

daism, which viewed Jewry's abiding singularity with even greater ambivalence, had borrowed its concept of "mission." Israel's particularity, Reformers affirmed, implies not indifference and withdrawal from the community of men but a divine mission" of universal significance (see documents 9 and 15). Enlightenment and emancipation created new social and cultural conditions for daism. The documents presented in this chapter adumbrate the emerging institutional patterns of religious adjustments to these new conditions: Reform, Conservative, Neo-Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Judaism.

THE NEW ISRAELITE TEMPLE ASSOCIATION

1. Constitution of the Hamburg Temple (December 11, 1817)¹

... Since public worship has for some time been neglected by so many, because of the ever decreasing knowledge of the language in which alone it has until now been conducted, and also because of many other shortcomings which have crept in at the same time—the undersigned, convinced of the necessity to restore public worship to its deserving dignity and importance, have joined together to follow the example of several Israelite congregations, especially the one in Berlin.² They plan to arrange in this city also, for themselves as well as others who think as they do, a dignified and well-ordered ritual according to which the worship service shall be conducted on the Sabbath and holy days and on other solemn occasions, and which shall be observed in their

own temple, to be erected especially for this purpose. Specifically, there shall be introduced at such services a German sermon, and choral singing to the accompaniment of an organ.

Incidentally, the above-mentioned ritual shall not be confined to services in the temple; rather it shall apply to all those religious customs and acts of daily life which are sanctified by the church³ or by their own nature. Outstanding amongst these are the entrance of the newly-born into the covenant of the fathers, weddings, and the like. Also, a religious ceremony shall be introduced in which the children of both sexes, after having received adequate schooling in the teachings of the faith, shall be accepted as confirmants of the Mosaic religion.

NOTES

1. The New Israelite Temple Association of Hamburg instituted the first systematic Reform worship services; it was founded by sixty-six Jews, led by Eduard Kley (1789–1867), Meyer Israel Bresselau (1785–1839) and Seckel Isaak Fraenkel (1765–1835)—all of them laymen. The Hamburg Temple was dedicated on October 18, 1818, the anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig, which marked the liberation of Germany from Napoleonic rule. Some historians see an ideological motive not only in this gesture but also behind the Reformers' naming their synagogue a "temple." That is, that by adopting the designation traditionally reserved for the fallen Temple of Jerusalem, the Reformers symbolically relinquished the hope of Israel's restoration and declared Hamburg their Jerusalem. Other historians ascribe to the Reformers the

more innocent motive of simply wishing to distinguish their house of worship from the traditional synagogue of Hamburg.

2. On the Feast of Weeks in the year 1815, Israel Jacobson (1768–1828)—the father of German Reform, the founder of a Reform temple in Sessen, Westphalia—inaugurated a "private" Reform worship service in his Berlin home. Later the services moved to the home of Jacob Herz-Beer, a wealthy Berlin banker. Due to the opposition of the conservative Prussian government the Reform synagogue of Berlin was closed down in 1817. Eduard Kley had served as a preacher in Beer's synagogue.

3. This word was intended to underscore the purely religious character of the Hamburg Temple.

Source: W. Gunther Plaut, *The Rise of Reform Judaism: A Sourcebook of Its European Origins* (New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1963), pp. 31ff. Reprinted by permission of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

which can not profit." By implication each has its own way to the truth.

Mal. 1:11.

Rabbenu Tam ("our perfect rabbi")—Jacob Meir (c. 1000–1171)—grandson of Rashi, was a leading rabbinic scholar from France and one of the principal compilers of the *Tosafot*, commentaries on the Babylonian Talmud. Many of his additions and corrections to textual corruptions in the Talmud were collected in his *The Book of Righteousness* (*Sefer hayashar*). The work cited here, bearing the same name, however, is another volume altogether. It is an ethical treatise that was popularly attributed according to contemporary scholars falsely to Rabbenu Tam (or, alternatively, other medieval authors). For the present citation, see the cited treatise *Sefer hayashar* (Jerusalem: Meshkol, 1962), pp. 42–43.

Bahya ben Joseph ibn Pakuda (second half of the eleventh century), moral philosopher who lived in Muslim Spain. *Duties of the Heart* (*Hovot ha-levavot*), which greatly influenced all subsequent Jewish pietistic literature, contains directions for the development of man's inner life. It is a complement to halakhic books, which concentrate on the duties of the members of the body, i.e., on outward actions. This passage is found in *Duties of the Heart*, Hebrew-English texts, trans. Moses M. Luzzatto (Jerusalem: Boys Town, 1962), vol. 1, pp. 3–44.

"Sanctification of the New Moon," *The Code of Maimonides*, book 3, treatise 8, trans. Solomon L. Lieberman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), par. 25, p. 73.

Liebermann apparently is referring to Rabbenu Meir Salomon (1789–1862), who was appointed preacher of the Hamburg Temple in October 1819. Of the early leaders of the temple, he was the only one to hold a rabbinic title, which at the time required halakhic ordination. Salomon was an eminent scholar and evinced even before his appointment to the Hamburg Temple interest in Reform. He was renowned for his eloquence as a

preacher; he had studied the sermons and style of famous contemporary Christian preachers for many years.

13. Jer. 7:1.

14. As a preacher Salomon was assisted by Eduard Klever (1789–1867), a disciple of Israel Jacobson and the founding spirit behind the Hamburg Temple. The sermon (*Predigt*) became one of the distinctive features of German Reform. "The nineteenth century saw the rise and development of a new type of Jewish preaching, replacing the traditional *drashah*. The changes involved in this innovation concerned not only the outward form and structure of the sermon but also its substance. The very concept of the purpose of preaching as well as the theology behind it underwent a radical transformation. Obviously, the impact of contemporary trends in the Christian pulpit and in the philosophical thinking of the period accounts for a great deal in this connection" (Alexander Altmann, "The New Style of Preaching in Nineteenth-Century German Jewry," in *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History*, ed. A. Altmann, Philip W. Lown, Institute of Advanced Judaic Studies, Brandeis University [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964], vol. 2, p. 65).

15. The author supports this position by citing a long passage from the Babylonian Talmud, tractate *Brakhot* 3a.

16. The Great Assembly is the *knesset hayodolah*—the institution that embodied the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people at the beginning of the Second Temple period. Constituting the supreme authority in matters of religious practice and law, it was considered the link between the prophets and the first of the rabbis. This body is said to have established the main text of the traditional liturgy.

17. Psalms 137:5.

18. Deut. 4:6.

19. See Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah*, Sanhedrin 1:11. See also Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, 2:11; 3:31.

THE HAMBURG RABBINICAL COURT

3. These Are the Words of the Covenant (1819)¹

These are the words of the covenant with Jacob, a law unto Israel, an eternal covenant; the world of God is one forever and ever. [These words are uttered] in accordance with the Torah and by judgment of the court of justice of the holy community of Hamburg—may the Lord bless it well—with the support of the leading men of learning in Germany, Poland, France, Italy, Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary. All of them join together, in an edict decreed by the angels and a judgment proclaimed by the holy ones, to abolish a *new law* (which was fabricated by several ignorant individuals unversed in the Torah) instituting practices which are not in keeping with the Law of Moses and of Israel. Therefore these pious, learned, holy and distinguished rabbis have risen to render the 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.

Happy is the man who heeds the decree of the sages of the court of justice and the words of the learned, pious and holy. Happy

is the man who does not remove himself from the congregation, in order that he may walk in the way of the good. He who desires the integrity of his soul will take utmost care lest he transgress, Heaven forbid, the words of the learned contained in this volume, as the sages of the Talmud, may their memory be blessed, said: "Pay heed to their legacy." Who is the man who fears the Lord and will not fear the words of the forty pious, exalted and holy men who have affixed their signatures to this book, sparing [thereby] himself and his household.

By Order of the Court of Justice of the Holy Community of Hamburg.

... Behold, we had hoped that these men [who have introduced Reform] would have attended to our words and listened to the voice of their teachers, who alone are fit to express an opinion on matters concerning what is permitted and what is prohibited. In former times the men of our proud city have listened to the voice of their teachers, who told them the path they were to take. We had thought that our judgment would be honored and that they would not dare to disobey our utterance, for our strength now is as it was formerly.

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

Source: *Eleh divrei hubrit* (Altona, 1819), pp. 1, 3–5. Trans. by S. Fischer and S. Weinstein.

THE REFORM RABBINICAL CONFERENCE AT BRUNSWICK

6. The Question of Patriotism (June 1844)¹

Tenth Session, June 18, 1844. Continuation of the committee report regarding Philippson's² proposal [to endorse the position of the French Sanhedrin on Jewish patriotism].

Question 4 [addressed to the Sanhedrin]: Do the Jews consider Frenchmen as their brethren or as strangers? Answer [of the Sanhedrin]: French Jews are the brethren of Frenchmen.

The committee recommended that [the present assembly adopt the following statement]: The Jew considers members of the people with whom he lives his brethren.

Plenum discussion. A. ADLER:³ He wants it to be said that the Jews consider not only the people with whom they live as brethren, but all mankind. Do not all men, according to the prophets, have but one Father? . . .

FRANKFURTER:⁴ This is quite right. It is, however, not a question of ethics, but of politics. For Judaism, the principle of human dignity is cosmopolitan, but I would like to put proper emphasis on the love for the particular people [among whom we live] and its individual members. As men, we love all mankind, but as Germans, we love the Ger-

NOTES

1. It was gradually realized that unless the nascent movement of Reform ceased to be merely the desultory effort of isolated congregations it would never obtain the authority to challenge the supremacy of Orthodox Judaism. Abraham Geiger, the most eminent figure in early Reform, argued that the necessary authority could be obtained only if rabbis supporting religious change would confer and establish common principles and a common program for Reform. In August 1837 Geiger initiated a largely stillborn conference

of like-minded rabbis in Wiesbaden, Germany. The first organizationally successful rabbinical conference on Reform took place from the twelfth to the nineteenth of June 1844. Twenty-five rabbis from throughout Germany attended. The above document is extracted from the protocol of the conference.

mans as the children of our fatherland. We are, and ought to be, patriots, not merely cosmopolitans. . . .

HIRSCH:⁵ Differentiating between love for the fatherland and love for mankind, he proposes an answer analogous to that of the Parisian notables.

HOLDHEIM:⁶ He traces the commandment of recognition and love for fellow countrymen back to the Pentateuch, where the love of the Israelite for the Israelite does not refer to their common religion, but to their common peoplehood. What was once a commandment for the Israelite *with regard to his fellow Israelite*, must also oblige us with regard to our contemporary compatriots—to the Germans. The doctrine of Judaism is thus, first your compatriots [*Vaterlandsgenosse*] then your co-religionists [*Glaubensgenosse*].

A. ADLER, therefore, suggests the following proposal: *The Jew acknowledges every man as his brother. But he acknowledges his fellow countryman to be one with whom he is connected by a particular bond, a bond forged by the effort to realize common political purposes [Staatsszwecke]. . . .*

religious life of the community, have received no Jewish education, have forsaken Judaism, and have embraced Christianity." Rossoff, op. cit., p. 132f.

11. This is an illusion to a rabbinic dictum cited in *These Are the Words of the Covenant*: "No rabbinic court may annul the decree of another court unless the former is greater in number or in wisdom." Purposefully ignoring the "or" of this statement, Bresselau suggests that just because the Reformers were in the minority, this was not warrant to assume that the rabbis were wiser. See Rossoff, op. cit., p. 132f.

12. Here Bresselau challenges the argument of the rabbis that tradition and customs sanctioned by ancient practice preclude all change. Even should the Prophet Elijah suddenly reappear, the rabbis claimed, he would have no authority to change the traditional customs and practice of Israel. Boldly rejecting this dictum, Bresselau insists that customs are as mortal as their authors.

13. This is a citation from *These Are the Words of the Covenant*.

14. Here Bresselau is articulating a recurrent criticism by the reformers of traditional religious practice, namely, that worship is often a mere mechanical observance bereft of genuine religious sentiments and understanding.

15. Bresselau now describes the achievements of the Hamburg Temple.

16. That is, the Hamburg Temple.

17. "Those who had been distant," namely, those Jews who were estranged from the traditional synagogue.

18. Acknowledging the decline in the knowledge of Hebrew, the Hamburg Temple introduced into the worship service prayers translated into German as well as a sermon in the vernacular.

19. The reference is to a confirmation ceremony.

20. Bresselau adds a note here: "The rabbis declared that these three matters were alike in that they were laws without scriptural basis."

21. "To revive many people," that is, to restore them to Jewish religious life.

ann had, proof texts from the tradition. (In a separate pamphlet in German, he presented rabbinic sources supporting prayer in the cular (*Ueber die Gebete der Israeliten in der Sprache* [n.p., 1819]). He also seems to have in mind as much as the rabbis the members of the temple who, faced with the assault by an immense array of learned critics, needed an engaging word.

Bresselau derives the word *slander* by conjoining an acronym from the second and the words of the Hebrew title of *These Are the Words of the Covenant*, namely, "divrei habrit" -*h*, which are the letters for the Hebrew word *slander* (*dibah*). So he refers to the work throughout his pamphlet. See Rossoff, op. cit., p. 132f.

That is, the rabbis who contribute the *revelation* in *These Are the Words of the Covenant*.

2f. Genesis 9:13. Bresselau uses the image of "arrow" of the covenant as that which shoots "light" at "the upright in heart," the "cloud" of "the darkness the minds of the rabbis." He suggests, the rabbis pervert the covenant. See Rossoff, op. cit., p. 128.

Following the Sephardic tradition, the Jews of Hamburg often called their rabbis the "wise" (*haim*).

The "plague" alluded to is the ever-worsening alienation of Jewish youth from Judaism. See Rossoff, op. cit., p. 129.

Bresselau is referring to the rabbis' loss of authority and the resulting anarchy and religious intolerance of contemporary Jewry.

The reference is to the three judges of the original rabbinic court who solicited the *responsa* recorded in *These Are the Words of the Covenant*.

The covenant "sealed in our flesh" is that of circumcision, the "sign" of Abraham's covenant with God.

"In this section, Bresselau bemoans the fate of the Jewish youth who, because of the neglect of those who were responsible for the reli-

oleon regarding the Jews' sentiments toward fellow countrymen. Philippson's motion was read to a committee, which, at the session of the eighteenth, submitted its recommendation to the motion. "By basing upon the French precedent, the first gathering Jewish representatives resulting from the changes superinduced by the political emancipation of the Jews . . . conference, whether consciously or unconsciously, declared itself the official voice of the Jewish spirit" (D. Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism*, rev. ed. [New York: Knave Publishing House, 1967], pp. 159ff.).

Ludwig Philippson (1811–1889), rabbi and preacher at Magdeburg. Supporting a program of moderate Reform, he tried to steer a middle course between radical Reform and Orthodoxy. He was founder and editor of the most widely read Jewish publication of the time, *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*; the newspaper was prominent in the struggle for Jewish emancipation and the fight against antisemitism.

3. Abraham Jacob Adler (1813–1856), rabbi at Worms; he was an exponent of radical Reform.

4. Naphtali Frankfurter (1810–1866), from 1840 to 1866 preacher at the Reform temple in Hamburg; identified with the most radical wing of Reform.

5. Samuel Hirsch (1815–1889), chief rabbi in Luxembourg from 1843 to 1866; he then emigrated to the United States, where he was rabbi of Congregation Keneseth Israel in Philadelphia until 1888. Opposed to the unsystematic reforms by radical lay groups, he upheld the rite of circumcision and the use of Hebrew in the public prayer service; yet, he was the first rabbi to advocate the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday, and he carried this out in the United States.

6. Samuel Holdheim (1806–1960), rabbi of the province of Mecklenburg-Schwerin from 1840 to 1846. In 1847 he accepted an invitation to serve as the rabbi of the newly founded Reform congregation of Berlin, which under his guidance became a center of radical Reform.

satisfy these needs, to alleviate these sorrows, and to prevent any discord [among the people]. It is the duty of the rabbinical conference to show and to attest that it is moved by serious and sacred aspirations. Its spokesmen, therefore, have to begin by stating their principles. It is the pride of Judaism that no person, and no social class, may presume authority, but that every decision must evolve organically from principles and derive its validity therefrom. Points of view may be stated and put to the vote, but without principles they are merely private opinions. First of all, therefore, the people are entitled to an exposition of our principles. . . .

The speaker now explains his principles: He stands for a positive, historical Judaism. [This approach posits that] in order to understand Judaism in the present one must look back and investigate its past.

The positive forms of Judaism are deeply rooted within its innermost being and must not be discarded coldly and heartlessly. Where would we be if we were to tear apart our inner life and let a new life spring forth from our head as Minerva sprang forth from the head of Jupiter. We cannot return to the letter of Scripture. The gap [between it and us] is too wide to be bridged. Even a new exegesis of the Bible is subject to changing phases of scholarship and could not serve as a foundation of a firm edifice. Should we allow any influence on the *Zeitgeist*, on the spirit of the time? But the *Zeitgeist* is as fickle as the times. Besides, it is cold. It may seem reasonable, but it will never satisfy, console and calm the soul; Judaism, on the other hand, always inspires and fills the soul with bliss.

The reform of Judaism, moreover, is not a reform of faith, but one of religious commandments. These still live within the people and exert their influence. We are not called upon to weaken, but rather to strengthen this influence. We must not consider the individuals who do not abide by them; we are not a party and must therefore take care of the whole. Now it is necessary to conserve the

things which are truly sacred to the entire people, to prevent any schism in Israel. Rather than creating new parties, we must make peace between the existing ones. . . .

Fourth Session, afternoon, July 16, 1845. . . . Geiger⁵ demands a strict adherence to the expression of the problem as consisting of the following two questions:

1. Is the complete exclusion of the Hebrew language from the liturgy in general desirable?

2. Are there momentary considerations in favour of a provisional solution?

Both questions, however, overlap and cannot be strictly separated in the debate. The speaker considers it desirable to pray in the mother tongue, which is the language of the soul. Our deepest emotions and feelings, our most sacred relationships, our most sublime thoughts find their expression in it. He feels compelled to admit that as regards himself—although Hebrew is his first mother tongue which he has learnt before other languages, and a language he knows thoroughly—a German prayer strikes a deeper chord than a Hebrew prayer.

The Hebrew language, he continues, has ceased to be alive for the people, and the language of [Jewish] prayer is certainly not the language of the Scripture any more. It is obvious, moreover, that even a reading from the Torah tires a large part of the community.

The introduction of the vernacular into the service, it is claimed, effects the disappearance of the Hebrew language and thus undermines the foundations of Judaism. To this objection the speaker replies that anyone who imagines Judaism to be walking on the crutches of a language deeply offends it. By considering Hebrew as being of central importance to Judaism, moreover, one would define it as a national religion, because a separate language is a characteristic element of a separate nation. But no member of this conference, the speaker concluded would wish to link Judaism to a particular nation. . . .

Fifth Session, morning, July 17, 1845. . . . Frankel [takes the floor]. The ongoing debate,

THE REFORM RABBINICAL CONFERENCE AT FRANKFURT Hebrew as the Language of Jewish Prayer (1845)¹

1 Session, morning, July 16, 1845. . . . The President moves that it would seem desirable to discuss the report [of the Commission Liturgy] immediately.

Question 1: To what degree is the Hebrew language necessary for the public prayer service, if not necessary, is its retention desirable for the time being?

Report of the committee: With respect to question one, the Hebrew language is not in any instance objectively necessary for the service, nor does the Talmud, with very minor exceptions, prescribe it. But since a large part of the Israelites in contemporary Germany seem to feel a subjective necessity for it, the committee considers the use of the Hebrew language advisable for typical parts

of the liturgy: the *barechu*,² the *parshat shema*,³ the three first and three last benedictions of the liturgy and the blessings upon reading of the Torah, should be recited in Hebrew; all other parts of the liturgy may be recited in a German adaptation.

The President, in accordance with the proposal of the committee, now poses the question: Is praying in the Hebrew language objectively, legally necessary [objektiv gesetzlich notwendig]?

Frankel⁴ takes the floor. He deems the occasion important enough to begin with a few general observations. This rabbinical conference consists of the guides and teachers of the people. They are familiar with the people's needs and sorrow; it is their duty to

¹ *Protokolle und Aktenstücke der zweiten Rabbiner-Versammlung . . .* (Frankfurt am Main, 1845), I, 32ff. Trans. by J. Hessing.

to remind you that we are not yet emanated. (Disapproval from all sides. The speaker insists that he merely wants to keep all political issues out of the debate, because their introduction causes misunderstanding.) From the obvious point of view, a distinction was made between prayer and service; this was correct. The reading from the Torah, for instance, is meant to demonstrate the unity of the people established by the Torah, as it is out-

15

With thirty rabbis in attendance, this conference took place in Frankfurt am Main from the 15th to the 18th of July, 1845. The conference was devoted to the consideration of the report of the Commission on Liturgy established at the previous conference at Brunswick. In consequence of the new cultural and political situation of the Jews, two distinct problems arose with regard to the continued use of Hebrew as the language of Jewish public worship: first, the neglect of traditional Jewish learning in Hebrew was increasingly unintelligible to the Jews, and second, it was feared that the use of the national language of the ancient commonwealth of Israel would seem to vitiate the Jews' religious affiliation to the 'country of their rest.' Accordingly, the Commission on Liturgy was constituted to reevaluate the place of Hebrew in the daily service, the *barechu* ("Praise the Lord who is to be praised . . .") call to prayer, and the affirmation of belief in God's divine providence. It is followed by *parshat*.

Consisting of the *shema* (Deut. 6:4-9) and accompanying blessings (largely drawn from Deut. 10:12-13 and Num. 15:37-41), the *parshat shema*, which is read daily, proclaims Israel's acceptance of God's sovereignty and the yoke of His Commandments. This proclamation links this people with the doctrine of Creation, Revelation and Redemption. The chief rabbi of Breslau, Abraham Geiger (1810-1874). At the time of the conference he was chief rabbi of Breslau and the founding editor of the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift fuer juedische Theologie* [Scientific Journal for Jewish Theology], 6 vols., 1835-1847. Considered the guiding spirit of the first rabbinical conferences, Geiger emerged as the leading theoretician and spokesman of Reform in Germany. He sought to ground the study of Judaism in a scholarly, historical approach (see chapter 5, document 7) that would validate Reform's conception of Judaism as an ongoing evolutionary process.

pressed in "And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel."¹⁵ Instruction [in the Torah] could be managed without this public reading, because [printed] Bibles are available in sufficient numbers now. As a demonstration [of Jewish unity], however, it should be sufficient to read selections from the Hebrew Pentateuch [at the public service and not also the traditional passages from the prophets].

appropriating the authority of an ecclesiastical synod, when in fact it was no more than a consultative body. Further, he charged that the conference demonstrated a single lack of deference to the regnant sentiments of the Jewish people. He decided to attend the Frankfurt conference in order to assure that his colleagues would not exceed their prerogatives.

5. Abraham Geiger (1810-1874). At the time of the conference he was chief rabbi of Breslau and the founding editor of the *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift fuer juedische Theologie* [Scientific Journal for Jewish Theology], 6 vols., 1835-1847. Considered the guiding spirit of the first rabbinical conferences, Geiger emerged as the leading theoretician and spokesman of Reform in Germany. He sought to ground the study of Judaism in a scholarly, historical approach (see chapter 5, document 7) that would validate Reform's conception of Judaism as an ongoing evolutionary process.

6. The Jews of Germany, of course, did not at this time enjoy full civil and political rights.

7. Mishnah, Ethics of the Fathers 1:11, cited in Hebrew.

8. Phylacteries, two small black boxes fastened to leather straps, containing four portions of the Pentateuch written on parchment (Exod. 13:1-16; Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21). They are bound ("laid") on the arm and the head of the male Jew during the morning prayers.

9. Parchment scroll placed in a container and fixed to the doorpost of the Jew's abode. On the scroll are inscribed portions from Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21.

10. Talmud, tractate *Berakhot* 31b; cited in Hebrew.

11. Aramaic is a cognate of Hebrew that was for many centuries the vernacular of Palestine. Biblical readings were translated into Aramaic in the

synagogue for the benefit of congregants who did not understand Hebrew. Some of the prayers of the traditional liturgy are still in Aramaic, most notably the doxology known as the *kaddish*.

12. Joseph Kahn (1809-1875). He was the chief rabbi of Treves (Trier), where he officiated for more than thirty years.

13. In the Middle Ages a practice was instituted that required the Jews to make a special oath (*More Judaico*) when testifying before a non-Jewish court. Assuming that the Jews did not respect Christian jurisprudence, these oaths bound the Jew's testimony under rabbinic law. The oaths were accom-

panied by self-imposed curses, delineating the punishment, often in gruesome detail, if the testimony was falsely made; sometimes they were accompanied by humiliating rites, such as standing on a sow's skin. In France the *more Judaico* was abolished only in 1846, in parts of Germany not until the second half of the nineteenth century; it was still administered in Rumania as late as 1904. The Duchy of Brunswick abrogated the practice in 1845.

14. Joseph Loewengard, rabbi of Lehrensteinfels.

15. Deut. 4:44; cited in Hebrew.

THE REFORM RABBINICAL CONFERENCE AT FRANKFURT

8. The Question of Messianism (1845)¹

Eighth Session, July 20, 1845. Agenda: Discussion of questions pertaining to cult. Question 2: To what degree must the dogma of the Messiah, and anything pertaining to it, be taken into consideration in the liturgy?

Before opening the debate, the President considers it necessary to remark that we are not concerned with the establishment of a certain doctrine of the Messiah, and that such doctrines will not be put to the vote; we are only concerned with how the existing liturgy should be evaluated in this respect, or perhaps conveniently changed. Points of view may differ subjectively, but it is hoped that a version acceptable to all will emerge. The numerous speakers, especially those who are ardent believers in traditional messianism, should beware of creating any doubt concerning their allegiance to the state. Such contrasts and seeming contradictions are easily resolved within the mind of the believer. Here we are only concerned with the demands of truthfulness, lest we pray for something that does not coincide with our convictions.

The committee report reads as follows: The concept of the Messiah must continue to occupy a prominent place in the liturgy, but all political and national implications should be avoided.

EINHORN:² The concept of the Messiah is closely linked to the entire ceremonial law. The believer in the Talmud finds his salvation only in the reconstruction of the state, the return of the people, the resumption of sacrifices, etc. Here lies the cause for all our lamentations over the destruction of the Temple, and our yearnings for the ruins of the altar. Ardent belief and unshakable courage were expressed in these hopes, uttered forth from the dark caves of our miserable streets.

But now our concepts have changed. There is no need any more for an extended ceremonial law. The earlier approach restricted divine guidance to the land [of Israel] and the people; the deity, it was believed, enjoyed bloody sacrifices, and priests were needed for penance. With increasing zeal, the prophets spoke up against this restricted

Source: *Protokolle und Aktenstuecke der zweiten Rabbiner-Versammlung . . .* (Frankfurt am Main, 1845), pp. 37-77, 81ff. Trans. by J. Hessing.

view. Everybody knows the passage: "It hath been told thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord doth require of thee; only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. 6:8, cited in Hebrew). The decline of Israel's political independence was at one time deplored, but in reality it was not a misfortune, but a mark of progress; not a degradation, but an elevation of our religion, through which Israel has come closer to fulfilling its vocation. The place of the sacrifices has been taken by sacred devotion. From Israel, the word of God had to be carried to the four corners of the earth, and new religions have helped in carrying out the task. Only the Talmud moves in circles; we, however, favor progress.

At one time I took the concept of the Messiah to be a substitute for the idea of immortality, but now I no longer think so. I rather consider it as a hope of both worldly and heavenly salvation. Neither this idea nor the concept of the Chosen People contain anything reprehensible. The concept of the Chosen People, in fact, offers the undeniable advantage, for it creates a beneficial self-consciousness in the face of the ruling church.

I vote for the renunciation of all petitions for the restoration of the sacrifices and our political independence. I should prefer our prayers for the Messiah to express a hope for a *spiritual renaissance and the unification of all men* in faith and in love through the agency of Israel.

Hess:⁴ In discussing the concept of the Messiah we run the greatest risk of losing ourselves in diffuse theories. The question is simply whether one wishes to interpret the Scripture in spirit, or literally; whether one conceives of messianism as an ideal, or as the idea of our religious independence, unattainable without the full political equality of the Israelites; whether, moreover, one sees it as a bond with our brethren living under oppressive rulers. Let us therefore hold on to the fact that the concept of a personal and political Messiah is dead for German Jewry, and that we must not petition God for that which we no longer believe. . . .

HOLDHEIM:⁵ Two points of misunderstanding must be clarified:

1. The hope for a national restoration contradicts our feeling for the fatherland; some speakers have claimed, on the other hand, that the two may coexist.

2. We are warned not to emphasize the national element, lest there be misinterpretations; but it was rightly remarked, on the other hand, that we should not pay attention to misinterpretations.

The main point, however, is this: We merely represent the religious, not the political interest of the community. The latter is sufficiently represented by other spokesmen. Our nationality is now only expressed in religious concepts and institutions. It is said: Our original nationality has developed towards religion. But this is erroneous; such a development is unnatural. One must not mistake a national for a religious phenomenon, otherwise many abuses could be justified.

The wish to return to Palestine in order to create there a political empire for those who are still oppressed because of their religion is superfluous. The wish should rather be for a termination of the oppression, which would improve their lot as it has improved ours. The wish, moreover, is inadmissible. It turns the messianic hope from a religious into a secular one, which is gladly given up as soon as the political situation changes for the better. But messianic hope, truly understood, is religious. It expresses either a hope for redemption and liberation from spiritual deprivation and the realization of a Kingdom of God on earth, or for a political restoration of the Mosaic theocracy where Jews could live according to the Law of Moses. This latter religious hope can be renounced only by those who have a more sublime conception of Judaism, and who believe that the fulfillment of Judaism's mission is not dependent on the establishment of a Jewish state, but rather by a merging of Jewry into the political constellations of the fatherland. Only an enlightened conception of religion can displace a dulled one. Those, however, who believe that religion demands a political

restoration must not renounce this belief even under the best of circumstances [in the Diaspora], because religion will content itself with nothing less than the complete satisfaction of its demands. This is the difference between strict Orthodoxy and Reform: Both approach Judaism from a religious standpoint; but while the former aims at a restoration of the old political order [in the interest of religion], the latter aims at the closest possible union with the political and national constellations of their times [as the demand of religion]. . . .

WECHSLER:⁶ As soon as we try to pin down the "how" of our hope, the hope immediately disappears. We ought not to vivisect our messianism, but to shape the existing prayers in accordance with our consciousness. We must not disregard the masses. If we had to compose new prayers, the situation would be different.

Therefore, everything already in existence should be admitted as long as it does not run

NOTES

1. The traditional Jewish liturgy gives prominent expression to the millennial yearning for a personal Messiah from the royal House of David who will herald "the ingathering of the exiles" of Israel to their ancestral homeland. The national sentiments of these prayers were considered by some reformers to cast doubt on the Jews' identification with the country of their residence and citizenship. The Commission on Liturgy was charged with reevaluating the place of messianism within the prayerbook.

2. Leopold Stein (1810-1882). From 1844 to 1862 he was a rabbi at Frankfurt am Main.

3. David Einhorn (1809-1879). In 1842 he was appointed rabbi of Hoppstaedten and chief rabbi of the principality of Birkenfeld. In 1855 he emigrated to the United States, where he became a leader of the radical wing of the Reform move-

counter to commonly accepted truth. *Political* and *national* do not seem to be the right expressions, anyway. Is the *People of Israel* national or a political term? If it were so the word *People* should not be used, and all passages in the liturgy containing the word should be deleted.

The question only concerns the prayer for our return to Palestine and all its consequences.

In all contemporary additions to the prayerbook our modern conception of the Messiah may clearly be stated, including the confession that our newly gained status citizens constitutes a partial fulfillment of our messianic hopes. . . .

Resolution adopted by the majority: The messianic idea should receive prominent mention in the prayers, but all petitions for our return to the land of our fathers and for the restoration of a Jewish state should be eliminated from the liturgy. . . .⁷

ment there.

4. Michael Hess (1782-1860). An advocate of thoroughgoing reform, from 1806 to 1855 served as headmaster of the Philanthropin Frankfurt, a Jewish elementary and high school fashioned in the spirit of the *haskalah*.

5. Samuel Holdheim, see documents 6 and 9 this chapter.

6. Bernhard Wechsler (d. 1874). In 1841 he succeeded Samson Raphael Hirsch as chief rabbi Oldenburg.

7. The conference unanimously approved the removal of the traditional petitions for the restoration of the sacrificial cult from the liturgy. The majority of the conference, however, voted that provided they were recited only in Hebrew the Torah passages concerning the sacrifice should remain in the liturgy.

ate the rabbis. (leshurun, symbolic name for Israel (Deut. 33:5, 26). *Zitzit*, the Hebrew word for "fringes." According to the biblical injunction fringes are to be tied to each of the four corners of a garment (Deut. 22:12). To fulfill this commandment the pious Jew wears a small four-cornered prayer shawl beneath his outer clothing.

14. Literally a "pierced slave." According to biblical law Hebrew slaves are to be freed after six years of service. If the slave refuses to go free and wishes to stay in his master's service, then the master pierces his ear with an awl and in this way the slave is bonded to him forever (see Exod. 21:5-6 and Deut. 15:16-17). The master here, of course, is temporal life and its pleasures.

ZECHARIAS FRANKEL

On Changes in Judaism (1845)¹

Maintaining the integrity of Judaism simultaneously with progress, this is the essential problem of the present. Can we deny the difficulty of a satisfactory solution? This is the point where the two apparent parties can meet? What ought to be our mode of departure in the attempt to reconcile traditional Judaism and progress and what opposition may we expect to encounter? How can we assure rest for the soul so that it shall not be torn apart or be numbed by mere doubts while searching for the ray of faith, and yet allot to reason its due and enable it to lend strength and lustre to the religious feeling which springs from the emotions? The opposing elements which so seldom are in balance must be reconciled and this is our task. . . .

Judaism is a religion which has a direct bearing on life's activity. It is a religion of action demanding the performance of precepts which either directly aim at ennobling the character, by reminding man of the divine, or, when his feelings of dependence on God are weakened, by reminding him of God and because of this trait neither pure contemplation nor dark mysticism can ever strike root in Judaism. This, in

turn, guaranteed that the lofty religious ideas were maintained in their purity, with the result that even today the divine light shines in Judaism.

By emphasizing religious activity, Judaism is completely tied to life and becomes the property of every individual Jew. A religion of pure ideas belongs primarily to the theologians; the masses who are not adapted to such conceptions concern themselves little with the particulars of such religions because they have little relationship to life. On the other hand, a religion of action is always present, demanding practice in activity and an expression of will, and its demands are reflected in the manifold life of the individual, with the result that the faith becomes the common property of every follower.

Thus we have reached the starting point for the consideration of the current parties in 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 es-

tranged 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 endeavors 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. We must, it feels, take into consideration the opposition between faith and conditions of the time. True faith, due to its divine nature, is above time, and just as

the nobler part of man is not subjected to time, so does faith rise above all time, and the word which issued from the mouth of God is rooted in eternity. But time has a force and might which must be taken account of. There is then created a dualism in which faith and time face each other, and man chooses either to live beyond time or to be subjected to it. It is in this situation that the Jew finds himself today; he cannot escape the influence of the conditions of the time and yet when the demands of faith bring him to opposition with the spirit of the time, it is hoped that he will heed its call—find the power to resist the blandishments of the times. This third party, then, declares that Judaism must be saved for all time. It affirms both the divine value and historical basis of Judaism and, therefore, believes that by introducing some changes it may achieve some agreement with the concepts and conditions of the time.

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. The early teachers, by interpretation, changed the literal meaning of the Scriptures; later scholars that of the Mishnah, and the post-talmudic scholars that of the Talmud. All these interpretations were not intended as speculation. They addressed themselves to life precepts. Thanks to such studies, Judaism achieved stabilization and avoided estrangement from the conditions of the time in various periods. . . . [The rabbis] established a rule which was intended as a guardian and protector against undue changes. It reads as follows: That which was adopted by the entire community of Israel and was accepted by the people and became a part of its life, can not be changed by any authority.²

In this fundamental statement there lies a living truth. Through it there speaks a pro-

¹"Die Symptome der Zeit," *Zeitschrift fuer juedische religioese Interessen* 2 (1845), pp. 1-21. Mordecai A. J. Rabinowitz, ed. and trans., *Tradition and Change: The Development of Conservative Judaism* (New York: Burning Bush Press, 1958), pp. 44, 46-50. Reprinted by permission of the Rabbinical Assembly of America.

found view of Judaism which can serve for all times as a formula for needed changes and can be employed both against destructive reform and against stagnation.

This fundamental statement helps to make clear to us what changes in Judaism are justified and how they can be realized. True, Judaism demands religious activity, but the people is not altogether mere clay to be molded by the will of theologians and scholars. In religious activities, as in those of ordinary life, it decides for itself. This right was conceded by Judaism to the people. At such times as an earlier religious ordinance was not accepted by the entire community of Israel, it was given up. Consequently, when a new ordinance was about to be enacted it was necessary to see whether it would find acceptance by the people. When the people allows certain practices to fall into disuse, then the practices cease to exist. There is in such cases no danger for faith. A people used to activity will not hurt itself and will not destroy its practices. Its own sense of religiosity warns against it. Only those practices from which it is entirely estranged and which yield it no satisfaction will be abandoned and will thus die of themselves. On the whole there is always a great fund of faith and religious activity to afford security against negation and destruction.

We have, then, reached a decisive point in regard to moderate changes, namely, that they must come from the people and that the will of the entire community must decide. Still, this rule alone may accomplish little. The whole community is a heavy unharmonious body and its will is difficult to recognize. It comes to expression only after many years. We must find a way to carry on such changes in the proper manner, and this can be done by the help of the scholars.³ Judaism has no priests as representatives of faith nor does it require special spiritual sanctimoniousness in its spokesmen. The power to represent it is not the share of any one family, nor does it pass from father to son. Knowledge and mastery of the law supply the sanctity, and these can be attained by

everybody. In Jewish life, spiritual and intellectual ability ultimately took the place of the former priesthood which, even in early times, was limited in its function primarily to the sacrificial cult. Even in early days, Judaism recognized the will of the people as a great force and because of this recognition a great religious activity came into being. But this activity, in turn was translated into a living force by the teachers of the people through the use of original ordinances and through interpretation of the Scriptures. At times these actions of the sages lightened the amount of observance; at times they increased it. That the results of the studies and research of the teachers found acceptance among the people proves, on the one hand, that the teachers knew the character of their time, and, on the other hand, that the people had confidence in them and that they considered them true representatives of their faith.

Should Jewish theologians and scholars of our time succeed in acquiring such a confidence, then they will attain influence with the introduction of whatever changes may be necessary. The will of the community of Israel will then find its representatives and knowledge will be its proper exercise.

The scholars thus have an important duty in order to make their work effective. It is to guard the sense of piety of the people and to raise their spirit to the height of the great ideas. For this they need the confidence of the people. Opposition to the views of the people, such as some reformers display, is unholy and fruitless. The teacher thereby loses the power to make the essence of faith effective, for in place of that confidence which is the basis in correct relations between teacher and community there comes mistrust and an unwillingness to follow. The truths of faith must be brought nearer to the people so that they may learn to understand the divine content within them and thus come to understand the spiritual nature and inner worth of the forms which embody these truths. Once the people are saturated with an awareness of the essential truths

and the forms which embody them, a firm ground will have been established for adhering to Jewish practices. And if the people then cease to practice some unimportant customs and forms of observances it will not be a matter of great concern. And it will not,

NOTES

1. Zecharias Frankel (1801–1875). He attended the Reform Rabbinical Conference at Frankfurt with grave doubts regarding his colleagues' commitment to the place of Hebrew in the liturgy. On the third day of the deliberations he submitted a letter of resignation from the conference in which he stated: "The preservation of Judaism is the innermost core of my life and the aim of all my endeavors. I am ready to make any sacrifice for this cause and shall always resist any tendency to the contrary." To his profound distress the attitude of the conference to Hebrew was indicative of such a tendency. Subsequently, he endeavored without success to call a conference of all rabbis committed both to the adjustment of Judaism to the spirit of the times and to the preservation of "positive historical Judaism." In his attempt to develop a middle position—articulated in the essay

as recent changes have, lead some Jews into shock and hopelessness. They will no longer see all such changes as leading to the disappearance of our faith and language, as their pusillanimity leads them to believe, the end of the existence of Judaism.

presented here—Frankel was opposed from both Reform and Orthodox quarters. The pain at this failure was assuaged when in 1854 he was named the director of the Juedisch-Theologisches Seminar at Breslau; a position that Geiger, who was instrumental in establishing the institution, desired. Under Frankel's directorship the seminary became the prototype of the modern rabbinical seminary. The seminary's curriculum aimed to teach a "positive historical Judaism," which in this context meant a positive attitude to the practical precepts of Judaism and a critical "historical" inquiry into the Jewish past, including biblical criticism.

2. Talmud, tractate *Avodah zarah* 3b.

3. Here Frankel means the scholar of the modern mode to be developed at the Breslau seminary

SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

13. Religion Allied to Progress (1854)¹

... "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. How leaderless was this new congregation of prophets before this new messenger with this new

message of salvation appeared among them. 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 clubs and fraternity, at the ball and supper party and concerts and in salons—everywhere the old Judaism was in the way and seemed so completely out of place. And even in the

Source: Samson Raphael Hirsch, "Die Religion im Bunde mit dem Fortschritt" (1854). *Judaism Eternal: Selected Essays from the Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*, ed. and trans. I. Grunfeld (London: Soncino Press, 1956), vol. 2, pp. 224–38. Copyright 1956 by the Soncino Press. Reprinted by permission.

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. Above all it seemed to be the only obstacle in the race for emancipation. No wonder then that without hesitation they shook off the old obstructive religion and hurried into the arms of "progress." And in the political market-place where emancipation was to be purchased, the modern sons of Judah could be seen in every corner offering to exchange the old Judaism for something else, since in any case it had lost all its value for their own use.

For many a decade modern Jewry thus soared aloft like dust on the wings of a butterfly and tasted freedom in the unwonted airy heights; and yet they felt a pain in their hearts where the absence of religion had left a void, and at the end they were ashamed while enjoying the brilliance of modern life to be walking the earth without religion; they felt restless and miserable.

But behold! The prophet of the new message came into their midst with the cry of "religion allied to progress"; he filled the blank, pacified their conscience and wiped out their shame. With this magic word he turned irreligion into Godliness, apostasy into priesthood, sin into merit, frivolity into virtue, weakness into strength, thoughtlessness 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

many a sacrifice, henceforth became the heavenly manna which merely reflected everybody's own desires, echoed their own thoughts, sanctified their own aspirations and said to each one: "Be what you are, enjoy what you fancy, aspire to what you will, whatever you may be you are always religious, whatever you may do—all is religion; continue to progress, for the more you progress the further you move from the ancient way, and the more you cast off old Jewish customs the more religious and acceptable to God will you be. . . .

All this would of itself worry us who are of different mind very little. We allow everyone his own peace and bliss and also his fame, if only he would be fair enough to leave us—not indeed our "fame" (to which we lay no claim), nor indeed our "bliss" (which cannot be impaired by human opinion)—but at least our peace and quiet.

But the eulogist of "religion allied to progress" and its prophet has found it necessary to enhance the brightness of his cause by painting its opposite in the blackest colours. He therefore describes us, [we the so-called proponents of Orthodoxy] who do not believe in the mission of the new prophet, as the "black opponents of progress and civilisation." . . .

May one of these "fools and obscurantists" be permitted in the face of such provocation, a few carefully considered and objective remarks, for the purpose of stating fully and placing in their true light the facts which certain people are so glad to call "religious confusions" (because they fear lest they might be cleared up) and so taking the first step towards resolving them? . . .

[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 about the principle, the much-vaunted, world-redeeming principle of "religion allied to progress"? If it is to be a principle—something more than an empty phrase meant for show—it must have a definable content and we must be permitted to try to clarify it. In the expression "religion allied to progress," progress is evidently intended to qualify religion. Indeed, this is the very essence of the "idea," not religion by itself, but religion only to the extent and in so far as it can co-exist with progress, in so far as one does not have to sacrifice progress to religion. The claim of religion is therefore not absolute but is valid only by permission of "progress." What, then, is this higher authority to which religion is therefore not absolute but is valid only by permission of "progress"? What, then, is this higher authority to which religion has to appeal in order to gain admission? What is this "progress"? Evidently not progress in the sphere of religion, for then the expression would amount to "religion allied to itself" which is nonsense. It means, then, progress in every sphere other than religion. Speaking frankly, therefore, it means: religion as long as it does not hinder progress, religion as long as it is not onerous or inconvenient. . . .

The subordination of religion to any other factor means the denial of religion: for if the Torah is to you the Law of God how dare you place another law above it and go along with God and His Law only as long as you thereby "progress" in other respects at the same time? You must admit it: it is only because "religion" does not mean to you the word of God, because in your heart you deny Divine Revelation, because you believe

not in Revelation given to man but in Revelation from man, that you can give man the right to lay down conditions to religion.

"Religion allied to progress"—do you know, dear reader, what that means? Virtue allied to sensual enjoyment, rectitude allied to advancement, uprightness allied to success. It means a religion and a morality which can be preached also in the haunts of vice and iniquity. It means sacrificing religion and morality to every man's momentary whim. It allows every man to fix his own goal and progress in any direction he pleases and to accept from religion only that part which does not hinder his "progress" or even assist it. It is the cardinal sin which Moses of old described as "a casual walking with God."³

Civilisation and culture—we all treasure those glorious and inalienable possessions of mankind. We all desire that the good and the true, all that is attainable by human thought and human will-power, should be the common heritage of all men. But to make religion—which is the mother and father of all civilisation and culture—dependent upon the progress of this same civilisation and culture would mean throwing it into the melting-pot of civilisation; it would mean turning the root into the blossom; it would mean crowning the human edifice with that which should be its foundation and cornerstone. . . .

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? . . . We declare before heaven and earth that if our religion demanded that we should renounce what is called civilisation and progress we would obey unquestioningly, because our religion is for us truly religion, the word of God before which every other consideration has to give way. We declare, equally, that we would prefer to be branded as fools and do without all the hon-

our and glory that civilisation and progress might confer on us rather than be guilty of the conceited mock-wisdom which the spokesman of a religion allied to progress here displays.

For behold whither a religion allied to progress leads! Behold how void it is of all piety and humanity and into what blunders the conceited, Torah-criticising spirit leads. Here you have a protagonist of this religion of progress. See how he dances on the graves of your forefathers, how he drags out their corpses from their graves, laughs in their faces and exclaims to you: "Your fathers were crude and uncivilised; they deserved the contempt in which they were held. Follow me, so that you may become civilised and deserve respect!"

Such is the craziness which grows on the tree of knowledge of this "religion allied to progress"!

If our choice were only between such craziness and simple ignorance, again we say we would remain ignorant all our life-long rather than be thus godlessly educated even for one moment.

There is, however, no such dilemma. Judaism never remained aloof from true civilisation and progress; in almost every era its adherents were fully abreast of contemporary learning and very often excelled their contemporaries. If in recent centuries German Jews remained more or less aloof from European civilisation the fault lay not in their religion but in the tyranny which confined them by force within the walls of their ghettos and denied them intercourse with the outside world. And, thank goodness, even now our sons and daughters can compare favourably in cultural and moral worth with the children of those families who have forsaken the religion of their forefathers for the sake of imagined progress. They need not shun the light of publicity or the critical eye of their contemporaries. They have lost nothing in culture or refinement, even though they do not smoke their cigars on the Sabbath, even though they do not seek the pleasures of the table in foods forbidden by

God, even though they do not desecrate the Sabbath for the sake of profit and enjoyment.

Indeed, we are short-sighted enough to believe that the Jew who remains steadfast amidst the scoffing and the enticements of the easy-going world around him, who remains strong enough to sacrifice to God's will profit, inclination and the respect and applause of his fellows, displays far greater moral strength and thus a higher degree of real culture than the frivolous "modern Jew" whose principles melt away before the first contemptuous glance or at the slightest prospect of profit, and who is unfaithful to the word of God and the teachings of his fathers in order to satisfy the whim of the moment. . . .

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 us from the adherents of "religion allied to progress"?

A mere trifle! They aim at religion allied to progress—and we have seen that this principle negates the truth of what they call religion—while we aim at progress allied to religion. To them, progress is the absolute and religion is governed by it; to us, religion is the absolute. For them, religion is valid only to the extent that it does not interfere with progress; for us, progress is valid only to the extent that it does not interfere with religion. That is all the difference. But this difference is abysmal.

Judaism as it has come down to us from our forefathers is for us the gift and the word of God, an untouchable sanctuary which must not be subjected to human judgment nor subordinated to human considerations. It is the ideal given by God to all the generations of the House of Jacob, never yet attained and to be striven for unto the distant

future. It is the great edifice for which all Jews and Jewesses are born to live and die, at all times and in every situation. It is the great Divine revelation which should infuse all our sentiments, justify all our resolutions and give all our actions their strength and stability, foundation and direction.

Comparisons are futile. Judaism is not a religion, the synagogue is not a church, and the rabbi is not a priest. Judaism is not a mere adjunct to life: it comprises all of life. To be a Jew is not a mere part, it is the sum total of our task in life. To be a Jew in the synagogue and the kitchen, in the field and the warehouse, in the office and the pulpit, as father and mother, as servant and master, as man and as citizen, with one's thoughts, in word and in deed, in enjoyment and privation, with the needle and the graving-tool, with the pen and the chisel—that is what it means to be a Jew. An entire life supported by the Divine Idea and lived and brought to fulfilment according to the Divine Will.

It is foolish, therefore, to believe—or to pretend to believe—that it is the wording of a prayer, the notes of a synagogue tune, or the order of a special service, which form the abyss between us. It is not the so-called Divine Service which separates us. It is the theory—"the principle" as you call it—which throws Judaism into a corner for use only on Sabbaths and Festivals, and by removing from Jewish souls that have strayed from their Divine Destiny the consciousness of their guilt robs them also of their last hope of penitence.

The more, indeed, Judaism comprises the whole of man and extends its declared mission to the salvation of the whole of mankind,⁵ the less it is possible to confine its outlook to the four cubits of a synagogue and the four walls of a study. The more the Jew is a Jew, the more universalist will his views and aspirations be, the less aloof will he be from anything that is noble and good, true and upright, in art or science, in culture or education; the more joyfully will he ap-

plaud whenever he sees truth and justice and peace and the ennoblement of man prevail and become dominant in human society: the more joyfully will he seize every opportunity to give proof of his mission as a Jew, the task of his Judaism, on new and untroudden ground; the more joyfully will he devote himself to all true progress in civilisation and culture—provided, that is, that he will not only not have to sacrifice his Judaism but will also be able to bring it to more perfect fulfilment. He will ever desire progress, but only in alliance with religion. He will not want to accomplish anything that he cannot accomplish as a Jew. Any step which takes him away from Judaism is not for him a step forward, is not progress. He exercises this self-control without a pang, for he does not wish to accomplish his own will on earth but labours in the service of God. He knows that wherever the Ark of his God does not march ahead of him he is not accompanied by the pillar of the fire of His light or the pillar of the cloud of His grace.

In truth, if only most Jews were truly Jews, most of the factors would disappear which to-day bar many an avenue of activity to them.

If only all Jews who travel or who are engaged in business observed their Jewish duties, the need would—as always—produce its own remedy. The Jew would everywhere find the food demanded by his religion; it would be but little sacrifice for him to refrain from business on the Sabbath; and even in the regulations laid down by state and public bodies enlightened governments would gladly pay respect to a display of conscientiousness which would in itself be a not inconsiderable contribution made by Jewish citizens to the society in which they live.

It is only through unfaithfulness of the majority that the loyalty of the minority becomes a duty demanding so much sacrifice, though the crown which it wins is all the more glorious for the thorns which our brethren strew in our path. . . .

1. Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888). Hirsch was born in Hamburg where his family belonged to the traditionalist opponents of the Reform temple of that city. After completing his rabbinic studies he attended the University of Bonn where he befriended his future adversary, Abraham Geiger. From 1830 to 1841 he served as the chief rabbi of the principality of Oldenburg. During this period he published his two most famous works: *Nineteen Letters on Judaism* (1836) and *Horeb: Essays on Israel's Duties in the Diaspora* (1837). Addressed to the perplexed Jewry of his day, both these works seek to demonstrate the viability of traditional Judaism in the modern world. Hirsch did, however, recognize the need to revise certain "external" aspects of Judaism—viz., aesthetic forms of the public worship service—in order to facilitate the Jew's adjustment to the modern sensibility. On the other hand, he emphatically rejected Reform and any changes affecting the principles and content of halakhic Judaism. Hirsch's response to Reform may be summarized as agreeing to revision of the externals but allowing no reform of the principles of Judaism. He added to this formula an endorsement of secular education and patriotic affection to the country of one's citizenship. In 1851 he was called to serve as the rabbi of the traditional congregation of Frankfurt am Main, Adas Yeshurun—a position he held for thirty-seven years. Under Hirsch's guidance this congregation and its allied educational institutions became the paradigm of his vision of a "Neo-Orthodox Judaism," or halakhic Judaism in harmony with the modern world.

This essay was prompted by the argument of Reform that the rabbinic tradition prevents Jews from finding their place in contemporary German

society, not only because of the traditional Jew's distinctive dress and manner of prayer—which Hirsch agreed must be revised—but also because of the practical precepts of halakhah which were allegedly difficult to perform in a secular environment.

2. According to the Talmud (tractate *Makot* 23b), there are 613 divine *mizvot* or precepts in the Pentateuch. Popularly, obedience to the "613 *mizvot*" refers to adherence to the halakhah.

3. In his interpretation of Lev. 26:21ff.—"and if ye walk contrary unto Me . . ."—Hirsch substitutes "casually" for "contrary."

4. Mishnah, Ethics of the Fathers 2:2.

5. This mission, which has become more urgent in modern times, is concisely stated in a previous work by Hirsch:

Because men had eliminated God from life, nay, even from nature, and found the basis of life in possessions and its aim in enjoyment, deeming life the product of the multitude of human desires, just as they looked upon nature as the product of a multitude of gods; therefore it became necessary that a people be introduced into the ranks of the nations which, through its history and life, should declare God the only creative cause of existence, fulfillment of His will the only aim of life; and which should bear the revelation of His will, rejuvenated and renewed for its sake, unto all parts of the world as the motive and incentive of its coherence (*The Nineteen Letters on Judaism*, trans. S. Drachman [New York, 1899], seventh letter, pp. 66–67).

AKIBA JOSEPH SCHLESINGER

14. An Ultra-Orthodox Position (1864)¹

. . . Once a rabbi was employed who preached his sermons in German. Our rabbi

said: "I was told that he was a learned and pious man." The *gaon*, Rabbi Meir Ish Shal-

Source: Akiva Joseph Schlesinger, *Lev haivri* (Ungvar, 1864), pp. 18a, 21ff. Translated in Alexander Guttmann, *The Struggle Over Reform in Rabbinic Literature* (Jerusalem/New York: World Union for Progressive Judaism, 1977), pp. 252–57. Reprinted by permission of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

om,² replied: "This is the way of the evil inclination. Now they elected a learned, pious man who preaches in a foreign language. Later they will elect an inferior man speaking German." And at the end he said in his holy language (Yiddish), "*Kumt oys eyn goy oyftsumemen als rav*" [finally, they will employ a goy as rabbi]. One great man present at this conversation said: "It is unbelievable how our rabbi hated that learned, pious man who used the foreign language." . . .

And I said, when I saw that he died at half of his life span, that this was the result of the vehement curses uttered by the righteous of that generation. However, in truth, when I paid attention to the matter, I saw that most of the rabbis using a foreign language were truly pious and had erred, in that they were misled or coerced in this matter [i.e., preaching in a foreign language], and did not reach old age. Some of them were killed, others remained childless. The children of some went the wrong [sinful] way. . . .

[Commenting on Hatam Sofer's words: "Be heedful of changing (i.e., you must not change) your name and your language," Schlesinger says:]

Sofer does not refer to the family name but to the first name, e.g., if his first name is Aaron, he should not be called Adolf. . . . "Our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt for four reasons, one of them was: Because they did not change their names" (Midrash, *Vayikra raba*). . . . In another version of the above Midrash the reading is: "Because they did not change their language." The wording in *Sefer mizvot gadol*,³ 50 is: "You must not follow the ways [lit., "laws"] of the gentiles, neither with respect to their clothing, nor with respect to their customs. [After quoting a few biblical verses, Schlesinger continues:] Accordingly, Israel must be separated from the gentiles in clothing, in custom, and in speech. . . .

Among the prohibited languages are *not* Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Arabic. . . . Accordingly, the Torah was given to Israel in these four languages as interpreted in [the Midrash] *Sifre, Beraklah*, on the passage,

Deuteronomy 33:2. Syriac and Persian are included in Aramaic, as we are informed in Tosafot, *Bava kama* 83. . . . Our sainted ancestors, who were forced not to speak Hebrew, changed the language of the nations into Yiddish. . . . Thus we have to understand Rabbi Sofer's command that we must not change the language (i.e., replacing Yiddish by another language), since our Yiddish is, from the viewpoint of Jewish law, just like Hebrew. And thus I heard and saw [a citation] in the name of the holy Isaac Luria⁴ that he used no secular language on a Sabbath, but talked in our language [Yiddish]. . . . [T]he language agreed upon by the Jews and used exclusively by them as the holiness of the holy language [Hebrew]. Therefore, Rabbi Sofer ordained that the Jews must not change their language in our time, and this refers to our Yiddish. . . . Translating the Torah into the language of the nations entails many sins: Transgression of positive and negative commandments. . . . Translating the Torah is prohibited by law as stated in Babylonian Talmud, tractate Kidushin 49. Exceptions are the only Aramaic translations by Onkelos⁵ and Jonathan ben Uziel.⁶ See *Shulkhan arukh*,⁷ *Even ha'ezer* 38:25. See Palestinian Talmud, tractate Megillah 6, for the reasons allowing the translation of the Torah into Aramaic and Greek. . . . The truth why we translate the Torah into our Yiddish is, perhaps, that it is not a specific language of the nations, since this is not done in a language accepted and used by an entire [foreign] nation. . . . All of you, who are using a foreign language, and all who are making any change in the ways of Israel. . . . while the judgment of the wicked is twelve months [in Gehenna; see Babylonian Talmud, tractate Rosh Hashanah 17] the [punishment of] heretics, sectarians, and informers—and those who deviate from the ways of Israel. . . . [is that] they descend to Gehenna and will be punished there for many generations. . . . [Now he flails secular knowledge, which is studied in a foreign language.] You see the Reform is real heresy and apostasy, which may come to realization

by establishing a seminary, God forbid. . . . Investigate the condition of our brothers, the Jews, in Germany, etc. . . . Amalek did not cause as much harm to the Jews as the harm intentionally done by this evil family [the Reformers.] May God save us from their hands and avenge the blood of His servants before our eyes. . . . They lead the children of sainted ancestors away from the heritage of their fathers toward sectarianism and heresy; and [may He avenge] the sin committed against the Jewish children whom they eternally killed in school with their murderous sword. Land, O land do not cover their blood! "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now I will arise, saith the Lord" (Ps. 12:6).

Did the [Jewish] people of Wurttemberg believe a few years ago that this enemy would gather so much power that it would be necessary to make a law prohibiting one

NOTES

1. Akiba Joseph Schlesinger (1837–1922) was one of the architects of ultra-Orthodox Judaism. Born in Pressburg, he attended the yeshivah established in that city by Hatam Sofer. On the basis of the latter's teachings, he elaborated the first comprehensive program of ultra-Orthodoxy. In his work, *Lev haivri* ("The Heart of the Hebrew," 1865), from which this excerpt is taken, he unequivocally rejects all "reforms" and "innovations" within Judaism and calls upon god-fearing, Torah-true Jews utterly to "separate" themselves from their brethren drawn to the modern world. This separation is to be fostered by ensuring that one's name, language and dress remain distinctly Jewish. Only such a radical separation will ensure the religious and spiritual integrity of the Jews. In 1870 Schlesinger settled in the Holy Land, where he sought to consolidate religious Jewry. To this end, he proposed the establishment of a network of schools to educate the young in the spirit of "ultra-Orthodox" Judaism. He also advocated the construction of a self-sufficient economy based on agricultural settlement and society, free from "heretical and outside elements." Despite Schlesinger's militant conservatism, historians point

to enter the synagogue, called a temple, wearing a *talit* and *tefilin*,⁸ and that the other synagogues would be closed, due to the activity of informers, by gentile courts. . . . Many die, and their children cannot say *Kaddish*.⁹ At the time of *bar mizvah*, the blessings over the Torah are written for them in foreign characters, because they don't know Hebrew or Jewish letters. . . . God will not forsake His people, but the future generations will throw stones upon the graves of these bad people. . . . How many rabbis did they ordain, who cause people to sin. . . . Everybody who supports this foreign [non-Jewish] matter, his soul is not the soul of Israel, as stated in the holy Zohar: They are the *erev rav*, the "mixed multitude" [who left Egypt with the Jews and caused all the trouble that followed the Exodus], and they will be identified before the Redeemer will come. . . .

out those features of his program that brought him into conflict with the leadership of the "old *yishuv*" (the community of traditional Jews in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Holy Land). Indeed, some scholars regard his program for Jewish religious renewal in *Eretz Israel*—which even included a proposal for the creation of a Jewish self-defense force—as proto-Zionist.

2. Rabbi Meir Ish-Shalom (Friedman: 1831–1908) was a rabbinic scholar who published highly acclaimed critical editions of midrashic and agadic works.

3. Written by the thirteenth-century French rabbi and scholar Moses ben Jacob of Coucy, *Sefer mizvot gadol* (180) is a codification of Jewish law.

4. Isaac Luria (1534–1572) was a kabbalist whose teachings had a profound impact on subsequent generations.

5. Onkelos (first century C.E., Palestine) was a proselyte to whom is attributed the best-known and still widely consulted Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch.

6. Jonathan ben Uziel (first cent. C.E.) was a Palestinian *tana* (i.e., a teacher mentioned in the Mishnah).

7. *Shulkhan arukh* ("The Prepared Table", 1550–1559) is a codification of Jewish law written by Joseph Caro (1488–1575). *Even ha'ezer* (cf. 1 Samuel 4:1) is the name of the third part of this seminal volume, which deals with the laws of matrimony, divorce and related topics.

8. *Talit* and *tefilin* are, respectively, the prayer shawl and the phylacteries traditionally worn by Jewish men in prayer.

9. *Kaddish* is the mourner's prayer.

SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH¹

15. The Secession of the Orthodox (1877)²

. . . The issue is not the separation between individuals, a withdrawal from friendly intercourse with brethren of differing religious convictions. . . . The issue is secession from all ties with *minut*, from all ties with acknowledgment of opposition-in-principle to Torah and *mizvah*,³—not the secession from social ties with *minim*,⁴ with individuals who acknowledge such opposition-in-principle. Thank God, there are in our days no more *minim* in the sense of our codices, concerning whom they teach us to avoid even mere contact. We are taught that gentiles outside *Eretz Israel* [Hebrew: Land of Israel] are not to be considered idolaters and that there are no *minim* among the nations⁵ and that, therefore, what we are commanded concerning the avoidance of contact with pagans does not apply to such gentiles because *minhag avotehem biydehem*⁶—their religious views and ways are habits acquired through parental influence. The same applies to our Jewish contemporaries who have adopted *minut*⁷ in attitude and practice. They too are already the second and third generation of those who first thought up the defection and then executed it by means of propaganda. . . .

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 [i.e., *minut*-organizations] in whose confession they were raised. . . . Otherwise this intercourse could have exactly the opposite effect on us and our children. That *minut* is more seductive than idolatry, that *minut maskha*,⁸ as our sages put it, we have, unfortunately been shown by the . . . experience of our time. . . .

[In support of his position, Rabbi Hirsch cites a just-published *responsum* of Rabbi Moses Sofer,⁹ the *Hatam Sofer*—universally recognized as one of the greatest rabbinic authorities of his time—who wrote concerning the reformers]:

"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,¹⁰ Anan and Saul,¹¹ they for themselves and we for ourselves. All

Source: Samson Raphael Hirsch, "Die offene Antwort an Herrn Distr. Rabbiner S.B. Bamberger" (1877), in S. R. Hirsch, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Naphtali Hirsch (Frankfurt am Main: Sanger & Friedberg, 1922), vol. 4, pp. 331–60, 361–426. Translated in Leo Levi, "The Relationship of the Orthodox to Heterodox Organizations," *Tradition. Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1967), pp. 97–102. Reprinted by permission of the Rabbinical Council of America.