עליו... והם מבזין את המת ומרמזין זאת במצב' ההוא שהוא בלשון
לאומים שהיא תעמוד וניצב ג"כ לחרפה ולדיראון עולם וא"כ הקרובים ושאר
בני ישראל שאנו מצווים שלא לבזות מת הי' ראוי' מצד המת עצמו לסלק
המצבה ההוא שלא להוציא שם לע"ז עלי' וגם על הקבורים אצלו... אבל מה
שעשו עוד שכתבו מספר השנים כדרך החדשים ג"כ בלשון לע"ז זה עבירה
כפולה ומכופלת דמספר החדשים שלהם אינם מכוונים למספר ב"י ומה
שסיימו במספר השנים למספר הנוצרי לדעתי זה איסור דאורייתא שהרי
בתורה בפ' משפטים נאמר ושם אלקים אחרים לא תזכירו ואמרו חכמים

9) Responsa Chatam Sofer, 1:28

יקרתו הגיעני, וע"ד בהכ"נ ישנה שסתרו אנשי הקהל קדש והרחיבו בנין החדשה לרומם בית אלקינו
ורוצים להעמיד הבימה שקורים בתורה בסוף בהכ"נ סמוך לארון הקודש ולא באמצע כמו שהיה מקדמת
דנא באמרם שיהיה נוי והרוחה יותר בבהכ"נ מאשר תעמוד באמצע... שהיה בבהכ"נ הישנה מ"מ אותו
בהכ"נ זכה להיות בימה שלה באמצעה כמו קרש שזכה בדרום וכו', והכלל החדש אסור מן התורה

10) Responsa Chatam Sofer 6:89 (pub. 1819)

If their judgment were in our hands, it would be my opinion to separate them from our
domain, not to give our daughters to their sons [or to take their daughters for our sons] so
that we should not come to be drawn after them, so that their congregation should be like
the congregation of Zadok and Boethus, Anan and Saul, they for themselves and we for
ourselves. All this appears to me as *Halakhah*, but not in practice in the absence of

permission and authorization of the government--without this [permission] my words should be void and accounted as non-existing.³

11) Mishna, Avot 2:1; R. Ovadia Bartenua (Italy, 15th c.)

רָבֵן גַּמְלִיאֵל בְּנוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הַנְּשִׂיא אוֹמֵר, יִפֶּה תְּלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה עִם דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, שְׂיִגִיעַת שְׁנֵיהֶם מִשְׁכַּחַת עוֹן. וְכָל תּוֹרָה שְׂאִין עִמָּה מְלֹאכָה, סוֹפָה בְּטֵלָה וְגוֹרְרַת עוֹן.

Barternura: As Torah [study] dulls the strength of a man and work pulls apart and breaks the body, and as a result of this the evil impulse is rendered idle for him.

12) Religion Allied with Progress (1854), R. SR Hirsch⁴

"Religion allied to progress": [the leaders of Reform have] with undaunted courage embroidered [this slogan] in scintillating colours on to the banner of our present-day religious struggles, that the educated "progressive" sons and daughters of the new age might rally to this new flag of the prophet and advance with it unhindered.

Since the beginning of the century the ancient religion had been to them—ancient; it no longer fitted into the society of the sons and daughters of the new age with their frock coats and evening dresses. In club and fraternity, at the ball and supper party, at concerts and in salons—everywhere the old Judaism was in the way and seemed so completely out of place. And even in the

counting-house and in the office, in the courtroom and at the easel, on board ship and in the train—throughout the stream-driven lightning activity of the new age the old Judaism acted as a brake on the hurrying march of progress.

lessness into profundity. By this one magic phrase he distilled the ancient world-ranging spirit of the Torah into a single aromatic drop of perfume so fragrant that in the most elegant party dress they could carry it round with them in their waistcoat pockets without being ashamed. By means of it, he carved out of the ponderous old rock-hewn Tablets of the Law ornamental figures so tiny that people gladly found room for them on smart dressing tables, in drawing-rooms and ball-rooms. By means of this one magic phrase he so skilfully loosened the rigid bonds of the old law with its 613 locks and chains² that the Divine Word which until then had inflexibly prohibited many a desire and demanded

[First] a point of fact, it was not "Orthodox" Jews who introduced the word "orthodoxy" into Jewish discussion. It was the modern "progressive" Jews who first applied this name to "old," "backward" Jews as a derogatory term. This name was at first resented by "old" Jews. And rightly so. "Orthodox" Judaism does not know any varieties of Judaism. It conceives Judaism as one and indivisible. It does not know a Mosaic,

prophetic and rabbinic Judaism, nor Orthodox and Liberal Judaism. It only knows Judaism and non-Judaism. It does not know Orthodox and Liberal Jews. It does indeed know conscientious and indifferent Jews, good Jews, bad Jews or baptised Jews; all, nevertheless, Jews with a mission which they cannot cast off. They are only distinguished accordingly as they fulfill or reject their mission. . . .

Now what is it that we want? Are the only alternatives either to abandon religion or to renounce all progress with all the glorious and noble gifts which civilisation and education offer mankind? Is the Jewish religion really of such a nature that its faithful adherents must be the enemies of civilisation and progress? . . .

Our aims also include the conscientious promotion of education and culture, and we have clearly expressed this in the motto of our Congregation: An excellent thing is the study of the Torah combined with the ways of the world [*Yafeh talmud torah im derekh erez*]⁴—thereby building on the same foundations as those which were laid by our sages of old—[then] what is it that separates

13) Collected Writings (R. Samson Raphael Hirsch), vol. 7, pgs. 415-16

It would be most perverse and criminal of us to seek to instill in our children a contempt, based on ignorance and untruth, for everything that is not specifically Jewish, for all other human arts and sciences, in the belief that by inculcating our children with such a negative attitude we could safeguard them from contacts with the scholarly and scientific endeavors of the rest of mankind...You will then see that your simple-minded calculations were just as criminal as they were perverse. Criminal, because they enlisted the help of untruth supposedly in order to protect the truth, and because you have thus departed from the path upon which your own Sages have preceded you and beckoned you to follow them. Perverse, because by so doing you have achieved precisely the opposite of what you wanted to

³ "But, the more we must remain in peaceful and friendly intercourse with our contemporaries who grew up in the ideas and ways of *minut*--the more demanding for us the necessity to remain distant from the *minut*-system in whose confession they were raised..." R. SR Hirsch in support of the Hatam Sofer in *The Secession of the Orthodox* (1877) from *The Jew in the Modern World* p. 205
⁴ Excerpts from *The Jew In The Modern World*, Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, pgs. 197-201

accomplish...Your child will consequently begin to doubt all of Judaism which (so, at least, it must seem to him from your behavior) can exist only in the night and darkness of ignorance and which must close its eyes and the minds of its adherents to the light of all knowledge if it is not to perish.

14) Eilu V'Eilu (R. Shimon Schwab, USA, 20th c.), p. 16 (1966)⁵



Shimon (Simon) Schwab (1908 - 1995) Orthodox rabbi and communal leader in Germany and the United States. from 1958 until his death at Khal Adath Jeshurun in Washington Heights, Manhattan. He was an ideologue of Agudath Israel of America, specifically defending the *Torah im Derech Eretz* approach to Jewish life. (Wikipedia)

The Eastern-European admirers of Hirsch accepted this innovation merely as הוראת שעה (emergency legislation) for the Western "Kulturzone" to stem the tide of assimilation, reform and apostasy. To Hirsch himself, the concept of T.I.D.E. was neither compromise nor concession; to him it was the ideal Jewish world outlook. Not a lessening of the "yoke," but rather a steep upward path. It meant to learn more and to study harder — not less — in order to reach the goal of maximum understanding of Torah, combined with excellence in Derech Erets. In his inspiring writings he stresses time and again the foremost obligation to make Torah the main object of study and never to forget to emphasize the essential (עיקר) above the non-essential (טפל) On the other hand, the secular disciplines which are the "Hilfswissenschaften" should, of right, also be pursued with religious sincerity for the "sake of heaven."

15) Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch Torah Commentary

Devarim 4:32 ("כי שאל נא לימים ראשונים")

ראה (see ibid. חוספות) מה לטובים מה לאחור and History which is open to our research within these limits is not only something permitted but something which is eminently desirable to the fullest possible extent, for only a mind armed with such a wide panoramic view on all matters can draw the right conclusions of the Jewish position in the world in the whole of its speciality.

Devarim 6:4 ("שמע ישראל")

Not from nature and history have we to deduce a belief in God, but, with the knowledge of God which we have been given in our hands, we are to look into nature and history and try to get an understanding of the phenomena of nature and the events of history. And then, with our eyes awakened by God to see Him in nature, with our ears opened to hear Him in history, everything, the greatest and smallest in nature, the greatest and smallest event in history proclaims itself as His work, His governing. Then in the world of nature and history of our own times we shall still see the ruling of the God

Bereishit 2:19 ("נפש חיה")⁶

Thus belief in God Who created men and things forms an essential foundation also to our theoretical knowledge. Without this belief, theoretical scientific knowledge can not escape hopeless scepticism, has no guarantee that they are not deducing a dream from a dream, and proving a dream by a dream.



Devarim 6:7 ("ודברת בם")

עשה אותם עיקר ואל תעשם טפילה שלא יהא משאך ומתנדן אלא: ודברת בם בהם שלא תערב בהם דברים אחרים שלא תאמר למדתי ישראל אלך ואלמוד חכמת (ספרי) הכנענים. "they, the teachings of the Torah are to form the real subjects of our mental occupation, we are not to cultivate them as a side-issue, nor from the standpoint or for the standpoint of other scientific study, and equally indeed take care not to introduce into the sphere of our Torah-studies foreign matter and ideas which have grown on the soil of other scientific hypotheses. We are altogether always to bear in mind the specific higher level of our knowledge which differs from all other scientific knowledge through its Divine origin and not place it on the same level

as the other sciences, as if it, too, rested on the basis of human knowledge. We have already worked out on Levit. XVIII,5 how these sentences of the Sifri quite clearly do not demand completely ignoring all scientific knowledge gained in other spheres, on the contrary, they rather presuppose having knowledge of them, but they give us the only correct standpoint from which our occupying ourselves with them can be beneficial to us, and they warn us of the danger the neglecting such a standpoint would bring to our mental life of study for true knowledge. (see p. 479 ibid.)

16) Responsa Melamed L'Ho'il (R. David Zvi Hoffman, Germany, 19th c.), 2:56

⁵ https://web.stevens.edu/golem/llevine/rsrh/these_and_those.pdf

⁶ "Perhaps the day will come when all the things bestowed upon mankind for its benefit and liberation will become corrupted into their very antithesis. Mankind, instead of assuring its members their legitimate rights of development ... will serve them the tear-drenched bread of slaves and the worm-wood of bitterness At such time, science, too, will become solely destructive ... will frantically blind itself with its own brightness Mankind will vainly exhaust its strength in a blind upsurge of uncurbed desires" Collected Writings vol. 1, p. 80

- Answering a question regarding swearing in court while bareheaded, as was standard secular protocol at the time
- Recalled a teaching job he held as a young rabbi in Frankfurt. Students learned secular studies bareheaded in the school founded and headed by R. Samson Raphael Hirsch. When R. Hoffmann went to visit R. Hirsch for the first time and failed to remove his headcovering, R. Hirsch berated him because other staff members may interpret it as a sign of disrespect. R. Hoffmann compared this with the strict views of Hungarian rabbis, who particularly forbade students in school to study bareheaded.

חלכו. הגה בק"ק יראים דפפריים בבית החינוך שנחיסר מהנאון ר' שמשון רפאל הירש וצ"ל (שאני הייתי מורה שם ב' שנים וחצי) יושבים החלמרים בשעת לימוד שאר המדעים בפריעת ראש, ורק בשעת לימוד תורה מכסים ראשם (וכן הוא המנהג בבית הספר בהאמבורג) וזה געשה שם עפ"י תקנת הרה"ג מו"ה ש"ר הירש וצ"ל. ובפעם ראשון שכאחי לביחו של הרה"ג ש"ר הירש בכובע על ראשו, אמר לי שכאן הוא דרך ארץ להסיר הכובע מעל הראש כשכאין אל אדם חשוב, ואולי יראה מורה אחר (יש בבית החינוך שם גם הרבה מורים אי"י) שאני איני מסיר הכובע מעל הראש לפני ראש בית החינוך (ירעקטאָר) היה מחשב זה כאילו אני מבוה אוהו. ובוה וכיוצא כזה אין בו

17) *On Changes in Judaism* (1845), Zecharias Frankel (Germany, 19th c.)



Bohemian-German rabbi and a historian who studied the historical development of Judaism. He was born in Prague and died in Breslau. Frankel was the founder and the most eminent member of the school of historical Judaism, which advocates freedom of research, while upholding the authority of traditional Jewish belief and practice. This school of thought was the intellectual progenitor of Conservative Judaism.

The viewpoint of the Orthodox party is clear. It has grown up in pious activity; to it the performance of precepts is inseparable from faith, for to it, the two are closely and inwardly connected. Were it to tear itself away from observance and give up the precepts, then it would find itself estranged from its own self and feel as though plunged into an abyss. Given this viewpoint, the direction and emphasis of the Orthodox party is clear. Where else, save in the combination of faith and meticulous observance of the precepts, can it find that complete satisfaction which it has enjoyed in the heritage of the fathers? When it will reject that which it has so long kept holy and inviolable? No--that is unthinkable.

Against this party there has arisen of late another one [Reform] which finds its aim in the opposite direction. This party sees salvation in overcoming the past, in carrying progress to the limit, in rejecting religious forms and returning merely to the simple original idea. In fact, we can hardly call it a party in Judaism, though its adherents still bear the name Jew, and are considered as such in social and political life, and do not belong to another faith. They do not, however, belong wholly to Judaism, for by limiting Judaism to some principles of faith, they place themselves partly outside the limits of Judaism. We will now turn to a third party which has arisen from the first party, and not only stands within the bound of Judaism, but is also filled with real zeal for its preservation and endeavours to hand it over to the descendants and make it the common good of all times.

This party bases itself upon rational faith and recognizes that the task of Judaism is religious action, but it demands that this action shall not be empty of spirit and that it shall not become merely mechanical, expressing itself mainly in the form. It has also reached the view that religious activity itself must be brought up to a higher level through giving weight to the many meanings with which it should be endowed. Furthermore, it holds that we must omit certain unimportant actions which are not

inherently connected either with the high ideas or with the religious forms delineated by the revealed laws.

In order to have a conception of what changes should and can be introduced, we must ask ourselves the question--does Judaism allow any changes in any of its religious forms? Does it consider all of them immutable, or can they be altered? Without entering into the citation of authorities pro and con, we may point out that Judaism does indeed allow changes.

שו"ת הרב"ז חלק ג (חושן משפט) סימן עו

על דבר שאלת כת"ר: אם יתכן להתיר לצורך הפסח סתם-צוקר, שלא הוכשר לכך מתחלתו, כנהוג. תשובה

הנה כי כן נשאלתי על זה מהרבה רבנים ממדינתנו. והאמת אגיד ולא אכחד, שאין דעתי נוחה משאלות כאלו. וכבר נודע מה שכתב מרן הגאון בעל "חתם סופר" ז"ל: "כל חדש אסור מן התורה!" אם אמנם, כפי אשר נוכחתי לדעת, אופן עשיית הצוקר בבתי-חרושת (פאבריקען) בזמן הזה, אין בו חשש תערובות חמץ. כי איננו דומה לה"צוקר" שהיה נעשה בשנים קדמוניות, בזמן הראשונים, שחשו לתערובות קמח בה"צוקר". כאשר עיני כל לנוכח יביטו ברמ"א או"ח סי' תס"ז סעי' א', וט"ז שם סק"ח, ומג"א שם סק"ט, ופמ"ג מ"ז סק"ח, ושו"ת נודע ביהודה מהד"ק חאו"ח סי' כ"ג כ"ד, ומהד"ת חאו"ח סי' ע"ב ע"ש. וכן נודע לכל באי שערי תשובה, כמבואר בשע"ת סי' תס"ז ס"ק ט"ו, אבל בזמן הזה אין בו חשש תערובות חמץ כאמור.

שו"ת משנה הלכות חלק ד סימן יג

אי מותר לקרות בתורה לבר מצוה ביום ראשון שלא יבאו לידי חלול שבת
ב"ה מ"ג למטמונים התשכ"א ברוקלין נ"י יצ"א.

בימי המנין, יזכה לראות הבנין, עם ביאת בר נפלי, מעושה ומפלי, ה"ה הרה"ג חו"ב פ"ה כש"ת מוהר"ר שמואל טוירק שליט"א.

אחדשת"ר קבלתי מכתבך בדבר המגפה בענין החילול שבת בעונ"ה שנתקיים בכמה בתי כנסיות בשביל הבר מצוות שבאים קרוביהם למיניהם במכונות עד סמוך לביהכ"נ בשבת וכמעט בכל ביהכ"נ נראה חילול שבת בפרהסיא ממש ונפשו בשאלתו האם לא נוכל לעשות הבר מצוות הללו ביום ראשון, האם יש איסור להוציא ס"ת ביום הראשון ולקרוא בתורה, ואם יש איסור לברך ברכה עליה, ואם אסור להבר מצוה לקרוא המפטיר בלי ברכות ואם היינו יכולים לדחות את הכל על יום ראשון הרבה היינו מרוויחים שלא נגרום את החילול שבת בעונ"ה.

דע לך כי הקשת לשאל ואני היום סמכוני באשישות והוא דבר חדש לחדש בעדת ישראל ואפי' היה להלכה נראה אפ"ה לא היינו מתקנים דבר שנוגע לכלל ישראל וכבר ידוע פתגם הח"ס חדש אסור מן התורה בדברים אלו אבל בר מן דין הכא ליכא שום סמך בהלכה לזה ולפי שכבר נשאלתי כעין זה אמרתי עכשיו בס"ד לסדר דברי מה שנראה לי מן השמים בענין זה בס"ד.

