LIBRARY COPYRIGHT NOTICE

www.huc.edu/libraries

Regulated Warning

See Code of Federal Regulations, Title 37, Volume 1, Section 201.14:

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

Statement by Referee of Master's Thesis

The M.H.L. dissertation entitled:

written by Bernard Martin
(name of student)

1) may (with revisions) be considered for publication (X)

cannot be considered for publication ( )

2) may, on request, be loaned by the Library (X)

may not be loaned by the Library ( )

(signature of referee)

Israel Bettan
(referee)

4-2-51
(date)

Microfilmed. A. Donnelly

THE MESSAGE OF EMIL G. HIRSCH'S SERMONS

by

Bernard Martin

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination.

Hebrew Union College-
Jewish Institute of Religion
Cincinnati, Chio
March, 1951

Referee:
Prof. Israel Bettan

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: EMIL G. HIRSCH AS PREACHER

In the last two decades of the Nineteenth Century and the first two of the Twentieth Emil G. Hirsch was the acknowledged leader of the Reform rabbinate in America. In his rich and varied ministry, as teacher, scholar, and philosopher, he made memorable contributions to the life and thought of his time.

Biographical sketches of Hirsch and evaluations of his work are numerous.[1] In his own lifetime he was known primarily as the most eloquent preacher in American Jewry. The judgment of his contemporaries was undoubtedly correct. Future generations will certainly remember Hirsch largely because of his sermons. Into them went most of his life-energy and effort. In them are to be discovered practically all the fruits of his scholarship and thought, for he did not study and think on one level and preach on another. As a rabbi, Hirsch conceived his function to be primarily that of a teacher using the medium of the pulpit for the moral and intellectual advancement of his listeners. His scholarship and thought were conceived merely as means of making his teaching better and more effective.

Our primary concern here will be with the content of Hirsch's teaching, and particularly with his social

message and his theology. His extant published sermons, some five hundred of them, have been carefully studied, largely for the purpose of extracting from them the essence of his thought. We shall be concerned here not only only with presenting the major conclusions of his intellectual life, as reflected in his sermons, but with relating these to those historical developments and intellectual currents of his time by which he was influenced. But a few general observations about Hirsch as a preacher will certainly not be amiss.

Hirsch was gifted with an unusual talent for language. He is said to have been well acquainted with some twenty modern and ancient tongues. Though English was not his mother tongue, he practically mastered its syntax and idiomatic structure. Moreover, he managed to achieve a homiletic style that was dignified and eloquent without being bombastic. He also had a poetic imagination, with a particular gift for striking metaphor and simile. These qualities appear most strongly in the preaching of his early ministry, when he still took pains to write out his sermons completely.

The range of Hirsch's interests was almost universal. He read very widely and, being blessed with an excellent memory, retained most of what he read. He could discourse authoritatively to his congregation not only on matters

directly related to feligion and ethics, his chief interests, but also on literature, politics, science, and history.

At times he would preach sermons of an intimate and personal nature, directed to the solution of the individual problems and the alleviation of the individual woes of his listeners. Sermons such as "The Discipline of Sorrow",[2] "Unappreciated Blessings", "God Counts the Tears", "Our Consolations", and "The Mystery and the Mastery of Life" show a poignant tenderness and an exquisite sensibility, which constituted only one aspect of the complex personality of Hirsch who could also be vindictive and sarcastic to the highest degree. All of his personality traits are revealed in his sermons. Hirsch was never a gushing sentimentalist in the pulpit, yet he could speak in a way to move the stoniest heart. Just as he was a master of what he called "fine language" but deprecated its use,[3] so he was also a master at playing upon the emotions of his audiences but despised the maudlin orator who succeeds "in squeezing tears from the lachrymal glands of his worshippers."[4]

Hirsch would sometimes treat his audiences to such erudite discourses as "Giordano Bruno", "The History of Easter in Connection with the Dogma of the Resurrection",

and "The Times and Personality of Mohammed", but even in such sermons he avoided a mere demonstration of (acquired) knowledge and strove to give his hearers some message that would be of vital and practical importance in their lives.

Hirsch was at his best when he dealt with significant social and ethical themes, such as "The Individual and Society", "The Fight for Justice", "The Value and Influence of Utopia", "The Inalienable Duties of Man", and "War and Peace". Here he could indulge in scathing invective, (of which he was a master,) against the evils of his society. But he could also, in these sermons, outline clear and logical programs of social action, and calmly and dispassionately dissect social institutions and diagnose their ills.

In those sermons in which he dealt primarily with theological and philosophical problems, Hirsch succeeded in combining clarity and simplicity with a considerable degree of profundity. He would, at times, insult and provoke his audiences, but he never underestimated their intelligence or preached "down" to them. He ascribed to them sufficient understanding to be able to grasp a theoretical problem when simply and clearly stated. That he was not over-optimistic is attested

by the fact that the great crowds which generally flocked to hear him were not at all diminished when he announced a theological topic.

Hirsch was thoroughly at home in the Midrash and other rabbinic sources, and many of his sermons exhibit his skill in their use. However, to a large extent he reserved the Midrash and other specifically Jewish sources for the sermons which it was his custom to preach in various synagogues in Chicago on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. In the Sunday services at his own Sinai Congregation he employed traditional Jewish sources only sparingly. Even there, however, he frequently preached sermons constructed around a Biblical text. He regretted that, in view of the fact that his Sunday morning audiences consisted largely of people unfamiliar with the Bible and rabbinic literature, he could not use the latter to the extent to which his love for them urged him.

Hirsch constantly emphasized the need for scholarship in the occupant of the Jewish pulpit. He had no use for what is sometimes termed "the pastoral ministry" or, at least, the more commonplace aspects of that ministry:

> Our rabbis shall not be organizers of side-shows - pastors that frit away their time in

> calling upon the congregation and inquiring after baby's teeth and grandmother's gouty toe; not advertising agencies of concerts and of God knows what else, or tight rope performances. The rabbi shall not spend his days looking up his members and gossiping with Madame Member, but (he shall be) a student, even if from week to week he be not seen by the congregation. 5

Learning, however, was not, for Hirsch, an end in itself. He insisted that the scholarship of the preacher must be so used as to arouse impulses of heart and mind which lead to a nobler life and a higher standard of conduct.[6] Intellectualism and technical perfection were not, for Hirsch, the major desiderata in a sermon. A sermon, he declared, must also contain the knowledge of life gleaned by the preacher through his own experience.[7]

Hirsch conceived the role of the Jewish preacher as essentially a prophetic one. And in his own sermons, with their bitter denunciations of social wrong, their stirring appeals for a just society, and their lofty envisagements of an ideal social order, Hirsch proved himself a modern prophet, at one in spirit with the ancient seers of Israel.

Notes to Chapter I

RA= The Reform Advocate

1. For biographical surveys see My Religion, pp. 11-23; The Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook, vol. 33, 1923, pp. 145-54; The Dictionary of American Biography; The American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 27, 1925-26, pp. 330-37; and RA for January 13 and May 26, 1923.

2. The (location) of this sermon and of others mentioned in this chapter is as follows:

   -"The Discipline of Sorrow", RA, vol. 3, 1892, pp. 342-346.

   -"Unappreciated Blessings", RA, vol. 1. 1891, pp. 43-44.

   -"God Counts the Tears", RA, vol. 16, 1898, pp. 148-150.

   -"Our Consolations", RA, vol. 11, 1896, pp. 96-100, 1896.

   -"The Mystery and the Mastery of Life", RA, vol. 22, pp. 82-85 (delivered in 1899).

   -Giordano Bruno", RA, vol. 9, 1895, p. 5ff.

   -"The History of Easter in Connection with the Dogma of the Resurrection", RA, vol. 9, 1895, p. 137ff.

   -"The Times and Personality of Mohammed", RA, vol. 9, 1895, p. 168ff.

   -"The Individual and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 247-50.

   -"The Fight for Justice", RA, vol. 4, 1893, pp. 499-502.

   -"The Value and Influence of Utopia", RA, vol. 5, 1893, pp. 202-205.

-"The Inalienable Duties of Man", RA vol. 13, 1897, Part I, pp. 187-90; Part II, pp. 205-208 (preached in 1895)

-"War and Peace", RA, vol. 12, 1896-97, p. 408ff.

3. in an editorial entitled "The Function of the Pulpit", RA, vol. 3, 1892, p. 361.

4. ibid.

5. sermon "What Sinai's Message Is", RA, vol. 16, 1899, p. 368.

6. sermon "How to Listen to a Sermon", RA, vol. 15, 1898, pp. 335-337.

7. ibid.

Chapter 2

THE BACKGROUND OF HIS THOUGHT

Emil G. Hirsch's forty-six years in the active ministry, from 1876 to 1922, were a period of profound change in American life and thought. Under the impact of new social forces and revolutionary intellectual discoveries, many of the most deeply cherished institutions and conceptions of the early Nineteenth Century crumbled and disappeared. Out of the ruins of these old forms and ideas, which in their heydey had been considered by the contemporary American as not only eternal but axiomatic, were to rise new and radically different ones, requiring new adjustments and perspectives.

The stresses and strains of this transitional period are clearly reflected in Hirsch's sermons. Believing, as he did, that the message of the pulpit must always be vital and of immediate relevance, he addressed himself in his preaching to the pressing problems of the day - economic, social, political, cultural, and religious. Though in many respects a creative and original thinker, Hirsch was basically a child of his age. In his sermons are to be discovered most of the major currents, and many of the minor eddies, of contemporary American thought. A familiarity with these and with the most important historical

developments of the period is, therefore, indispensable for a proper understanding of his message.

I Economic, Social, and Political Developments

The year in which Hirsch began his career as a rabbi saw in progress that thorough-going metamorphosis in the structure of the American economy which had been inaugurated by the Civil War. Already the consequences inherent in the process which was transforming America from an agricultural into a primarily industrial land were beginning to manifest themselves. The rise of the great cities; the development of big business and investment banking; the increase in immigration; the development of a class system based on the possession of wealth; the rise of labor unions and industrial conflict; the growth of America as an important power in international affairs - these and other phenomena too numerous to mention were part of the American environment to which Hirsch returned from his studies in Germany in 1876. In the years that followed, the influence of industrialization was to become so pervasive and far-reaching that Henry Adams was not indulging in mere poetic fancy when, upon seeing the dynamo at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893, he concluded that its discovery was the most important event in modern history.

Hirsch was to ponder deeply the host of new problems that industrialization brought to America. Among the questions that vexed his mind in these years, and concerning which he spoke to his congregation, were the proper distribution of wealth, the effect of unemployment and poverty on the working classes, the maintenance of political democracy in an oligarchic and royalistic economy, and the general moral legitimacy of a social order based on selfishness and competition.

The economic system which permitted the creation of vast business empires and immense aggregations of capital such as those controlled by the Goulds, the Carnegies, the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, and the Swifts found its theoretic justification in the doctrine of the Manchester school of economics - a doctrine with which Hirsch was to find himself, as we shall see, in bitter disagreement. One of the cardinal principles of Manchester liberalism, or laissez-faire capitalism, was that given expression by Jay Gould: "Labor is a commodity that will in the long run be governed absolutely by the law of supply and demand."[1] The great Old World exponents of laissez-faire capitalism had been Quesnay, Smith, Mill, Bentham, and Ricardo. Their intellectual heir and the chief living representative of their economic doctrines in the 1870's and the 1880's was the renowned Englishman, Herbert Spencer, a man whose influence on

American social and economic thought of the post-Civil War period is incalculable. Spencer's economic philosophy, based on a combination of Manchester liberalism and the Darwinian concept of "the survival of the fittest", was the gospel of the American industrialist and businessman of the age. To Hirsch and to a growing band of liberals, both in the religious and secular worlds, it was anathema. But the champions of Spencerian economics were still dominant. Among the greatest of them was the famous William Graham Sumner, whose work has been thus described by a recent social historian:

> No one applied more rigorously to the social realm the Darwinian doctrine of the survival of the fittest than this Episcopal rector turned sociologist, who conceded to the commandments from Manchester an authority he could not concede to those from Mt. Sinai. He elevated laissez-faire into a social and economic law and assigned to it the same standing as the law of gravity. 2

Many of the great industrial magnates of the last decades of the Nineteenth Century were "self-made" men, risen from obscure and lowly stations to fabulous opulence and power. An expanding economy and a government which, though espousing an attitude of laissez-faire toward the working class and its economic problems, abandoned this attitude in the interests of the railroad promoters and the manufacturers by handing them large land grants and establishing high protective tariffs,[3] made possible (such) great concentration of wealth in their hands. Their success

stories, presented in fictional form by writers like Horatio Alger and in biographical form by industrialists like Andrew Carnegie, nourished the flame of optimism in the hearts of millions. Anyone, it was thought, could be rich if he only wanted to, and everyone wanted to. Jay Cooke, writing of the expanding commercial life in St. Louis, commented: "Through all the grades I see the all-pervading, all-engrossing anxiety to grow rich. That is the only thing for which men live here."[4] Hirsch found it necessary to repeatedly rebuke his congregations for similar tendencies.

But the bright hope that a million dollars was just around the corner for anyone willing to work hard enough was rudely dispelled by events which showed the fallacy of that hope and dramatically pointed up the inherent weaknesses of the economic system on which it was founded. In 1873 a great financial panic occurred in which thousands of people were ruined. Four years later the great railroad strike introduced large-scale industrial violence in America, a phenomenon destined to recur with terrible frequency in the years that followed. In 1886, six years after Hirsch took up residence in Chicago, there occurred in that brawling, bustling capital of the Midwest the great McCormick Harvester Strike and the riot in Haymarket Square which culminated in the judicial murder of five alleged anarchists. Six years later, in 1892,

came the infamous Homestead Strike in which a bloody battle was fought in the small Pennsylvania steel town. The following year another financial panic occurred, far worse than the one which had taken place twenty years before. In 1894 the great Pullman Strike occurred, and in the same year bloody industrial warfare broke out in the Cripple Creek coal-fields of Colorado. Unemployment in that year had become so wide-spread that the quixotic Jacob Coxey led a huge army of jobless workers to Washington, there to find himself and his lieutenants jailed for walking on the grass of the White House

Throughout these years Hirsch constantly preached about the nature and causes of this economic unrest and joined his voice to the chorus of opposition against the prevailing economic order.

The movement of opposition toward the rampant individualism and unbridled competition of the Manchester philosophy became progressively stronger in the last decades of the Nineteenth Century. Many groups - farmers, labor union members, Socialists, single-taxers - were rising to demand responsible government action for the alleviation of the economic distress of the masses.

The liberal and reform movement of the late Nineteenth Century reached its climax in 1896 when the Democratic Party, which had absorbed most of the progressive elements,

ran as its candidate for the Presidency the "Great Commoner", William Jennings Bryan. Though Bryan lost, the liberal and agrarian movement did not really fail. For the quest for social justice which it heralded was continued in the decades that followed and, in considerable measure, attained. The twenty years between Bryan's first struggle for the Presidency and Wilson's second has become known in American history as the Progressive Era. In this period practically all the major social and economic institutions of American life were subject to criticism and reform. The very term "reform" was the catchword of the period, and its theoretic exponents in all fields were legion.

Many of the reforms which Hirsch and his fellow-liberals in the rabbinate and in the Christian Social Gospel movement advocated were effected in this period. Slum clearance, governmental regulation of the hours and wages of labor, factory safety legislation, compulsory workmen's compensation and insurance laws, the protection of women in industry, the regulation of child labor, prison reform, the spread and improvement of public education, public health and welfare programs, the graduated income tax, the reform of political machinery - all these were products of the Progressive Era.

The thinking of Hirsch and of thousands of other public men who, in this period, urged the abandonment of the old laissez-faire philosophy and ~~urged~~ advocated governmental social welfare legislation was influenced by numerous scholars, writers, and politicians - by sociologists like Lester Ward who, in the very year (1883) that William Graham Sumner, that vigorous proponent of absolute individualism and complete laissez-faire, published What Social Classes Owe to Each Other, wrote his famous Dynamic Sociology, containing an elaborate argument for intelligent social planning and insisting, against Spencer and Sumner, that social progress is not natural and inevitable; by economists like Richard T. Ely, who held (insisted) that economics must be related to ethics and damned Manchester liberalism, and Thorstein Veblen, who realistically bared the irrational psychological motives underlying the contemporary economic system; by publicists like Henry George, who advocated the single-tax as the panacea for all social ills; by novelists like Edward Bellamy, who in Looking Backward (1888), portrayed a utopian society in which there was complete social, economic, and political equality; by revolutionary socialists like Johann Most and David de Leon, and moderate socialists like Eugene V. Debs; by the group of journalists known as the Muckrakers who wrotes exposés of the corruption existing in many social, political, and economic institutions; and by many others too numerous to mention.

To all of these Hirsch was indebted for much of his thinking on the great public issues of his day. Their influence will become manifest when we consider the social message of his sermons.

II General American Cultural and Religious Developments

The closing decades of the Nineteenth Century and the opening decades of the Twentieth also witnessed numerous important developments in the cultural and religious life of America. These were years of wide-spread intellectual ferment. Old orthodoxies were toppling and new heresies rising daily. The rapid changes in social and economic thought precipitated by the technological revolution were matched by equally rapid changes in philosophy, literature, and religion. All of these, forming the intellectual climate in which Hirsch lived, had their effect on his thinking and preaching.

Perhaps the outstanding discovery of the second half of the Nineteenth Century was Charles Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis. Within a comparatively short time this hypothesis gained acceptance in practically the whole of the civilized intellectual world. The effect of Darwinism on philosophy and religion was, at first, revolutionary and destructive. From his noble position in the center of

the universe as the divinely created child of God, man was unceremoniously degraded, at least in the popular understanding of the theory, to the level of the ape. And the fixed and ordered universe which had furnished such pleasure to the children of the Enlightenment gave way to a universe which could be conceived only as being in a constant state of flux and evolving from an unimagineable beginning to an equally unimagineable end. Gone were the proud certainties of yesterday - felled with a single stroke by this nefarious doctrine. It is not surprising that the exponents of rigid orthodoxy in religion and ethics rose to furious and uncompromising battle against Darwinism.

But though, it was, in its first impact, destructive to many of the long-cherished certainties of the past, Darwinism did not prove permanently so, nor did it affect adversely all old ideas. We have already seen how Herbert Spencer, the great popularizer of Darwinism, employed the concept of the survival of the fittest to justify the old economic doctrine of individualism which had heretofore had its theoretic basis in the more artificial concepts of the "economic man" and "economic conduct" held by the Manchester school. Likewise in philosophy and religion, Spencer and his disciples - notably, in America, John Fiske[5] - adapted Darwinian concepts to confirm the received verities. Thus, for example, the faith of the Enlightenment

in Man, Reason, and Progress was sustained by the application of the evolutionary hypothesis. Man was still to be regarded as the consummation of creation, but instead of coming at the beginning of the process,he was now conceived as the end toward which the creative work of the universe had been tending throughout all time. Man's reason was still to be considered as the divine spark, giving him uniqueness among mundane creatures and insuring his unbroken material and moral progress. Progress itself was exalted into an absolute, a metaphysical entity inherent in the very structure of the universe. Evolution was the central fact in nature, and evolution was synonymous with progress. We shall see the great role that the idea of progress was to play in Hirsch's thought.

Optimism was the primary attitude in the Weltanschauung of the contemporary American. There were, to be sure, many disquieting factors in American life. All was not well in the economic world. Depression and industrial conflict were, as we have seen, frequent occurrences. But the average American was confident of the ability of his society to reform itself and to conquer its ills. Only a few among the great intellectual figures of the time expressed a persistent and thorough-going pessimism. Notable among these was Henry Adams[6] who elaborated his famous theory of the dissipation of force and predicted that the Twentieth Century, though achieving great technological advances, would be a period of unparalleled wars and

revolutions. But Adams' gloomy outlook was not shared by Hirsch or by many other contemporary thinkers.

Nor was the attitude of pessimism and despair which was to characterize the literature and thought of the decades to come as yet widespread. It is true that its seeds might, by a sharp eye, have already been discerned in the realism which, borrowed from the French and Scandinavian schools, was then dominating American letters. But this realism was not yet of the utterly desperate kind. The early realists and naturalists had not yet given up their faith in man. Frequently their object in writing was a moral one: to present man as he is, so that he might change into what he could be. The reform movement, as we have seen, was one of the great contemporary causes, and many of the naturalistic writers of the period were ardent reformers.

The major indigenous philosophic movement which developed in late Nineteenth Century America was also essentially motivated by a belief in Man, Reason, and Progress. Pragmatism[7] was based on a faith in man's ability to discover (or make) the truths necessary for his existence. Its great aim was to further man's happiness by the use of intelligence. The influence of Pragmatism on Hirsch's religious thinking will become evident when we consider his doctrine of God.

We have said above that Darwinism while, in its first impact, destructive to the old orthodoxy in philosophy, did not prove to be permanently or universally so. Often it effected only modifications and adaptations. The same is true, to a considerable extent, in the field of religion.

In the orthodox churches the evolutionary philosophy, combined with the havoc perpetrated on the sacred documents of revealed religion by the critical and scientific schools, precipitated a long battle between fundamentalists and modernists. But modernism which, while retaining traditional dogmas and symbols, reinterpreted these naturalistically, never wholly replaced the fundamentalism that which remains a significant force in American Protestantism. The theory of evolution and science could not crush either it or the numerous other irrational sects, such as Christian Science, which developed in the late Nineteenth Century.

However, the increasing evidence of the incompatibility of supernatural religion with science did drive many Christians to abandon the orthodox churches. Still others left the church entirely. These substituted for their former faith the Religion of Humanity, which placed its emphasis on the law of love and ethical conduct. The experience of Christianity was paralleled by that of Judaism. Under the influence of science and critical thought

many Jews abandoned the orthodoxy of the old synagogue to find a more congenial atmosphere in the rationalistic Reform temple. Still others left Judaism entirely and espoused Ethical Culture.

Within the churches a strong movement was developing in the second half of the Nineteenth Century which had a great influence on Hirsch and his fellow-liberals in the synagogue. The Social Gospel movement was a response not only to the influence of the humanists and Ethical Culturists but also to the urgent problems created by the new urban and industrial order which we have noted above. Many serious-minded men within the churches - men like Theodore Parker, Wendell Phillips, Josiah Strong, and Walter Rauschenbusch - urged that the true mission of Christianity is the humanization of society. Dissatisfied with the old attitude which had made the church primarily an instrument to insure the other-worldly salvation of the individual, these men insisted that the church must address itself to the correction of social abuses and the amelioration of social ills. The pronouncements of the Social Gospel movement undoubtedly influenced Hirsch and many other Reform rabbis to proclaim a similar mission for the synagogue.

III Major Developments in Reform Judaism in America

When Emil G. Hirsch came to America with his father in 1866, Reform had already become a widespread movement in American Jewry. The first crude and hesitating attempts at reform inaugurated in the old Spehardic congregation of Charleston, South Carolina in 1824 were replaced in the 1840's and 1850's by carefully planned and well-considered programs of action, buttressed by elaborate theological and philosophic systems. It was in those decades that men like Isaac Mayer Wise, Max Lilienthal, Leo Merzbacher, David Einhorn, Samuel Adler, and Bernhard Felsenthal came to America and began to chart a systematic ccurse for Reform.[8]

By 1855 a definite split had developed within the Reform movement. On the one side, espousing a conservative theological position and advocating tentative and gradual reforms, were men like Lilienthal and Wise. On the other, insisting upon a thorough-going revision both of traditional theology and ritual practice, were men like Einhorn and Adler. When, at the rabbinical conference held in Cleveland in 1855, a resolution was adopted holding the Bible to be "of immediate Divine origin"

and declaring that it must be "expounded and practiced according to the comments of the Talmud", Einhorn's dissent was sharp and bitter. From then on he became the leader of the radical party in American Reform. He was joined by Samuel Hirsch on the latter's arrival in America.

Together David Einhorn and Samuel Hirsch succeeded in making their radical viewpoint the dominant one in the Reform movement of the next generation. The extremist Pittsburgh Platform,[9] which for some decades remained the authoritative statement of the principles of Reform Judaism, was largely the outcome of their labors. Their thought was also the major influence in the theological formulations of Emil G. Hirsch, who elaborated their outlook and preserved it as the dominant philosophy of Reform during his own generation. A brief survey of the thought of his father and father-in-law is, therefore, essential for the placing of Hirsch's own thought in its proper perspective.

In 1842 Samuel Hirsch wrote his famous Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden which, though essentially a defense of traditional Judaism, already contained ideas which ultimately led him to radical Reform. For besides maintaining, in opposition to his master Hegel (whose major theses about religion he accepted), that not Christianity

but Judaism is the absolute religion, Hirsch also insisted that Judaism is not a dogmatic creed or law but a doctrine (Lehre) leading to truth. His antipathy to dogma very quickly led him into the Reform camp in Europe.

Over the years his theology developed and changed, but certain principles remained fairly constant. The existence of a personal God who is solicitous that men and nations should constantly strive to develop their powers, which are His gifts; man as a morally free being who is made in the image of God; Israel as a kingdom of priests whose divine mission is to prove that man is free and may build on earth a society in which truth and justice will prevail; and the replacement of the Messianic ideal which looks only for the restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine by a larger Messianic goal which looks forward to the spiritual union of all men as children of God - these ideas were basic in Samuel Hirsch's philosophy of Judaism.[10]

Emil G. Hirsch described his father's fundamental ideas about the nature of Judaism in these words:

> With his master Hegel he regarded history as the divine process of revelation. Against Paul, Hegel, and Kant, and against most of the Reformed rabbis, he maintained that Judaism was not law but "lehre", a body of truths finding expression in Israel through the genius of its prophets, and for the application of which in life and

> the...exemplifying of which before the whole world Israel was chosen...This obligation and this appointment descend from father to son, and are imposed at birth..."Torah" does not signify "law" but "Lehre", doctrine. The laws are symbols illustrative of the truths confided to Israel. They are aids to keep alive the Jewish consciousness. As long as symbols are vital and not mechanical they may not be neglected; but when they have fallen into desuetude or are merely retained in mechanical, perfunctory observance, or from fear or superstition, they have lost their value, and they need not be retained. 11

Emil G. Hirsch took over many of his father's ideas completely. But perhaps the one idea of his father's which most influenced him was the dominance of the ethical ideal in the latter's conception of Judaism.

David Einhorn also conceived the ethical element in Judaism as the most important and undoubtedly influenced Hirsch in this respect. His influence is also to be discerned in much of Hirsch's thinking on other aspects of Judaism. Among Einhorns's chief theological premises were the following: God is transcendent but united in substance with the human race to whose men of genius he reveals himself; man is morally free and can achieve perfection; the purpose of Israel is to help bring about the Messianic era in which all humanity will be united in the recognition of God; Israel must retain its special national and ceremonial garb only until the arrival of the Messianic era when it will merge its identity in the greater life of united humanity.[12]

The last point especially became, as we shall see, extremely important in the thought of Emil G. Hirsch who readily acknowledged his indebtedness to Einhorn for it.

Hirsch's conception of Judaism was greatly influenced not only by his two great teachers in America, Samuel Hirsch and David Einhorn, but by the insights garnered in his Berlin days from the great leaders of German Reform, Abraham Geiger, Moritz Lazarus, and Herman Steinthal.

It was also molded and modified by the emergence of new forces in American Jewish life during his lifetime. The great influx of East European Jews in the 1880's and 1890's brought about a revival of orthodoxy, and Hirsch was obliged to re-examine his attitude toward traditional Judaism. The East European Jews also gave impetus to the Zionist movement, which became increasingly stronger in the second half of Hirsch's ministry and toward which he had to define his attitude.

Throughout his ministry Hirsch was responsive to the historical and intellectual developments taking place around him. In his sermons we shall see how these molded his thought and how he reacted to them.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Quoted in Nevins and Commager, A Short History of the United States, Modern Library edition, p. 326.

2. H. S. Commager, The American Mind, p. 201.

3. H. A. Faulkner, American Political and Social History, Fourth Edition, p. 231.

4. ibid.

5. For an excellent discussion of John Fiske see Commager, The American Mind, pp. 82-90; see also Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, vol. 3, pp. 203-211.

6. Commager, op. cit., pp. 132-140; Parrington, op. cit., vol. 3, pp. 214-227.

7. for the best discussion of the nature of Pragmatism see the basic source: William James, Pragmatism, 1907.

8. for good discussions of the history of Reform Judaism in America see David Phillipson's The Reform Movement in Judaism and Beryl H. Levy's Reform Judaism in America.

9. The Platform is presented in full in Levy, op. cit,, pp. 61-2.

10. Levy, op. cit., pp. 52-63.

11. Quoted in Levy, op. cit., p. 54

12. Levy, pp. 49-52

Chapter 3

HIS SOCIAL MESSAGE

Emil G. Hirsch looked at the new social order introduced into America by the process of industrialization and found it heart-breakingly wanting. Throughout the years of his ministry he drew up, in his preaching, bitter and wrathful indictments against contemporary American society.[1] The most frequently recurring theme in his sermons throughout his lifetime was social justice, and it is for his great sermons dealing with social problems that he is most likely to be remembered.

Hirsch lived, as we have seen, in the age when the dominant philosophy of individualism and unrestrained competition was being violently challenged by those to whom it had brought, not wealth and happiness, but poverty and misery. In the city of Chicago particularly, the locale of the Haymarket Square riots and the railroad and Pullman strikes, he could see the bitter fruits of the social conflict.

A great sermon preached in 1894 reflects Hirsch's immense concern with the existing social conflict and his belief that it was the most pressing religious problem of the day.

> In days like these when the foundations of civilization seem to tremble; when distrust stalks everywhere; when man has learned to regard man

> as only a machine and tool; when incendiary torches are lit and dynamite bombs explode; when rulers of republics are killed by the dagger of the fanatic, and cities quiver for days in anxiety and anguish lest the firebrand be thrown into peaceful homes and busy hives of commerce be reduced to ashes - shall we have nothing else to do but lose ourselves in metaphysics about the existence of God and to sigh and to pray and to fast for our own self-satisfaction?....The world waits once more the prophet; would once more hear the word of a nobler view of life than gain and profit and greed and hurrying and chasing after the booty. We need once more to be taught to feel that humanity is more than a pack of wolves fighting for the carcass by the way-side; we need once more the stern sacramental words of duty and obligation; of righteousness and justice - justice, mark you, not charity. Away with this pretender. Off from the throne with that usurper. Away with all this charity. Justice we need. Social justice everywhere. 2

To Hirsch the social conflict of his time seemed not essentially a struggle between capital and labor for the greater share of wealth; it seemed to him to hinge, rather, on the worker's demand, and right, that he be not regarded merely as a tool or machine, a "hand" hired out by the hour, but as a human personality, a child of God made in His image.[3] Fundamentally, Hirsch declared, the social problem was an ethical and religious one.[4] A system in which self-interest is the supreme motive and in which human beings are regarded as commodities, the value of which is subject to the law of supply and demand, is, he constantly reiterated, both immoral and irreligious.[5]

Hirsch never minced words in his denunciation of the worst excresecences of the contemporary economic order.

The ill-ventilated and unsafe sweatshops, in which men and women worked fourteen hours a day at wages insufficient to support themselves, particularly aroused his anger.

> Sweatshops are an expedient of hell, and no matter what commercial morals may say, God in heaven and Judaism protest that he that works shall eat and eat sufficiently, and not be robbed of his manhood. ...Ye Jewish merchants, - profit or loss -, what are these considerations? Do ye, at least, whatever others may devise, your duty to stamp out this barbarous system. It is a blot upon the face of our civilization. 6

Very early in his career Hirsch developed an extreme antipathy to the doctrines of Manchester liberalism in which, like many other thoughtful men of his age, he saw the root of all the economic injustice and unrest of the time. In the academic world men like Lester Ward and Richard Ely, and in the churches men like Theodore Parker and Wendell Phillips, were rising to challenge laissez-faire capitalism. Hirsch joined the chorus of opposition. His denunciations of Manchester liberalism were frequent and violent.[7] His criticisms of the system included numerous elements: that its assumption of an "economic man", motivated only by self-interest, is artificial;[8] that its making of selfishness the basis of social organization is immoral;[9] that its exaltation of the idea of freedom of contract is a fraud, for, since the worker and the capitalist can hardly be con-

ceived to be on equal bargaining terms, "freedom of contract is a beautiful phrase and nothing more";[10] that it prevents social amelioration by insisting that the government may not interfere to protect the underprivileged;[11] and that it prospers no one but the capitalist.[12]

Hirsch admitted that originally Manchester liberalism, being a revolutionary protest against the authoritarianism of existing society, had been a valid and beneficial movement. But because of the mistakes noted above, it had, he insisted, become pernicious and destructive and must, therefore, be abandoned.[13]

In his reading of history Hirsch saw in the Middle Ages a society based on social function and on the responsibility of the individual to contribute to the welfare of society. This seemed to him a more reasonable and ethical system than the individualistic doctrine of Adam Smith and the Manchester school, and he urged its re-adoption.

> Thus history has judged of Adam Smith's theory. The theory, so brutal, has failed. It is Chronos devouring his own off-spring. We are not individuals. We are not made to be individualistic. We are human beings that live in and with others and through others. History has spoken. What the Middle Ages had we must have again, the sense of our belongingness one to the other. If we have it, the social problem and the social contest loses much of its sharp edge. 14

Over and above its other faults, Hirsch declared, Manchester liberalism erred in the tremendous importance that it assigned to personal rights, to the neglect of social duties. This fault is an oft-repeated theme in his criticisms of the system.[15] In two sermons preached in 1895 and significantly titled "The Inalienable Duties of Man", Hirsch set forth his thesis that the doctrine of individual rights which, when first proclaimed, had held forth the promise of maximizing freedom and opportunity for the masses, had now become an instrument of class oppression.

> Can it be denied that the mere doctrine of the rights of man has played into the hands of the selfish? While it has been the lever to lift up a few, it has also, contrary to the hope and confidence of its first coiners, proved a wight to drag down the millions. The bald theory of rights has prospered the capitalist and none other. It has sponsored a new kind of selfishness of which the former ages knew nothing. 16

The basic error of the theory of rights, Hirsch held, was that it failed to recognize the primacy which society does, and by right, should, have in the life of the individual. "It undermines the essential life of society by putting the individual first and society last, reducing the latter to a sum in arithmetic, an equation in statics, instead of regarding and treating it as a theorem and function in dynamics."[17]

Hirsch declared that the time had now come for a new emphasis on the duties of man toward society. For, he insisted, the solution to the social unrest of the time cannot come merely through mechanical or external remedies. There must also be a recognition by men that, in addition to the inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness which they possess, they are bound by certain inalienable duties toward society. Hirsch indicated quite clearly what he considered the nature of these duties to be:

> If the right to life is inalienable, the duty to make the proper use thereof is as emphatically inalienable. The individual is always under the social relation. This is the fulcrum for his lever. Not as he lists, but as the social welfare and his power for social service suggest, must the individual shape his own career.
>
> To own the fruit of one's labor is an inalienable right; to dispose of one's earnings by will and testament may even be included in this category, though some theorists would question the legitimacy of such latitude. Yet property is our own only to do therewith what shall prosper the common life. The right to possess is limited by the duty to utilize one's own for the social good...Nor is property ever more sacred than humanity. Wherever the right of property clashes with a duty toward humanity, the former has no credentials that are entitled to consideration. 18

Hirsch believed not only that society should take precedence over the individual, but that it has, in fact, always done so. In his extensive reading of history Hirsch discovered almost a complete societal and historical conditioning of the individual. Single men and single

generations, he maintained, are conditioned by their historical antecedents. This is especially true of social and political institutions. The abstract theories concerning the origin of government formulated by a Hobbes or a Rousseau are, he declared, false and artificial because they do not take account of the historical forces which have produced human institutions.[19] Hirsch discovered historical and societal conditioning even in those areas in which the individual seems to be most free and undetermined. Thus, he insisted that the individual human conscience (even) is nothing more than the internalized judgments of the society, a doctrine which was later taught by Freud and his disciples. The content and expression of conscience differ in different individuals, declared Hirsch, because the value judgments of the societies and environments within which they live differ.[20]

Yet though Hirsch, in his early years, constantly preached that society is, in fact, and should be, by right,[21] primary in the life of the individual, who has the duty to suppress his own desires in order to further the common good, he was not to retain this view throughout his life. In his later years he emphasized, as we shall see, the dignity and value of the individual personality above the welfare of society and condemned socialism,

which he at one time had praised, for placing society before the individual. The tension between his Kantian philosophic outlook, in which was emphasized the dignity and supreme worth of the individual, and his understanding of history, which led him to assign the dominant place to society, issued ultimately in a triumph for Kantianism. Individual personality became the supreme value.

Hirsch's faith in man, especially in the great man, was strong even in the years that he was proclaiming the dominance of society. Thus, he modified his conception of the origin of conscience and declared that though, in the generality of men, conscience is only the reflection of the dominant values of the society, in extraordinary men it is much more. Men of genius, he argued, transcend the notions of morality current in their time and replace them with higher ideas. These then become the conscience of the age, only to be replaced by further advances.

> Defining conscience as I do, I still cannot be blind to the fact that certain men are gifted with a keener appreciation of the wrongs and the evils, and thus rise from society above society. These men are the prophets in the present of the things that must be if humanity is to live in the future. 22
>
> The theory that men must forever abide the mirror of their environments is not true. Environments furnish prejudices that are as

> rank as those that come to us by heredity. Still ours is the power to rise above our surroundings. We can throw the usurper out of the windows and fill the room thus made by new and better impulses. 23

Hirsch insisted that progress is not mechanical[24] and protested strongly against the enervating Spencerian principle that time and evolution will ultimately set everything right.[25] With Lester Ward he believed that social progress is effected through intelligent planning, and with Thomas Carlyle he believed, as we have seen above, that the creative thought which leads to progress is the work of great men of genius.

Of progress itself Hirsch never had any doubt.[26] In this he was entirely in accord with the dominant optimistic mood of contemporary America. His sermons are filled with buoyant and exalted paeans to progress.

> I believe in moral progress. As the years roll by, the minds of men are widened, their sympathies become broader, and their conduct is attuned to higher music. This I will not have disputed. It is the staff and the stay of my intellectual creed. 27

The doctrine, shared by John Fiske and most of the liberal re-interpreters of Darwinian evolutionism, that man is ever advancing to higher levels, Hirsch declared to be one of the great distinctive ideas of Judaism.

> The future has better things in store than had the past; upward runs the course of humanity, not downward; this a fundamental distinction of the philosophy of life preached by

> Judaism at all times and the doctrines taught by other organized systems of social life or the dogmatically fixed thoughts of other religious bodies. 28

In 1899, on the eve of a new century, Hirsch surveyed the decade that had just passed and, despite his recognition both of the injustice, violence, and suffering which had characterized it and of those incipient forces - nationalism and racialism - that were to plunge the world into darkness in the Twentieth Century, nevertheless insisted that progress was bound to come. The present gloom, he argued, was merely "the darkness before the dawn."

> In all Messianic legends the thought is central that the advent is announced by disorganizing and disrupting wars.....I for one cannot concede that revived nationalism and racial bigotry, of which the Jews above all other men have most to dread, portend more than that the day of battle is upon us. The Messianic agony is stirring the depths. The century to come will not belie the promise of our deeper and wider sympathies. 29

The specific content of the progress which Hirsch expected, at least in his early years, is quite clear. It was the emergence of a socialistic order of society. In 1891 Hirsch declared that the different forms of political and economic organization that had existed in human history - despotism, aristocracy, feudalism, and individualism (Manchester liberalism) - were only successive stepping stones. Now the last of these is itself about

to be transcended.

> And thus he who has eye to see understands that the individualistic age is at an end, and that soon (shudder at the name if you cannot understand it) the socialistic period will begin, for the individualistic time is but a stepping-stone to that form of society where the individual knows that beyond his rights, and before his rights, come certain duties and certain obligations. That will be the next succeeding stone. 30

Though here proclaiming the coming of socialism, and in numerous other places, as we have seen, scathingly denouncing Manchester economics,[31] and in still other places declaring that Jewish ethics demands a socialist economic order,[32] Hirsch was not, even in his early years, entirely unambivalent in his advocacy of socialism. In a sermon preached in 1891 and entitled "Government and Society" he criticized not only anarchism and Manchester individualism, but collectivism as well. The latter, he declared, assumes that government can be omniscient, ordering society for the welfare of all men. Not only is this not true, he argued, but collectivism would also destroy hope, ambition, and incentive, and thereby degrade men.[33]

But, though challenging the validity of orthodox socialism, Hirsch, in the very same sermon, formulated a conception of the function of the state and a program of specific social legislation which can only be termed socialistic. The purpose of the state, he maintained, is to "guard, not merely preventatively, but by way of init-

iative, the common interests of all, and more specifically, to return to the original intention of law, which was to protect the weaker against the aggression of the stronger."[34]

Specifically, Hirsch declared, a legitimate program of state action would include a system of differential and progressive taxation, safety and sanitation regulation of factories, workmen's insurance the cost of which would be borne primarily by capital, regulation of hours of work, prohibition of child labor, protection of women, strict control of monopolies and large corporations, and the guarantee to labor of the right to assemble and to organize.[35] All these were included among the reforms demanded by the liberal movement of Hirsch's time and most of them were achieved in the Progressive Era.

In 1897, in a sermon dealing with "The Problem of Poverty", Hirsch urged even more liberal social legislation by the government: the implementation of a system of co-operative buying which would eliminate the middleman, compulsory sickness and accident insurance, public housing for the poor, and the establishment of institutions to lend money to the needy without the requirement of collateral which they do not possess.[36]

Though Hirsch did not urge, as the orthodox socialists did, the nationalization and government ownership of

industries, his social legislation recommendations were certainly a radical departure from laissez-faire capitalism and an approach to socialism. Still other of Hirsch's statements concerning the right of property and inheritance and concerning capitalism clearly indicate the socialistic cast of Hirsch's economic thought, at least in the first part of his ministry.

> The contention that inheritance and ownership of immeasurable wealth are fundamental principles which cannot be modified is not true. Truth and righteousness are fundamental principles, justice and sympathy are, and not the right of inheritance. It is not a natural right, it is an acquired right, an artificial right. The time may come when society will rise to a better constitution, when what is created by all will revert to the uses of all. 37

> I am not of the opinion that private property is ethically and fundamentally wrong. Against the capitalist I have nothing to urge; but against capitalism, against a capitalistic order of society, my religion, the religion of Jeremiah and Isaiah, the religion of the best among all men - has everything to urge. 38

From the discussion thus far it appears that Hirsch was completely in sympathy with the growing liberal movement both in American secular and religious life of the late Nineteenth Century. He shared both (in) its protest against the heartless selfishness and brutality of the contemporary economic system and (in) its advocacy of a more just and humane distribution of wealth. He agreed with its challenge of laissez-faire capitalism and with its advo-

cacy of ameliorative social legislation. He rejoiced in the concrete accomplishments of the reform movement, in support of which he so frequently raised his own voice. That he was actuated in his social thought both by an intellectual appreciation of the inadequacies of Manchester liberalism and a deep sympathy for the masses who suffered under that system is obvious. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that he was as truly a democrat in politics as in economics. He certainly did not share the democratic faith of a Paine or a Jefferson in the ability of the people to govern themselves well. Even his sympathy for the masses seems to have been that of the kindly and generous aristocrat rather than of the impassioned and convinced democrat.

That Hirsch accepted Carlyle's "great man" theory of history has already been noted above in the discussion of his view of the method of social progress.[39] That he also shared Carlyle's aristocratic contempt for the masses must also be stated. He went so far as to borrow and use, with approval, Carlyle's vulgar phrase for the masses - "them asses".[40] Hirsch considered the granting of suffrage to the Negroes of the South as one of the most serious errors in American political history. Indeed the whole idea of universal suffrage was repugnant to him. In it he saw the source of all political corruption.

> "Them asses", as Carlyle pronounces the phrase, are always susceptible to the blandishments and the tricks of the crafty demagogues...Therefore, in all countries where political dogmatism has not brought forth its natural offspring, political demagogism, the municipal franchise is conditioned by property tests or by tests of educational attainments, certainly by a clean bill of moral health. 41

It is rather surprising that a man who was not an ideological democrat in politics should have kept his liberal economic principles fairly intact throughout his life. Yet Hirsch managed, in considerable measure, to do so. Even after the disillusionment with socialism which came to many American liberals after the Bolshevik revolution, Hirsch did not return to a full-throated cry for capitalism. It is true that he was no longer the flaming radical he had been in his youth, but he was also not completely the tired and disillusioned liberal. The criticisms which he had had of socialism in 1891[42] were, indeed, intensified now. Thus, shortly before his death, Hirsch said of socialism:

> (It) denies the one fundamental factor of our personality. It denies the initiative of the individual, it denies the scope and the sway of individual action and ambition. It kills individual ambition, for Socialism is really the most consistent scheme of militarism. It puts us all into battalions and into regiments. We are all regimented and we are all under discipline, and our individuality is chilled and killed. 43

Yet capitalism did not even then recommend itself fully to Hirsch. He still saw its inadequacies: its degrada-

of men into machines with price tags attached, its failure to prevent recurrent panics and depressions, its inability to solve the paradox of simultaneous excess production and widespread want. Nevertheless a modified and restrained capitalism, which recognizes the infinite worth of every human personality, is to be preferred, declared Hirsch, to the regimentation of socialism. "Of the two the capitalistic scheme allows much more scope for the assertion of individual power and individual ability than does Socialism."[44]

It is entirely characteristic of Hirsch that when he made his final choice the deciding factor was his conviction that modified capitalism is more in keeping, both really and ideally, with the dignity of man. For the latter was a dominant theme in Hirsch's thought throughout his life. In spite of the contradiction and paradox in his thought - in spite of his insistence that only the great men of genius influence human history and of his belief in the primacy of society and the societal conditioning of man - Hirsch always affirmed one cardinal dogma: the value and dignity of every man.

In the end the tension inherent in Hirsch's simultaneous belief in the supreme importance of society and of the

individual was resolved by his conviction that that system which recognizes the supreme importance of the individual and seeks his highest welfare leads also to the highest welfare of society.

Notes to Chapter III

1. See the following sermons: "Thy Kingdom Come", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 279-281; "The Fight for Justice", RA, vol. 4, 1893, pp. 499-502; "The Value and Influence of Utopia", RA, vol. 5, 1893, pp. 202-205; "The Radical's Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 104-108; "A Discourse on the Eve of the Day of Atonement", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 202-205; and "Henry George", RA, vol. 14, 1897, pp. 655-658.

2. "The Radical's Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 107-108.

3. "The Value and Influence of Utopia", RA, vol. 5, 1893, p. 205.

4. "New Year'S Reflections", RA, vol. 8, 1895, p. 336.

5. "Thy Kingdom Come", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 279-81; "The Value and Influence of Utopia", RA, vol. 5, 1893, p. 205.

6. "A Discourse on the Eve of the Day of Atonement", RA, vol. 8, 1894, p. 205.

7. See the following sermons: "Government and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 343-46; "Conflicting Tendencies", RA, vol. 2, 1891, pp. 51-54; "Hard Times", vol. 5, 1893, pp. 365-66; "The Psychology of Sin", RA, vol. 7, 1894, pp. 132-135; "New Year's Reflections", RA, vol. 8, 1895, pp. 334-38; "Modern Heretics", RA, vol. 11, 1896, pp. 340-43; and "The Inalienable Duties of Man"-Parts I and II, RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 187-190 and 205-208 (preached in 1895).

8. "Government and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 343-46; "Modern Heretics", RA, vol. 11, 1896, pp. 340-43; "The Inalienable Duties of Man" - PartI, RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 187-190.

9. "Modern Heretics", RA, vol. 11, 1896, pp. 340-43

10. "Government and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, p. 345

11. "The Inalienable Duties of Man", Part I, Vol. 13, 1897, pp. 187-190.

12. idem.

13. idem.

14. "New Year's Reflections", RA, vol. 8, 1895, p. 337.

15. See the following sermons: "Individual and Society", vol. 1, 1891, pp. 247-50; "Stepping Stones", vol. 1, 1891, pp. 264-66; "Conflicting Tendencies", vol. 2, 1891, pp. 51-54; "Hard Times", vol. 5, 1893, pp. 363-66; "The Inalienable Duties of Man" - Parts I and II, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 187-190 and 205-208 (preached in 1895); and "Democracy Triumphant", vol. 17, 1899, pp 43-48.

16. "The Inalienable Duties of Man" - Part I, RA, vol. 13, 1897, p. 188.

17. ibid., p. 189.

18. "The Inalienable Duties of Man" - Part II, RA, vol. 13, 1897, p. 208.

19. "The Dangers of Democracy", RA, vol. 6, 1893, pp. 282-86.

20. "Individual and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 247-50; "A Growing Conscience", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 241-44

21. See notes 14 and 17 of this chapter.

22. "Individual and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, p. 249.

23. "A Growing Conscience", RA, vol. 13, 1897, p. 243.

24. "The Dying Century", RA, vol. 18, 1899, pp. 249-255.

25. "Thy Kingdom Come", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 279-81.

26. See the Following sermons: "Stepping Stones", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 264-66; "The Value and Influence of Utopia", RA, vol. 5, 1893, pp. 202-205; "The Citizen", RA, vol. 15, 1898, pp. 112-13; "Justice and Judgment", RA, vol. 15, 1898, pp. 193-95; "Our Disenchantments", RA, vol. vol. 15, 1898, pp. 223-24; "The Dying Century", RA, vol. 18, 1899, pp. 249-55; "The Twentieth Century", RA, vol. 19, 1900, pp. 49-50 (abstract).

27. "The Citizen", RA, vol. 15, 1898, p. 112.

28. "The Value and Influence of Utopia", RA, vol. 5, 1893, p. 205.

29. "The Dying Century", RA, vol. 18, 1899, p. 254.

30. "Stepping Stones", RA, vol. 1, 1891, p. 266.

31. See note 7 of this chapter.

32. "Modern Heretics", RA, vol. 11, 1896, pp. 340-43; "Modern Prophets", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 293-96; "Proper Themes for the Pulpit", vol. 17, 1899, pp. 239-245.

33. "Government and Society", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 343-46.

34. ~~idem~~ ibid, p. 346.

35. ibid.

36. "The Problem of Poverty", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 3-6.

37. "A Discourse on the Eve of the Day of Atonement", RA, , vol. 8, 1894, pp. 202-205.

38. "The Inalienable Duties of Man" - Part I, Vol. 13, 1897, p. 188.

39. See note 32 of this chapter.

40. "The Day of Small Things", RA, vol. 14, 1897, pp. 457-56.; "The New Discipline and Duty", RA, vol. 16, 1898, pp. 244-47.

41. "The New Discipline and Duty", RA, vol. 16, 1898, p. 245.

42. See note 33 of this chapter.

43. "The New Social Adjustment Suggested by the Implications of My Religion" in My Religion, p. 136.

44. ibid.

Chapter 4

HIS THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY OF JUDAISM

I

In the field of religion perhaps the outstanding achievement of the Nineteenth Century was the development of the new science of comparative religion. Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis had turned the attention of theologians away from the formal analysis and evaluation of the specific dogmas of the various religions to the quest for the basic sources, both in man and in nature, of all religion. The search, urged long before by Hume in England and by Herder in Germany, for the psychological, historical, and anthropological roots of religion received in the late Nineteenth Century, under the sway of Darwinian evolutionism, its fullest development.

Hirsch was greatly attracted by the new science and avidly read the works of its chief investigators. His study of comparative religion, as well as his wide reading in the field of general philosophy and theology, led him to the conclusion that there is a common source for all religion. This he conceived to be the innate human yearning for the complete and the perfect. In his sermons he repeatedly enunciated his conviction that this yearning is the primary source of all religion.

> "God speaks all languages." This to my mind constitutes the greatest and most lasting contribution of our time to the treasury of unborn humanity. Religion, of whatever form or faith, is the echo of Divine speech. Somebody has styled religion the gnawing bitter-

> ness of homesickness in the human soul. This definition is not altogether a poetic simile. Religion is, indeed, like homesickness, a yearning for something which it seems we once possessed. The sense of imperfection, incompleteness, on the one hand, and the passion to become perfect, to grow into completeness; the consciousness of weakness and the dread to be annihilated unless strengthened; the striving to escape from the destruction; contrary as its single threads appear, religion weaves together, more or less perfectly, these discordant fibres. 1

Religion was, for Hirsch, primarily rooted not in fear or awe or love or a feeling of helplessness and dependence, though all these contribute to its development, but in the basic and inescapable human need to construct, through poetic concept and dramatic symbol, a unified view of the universe and of the ultimate significance of life. The construction of these, he believed, is essential to man's continued existence on earth. As a student of history Hirsch recognized, however, the social and environmental conditioning undergone by the various religions and drew from this the conclusion that no religion is final and in exclusive possession of the truth. This thought was corroborated for Hirsch by Lessing whom he greatly admired.

> This instinct for totality, the counterpart of the feeling gnawing and rankling of dissatisfaction, is the germ of all religion. But man answers the craving need of a totality and a prospect into the future according to his historical conditions. Therefore all religions are genuine rings. None of them is a counterfeit and none of them owns exclusively the truth and the whole truth. 2

The liberalism that Hirsch found and commended in Lessing was confirmed for him by the thought currents of his own time. His conviction that all religions are somehow true but that none is final and complete was strengthened by his understanding of Darwinism, which seemed to him to prove the case for a serious but modest agnosticism, which cannot itself, however, be final. Speaking of the (serious) doubts concerning the validity of traditional dogmas raised by the new scientific discoveries, Hirsch said:

> But this agnosticism was only the first phase in the new religious reconstruction. It is not its final. In fact, there can be no final. As long as man lives, all statements of truth can only be preliminary. 3

Darwin and his successors had destroyed for Hirsch and for other religious liberals, both in the church and in the synagogue, the certainties of the old orthodoxy. But (they) did not preclude the possibility of a new faith as long as it was recognized that this faith was only tentative and subject to constant revision. Not only Darwinism but Pragmatism also recommended this view to Hirsch who, in accepting it, was completely in accord with the prevailing doctrine of the liberalism of the day.

Yet, though no religion was final for Hirsch, he believed passionately that Judaism, at least his purified interpretation of Judaism, was the most perfect religion in

existence. Like his father Samuel Hirsch who, though a Hegelian, had concerned himself with disproving Hegel's contention that only Christianity had realized the Absolute and with defending Judaism's claim to be the absolute religion, so Emil G. Hirsch also defended Judaism's superiority over Christianity, as well as over all other religions. [3a] Judaism, he believed, as we shall see, would ultimately make way for the more perfect religion of humanity which would be universal in scope, but already it possessed most of the requisites of this universal religion.

II

The basic theological problem is the problem of God. Throughout his ministry Hirsch wrestled with this problem, seeking to find both for himself and for those to whom he spoke an adequate conception of Deity.

In his early thought on the problem of God, Hirsch was almost completely under the influence of Immanuel Kant. The philospher of Koenigsberg, whose works he had studied thoroughly in his student days in Germany, was, in his estimation, the most important religious thinker of modern times.

> I at least know of none who, after Jesus, Moses, Buddha, Paul, and Mohammed, has so

> deeply cut the groove in which thought generally, and religious thought particularly, must henceforth run. 4

Kant had demonstrated the invalidity of the classic philosophic proofs for the existence of God which had so delighted the minds of both the Medieval scholastics and the Enlightenment Era Deists. With Kant's assertion that the existence of God was philosophically unproveable Hirsch fully agreed. [5] He agreed also with him in maintaining that God could only be a postulate the truth of which is based on man's moral nature. [6] Human conscience, man's innate sense of right and of duty, Hirsch believed in his early ministry, reveals God.

To follow the popular current and seek God only in the wonders, terrors, and beauties of nature is, Hirsch declared, erroneous and (conducive) to a false conception of Deity.[7] Those religions which seek God in nature alone, he held, are generally religions of fear, for nature is often cruel and immoral. Furthermore, under another aspect, the realm of nature is also the realm of inexorable law, of ultimate slavery. Greek religion which was based on a conception of nature as law and order was strongly fatalistic in its outlook, and though it worshipped beauty, proportion, and harmony, it had no great ethical ideal. Christianity and Buddhism, Hirsch maintained, represent a revulsion against nature-

worship. They are world-denying, world-fleeing faiths. Prophetic Judaism, he declared, was also a revulsion against nature-worship, but it did not,like the other movements of revolt, lapse into mysticism and irrationalism. According To Hirsch, it always insisted that God is to be found in the still, small voice of conscience, calling to duty and sacrifice. After God has spoken thus to man's heart, He may be found also in nature. Upon this theme Hirsch waxed rhapsodic.

> ....when prophet has heard that Yahweh is in the still, small voice, then indeed the stars assume a new twinkle, the flowers array themselves in a new garment of beauty, the rivers receive a new impetus of joy, and the stones even preach sermons most majestic and most momentous. Then nature becomes the temple of God, but whosoever has not the key to his own heart will find the door locked. 8

Though in his early years Hirsch tended to agree with Kant's virtual identification of religion with conscience and morality, he did not find himself in agreement with him on all matters. Thus he criticized Kant for setting up good and evil, physical and spiritual, material and moral, as radically distinct entitities. Kant, he said, did not recognize the gradual development, the evolution,of the spiritual out of the material. He was wrong in thinking that the change from evil to good is a free-will, catastrophic, and immediate act of regeneration. In these doctrines Hirsch found evidence

of Kant's Christian predispositions.9

Hirsch's conception of God did not remain static throughout his ministry. We shall see how, over years of serious thought and study, it matured and developed. But the early Kantian influence which made the idea of God dependent on man's moral sense remained fairly constant. In his early ministry Hirsch was capable of actually identifying theism with moral conduct.

> I am bold to say that there are no atheists. I know none. Men may profess to believe in no God. They may be admired for this. But as long as their life is attuned to high purpose; as long as they love wife and child; as long as they have a ready hand to help; as long as in their business relations they regard brother man as not a tool, but as their equal, with God's light beaming in his eye - so long, say what they will, they are not atheists. The equation of atheism is selfishness. The equation of theism is love to others and self-development for the purpose of service to others. 10

This kind of radical humanism recommended itself to Hirsch especially in his early years. As a preacher he was not particularly interested in theology. The glorification of man and his moral possibilities was his primary concern, not the exaltation of God. Yet, though many of his extreme statements about God may be interpreted as exaggerations made with a practical, homiletical intent, they are too frequent and regular not to be indicative of Hirsch's real thinking about God at the time. A statement such as the following

appears in a well-prepared and well-reasoned sermon and certainly indicates Hirsch's real view at the moment.

> For the belief in God is merely the outcome of the belief in man. God is the apex of the pyramid, not the base. Man is the cornerstone; and from the true conception of man have the Jewish thinkers risen to the noblest conception of the Deity. Those are shallow who talk of their agnosticism and parade their atheism. No one is an agnostic and no one is an atheist, except he have neither pity for the weak nor charity for the erring; except he have no mercy for those who need its soothing balm. 11

In complete accord with Kantian thought, Hirsch declared repeatedly that not theology, but ethics, is primary in religion. The power of man to achieve individual righteousness and social justice is the great doctrine of true religion. Theistic belief is of importance only as it has ethical import. [12] The idea of God is significant only as a factor which makes for the ennobling of human life.

> The question fundamental for man to ask is not "What is God?" but "What is He for us as men?" What is God for man is indeed the basic inquiry of Judaism, and to it Judaism gives a clear and definite answer: God for man stands in the consciousness of man's dignity, "little less than God", higher, immeasurably higher, than the brutes, and therefore for the appreciation that man's life is distinct from the brutes and dowered for ends higher than those that have come to the beast. 12a

Yet though Hirsch seems, at first, almost to have replaced God with man, or at least made the doctrine of

God secondary to the doctrine of man, he could not, either as religionist or philosopher, remain long content with such a dilution of theism. He came to recognize that human life and action, in order to be ultimately significant, must be supported by a greater Creative Power, a Power which transcends man's creativity and is an actual existent in the universe.

> The doctrine of man as creator, as I can easily show to such as can think philosophically, necessarily leads to an assumption of a greater creative force immanent in nature.....Human life, weak as it is, shadowlike as undoubtedly it is, fleet-footed as it is, gains strength in the thought that the All-life lives and supports the individual life, which is not wiped away as the little riplets are in the broader stream. 13

This insight deepened and matured over the years. Mere humanism became, for Hirsch, unsatisfactory. Man, he believed, was not alone in his struggle for the great ideal values laid down by religion. Outside of, and independent of, man, there was a universal and eternal Power working for the realization of these values. Ultimately Hirsch accepted, in essence, Matthew Arnold's formulation of the nature of Deity: the power outside ourselves which makes for righteousness.

> The spirit of our God broods over the mighty waters of Time. It is the enduring right and justice; righteousness and truth are the

> goals for which a power not ourselves is making in the conflicts and the contentions, in the contortions of time. 14

To the end of his life Hirsch remained primarily a humanist and a moralist. His religion was man-centered and morality-centered. But faith in a real God who is the eternal power making for righteousness became an integral part of his religion. In preaching, however, his aim was primarily practical; therefore, he emphasized that the power which is God works in large measure through man, who, in the recognition and acceptance of his share in the process, finds life meaningful and joyous.

> The Jewish God's symbol vocalizes the reality of an all-encompassing and controlling "Justice", the One world-power, the all-pervading world-process, the all-shaping world-purpose. This Power, Process, and Purpose, conceived and carried out in Love, is an end unto itself, but man is a means to it. By making this purpose his own day's intention man gives music and value to his life.... 15

God, Hirsch finally concluded, is the omnipotent and omnipresent Lord who rules both nature and history.[16] Through His continuing work, which men can further by their own actions, the world is directed toward ethical ends. "The ages tremble under the weight of moral purpose - steady, unbroken, uninterrupted."[17] Hirsch's tremendous faith in progress which, as we have noted above in the discussion of his social views,[18] he shared

with liberal philosophic interpreters of Darwinism like John Fiske, was certainly confirmed and, perhaps, even grounded in this view of Deity.

In general Hirsch was not fond of theological subtleties. Yet he ventured at times, even in his preaching, to define the attributes of God. God, he declared, is personal, or so, at least, must human speech and thought, with their essential limitations, conceive Him.

> As long as our feelings strive for utterance and our thoughts for verbal dress, man restricted to the use of human symbols and similes, must speak of the Godhead as he does of what is his highest, in terms connoting personal consciousness, freedom, volition; in brief, in terms conveying the confidence that the essence of all things is moral, and the moral life is divine. 19

God, Hirsch declared, is personal not only because man naturally ascribes to the Godhead what is his own highest possession. Personality must also be an attribute of God because He is the great Mind in nature. Hirsch had travelled a considerable distance in his intellectual journeying since the time when, under Kantian influence, he had insisted that God is to be discovered in the conscience of man rather than in nature. Now he was ready to accept Spinoza's pantheism and to make for it the same claim he had once made for Kantianism, namely, that it is the essence of Judaism. God, he maintained, is identical with nature or, at any rate, with the

personal-mental element in nature.

> Nature and God for the Christian are antithetical - never so with the Jew.....Spinoza's doctrine is Jewish to the core. Nature and God, from the Jewish point of view, are not antithetical. They are not antipodal. They are different modes of one, what? Of one energy that spans the all. Nature is God. God is nature. But mind in man is also in nature. Mind in man being personal, mind in its development through the human taking on the personal, we have the right to urge that in nature is personality. 20

Though Hirsch did, at times, indulge in abstruse theological speculation, he never was really convinced, it seems, of the validity of such speculation. Over and over again he warned that it was arrogance for the human mind to believe that it could adequately define and describe God.

His mature and permanent belief - his belief in God as the eternal power making for righteousness - was not founded on the conviction that he had logically proved His existence. The old skepticism and agnosticism could not be so easily eradicated. Nor was Hirsch temperamentally capable of arriving at belief through faith. Reason was paramount for him, and though reason could not logically prove God to him, it could suggest certain values realized through a belief in God. In a great sermon entitled "In Thy Hands are My Tides", preached in 1916, Hirsch set up a completely pragmatic

test for theological ideas.

> ....this is the final test of the truth or untruth of a constructive or disintegrating philosophy of life. What increases man's sense of power, and therefore for him the content of life, is true. What tends to the diminishing of the store of moral resiliency and of the energy needed for resisting as well as for onward pushing is corrupting and therefore marked by falsehood's taint. 21

On the basis of such a pragmatic test the idea of God as the eternal and universal power which makes for righteousness becomes supremely important for human life.

> Value is given to our little limited lives. Our days are reckoned as movements in the sweep of the centuries. Their faint note belongs to the ocean of song to which worlds and ages have contributed. Our doings help and hinder, spread or retard, the pulsations of the universe's heart. We are a part of the eternities and have a part to play in their orchestrated symphonic movements. 22

For Hirsch the way to God was, as we have said, essentially through reason. Faith he could not accept. Nor was revelation, in its original meaning, a significant concept for him. He completely accepted the most radical conclusions of Biblical criticism. Its major premise, namely, that the Bible is not the word of God literally revealed to men, was axiomatic with him. Moreover, he could not see any real justification for the idea of revelation.

> We know that revelation is unnecessary. If revelation brings something that man cannot grasp, and if revelation unfolds something that transcends the intellectual power of man, revelation is in vain; for that which men cannot understand, and can therefore not reproduce, remains a dead sound....A revelation that transcends man's intellect can indeed bring sound, but no sense. And if man is capable enough to connect with revelation sense, then revelation, again, is unnecessary, for that which we can understand, we can also discover. 23

Revelation, for Hirsch, is synonymous with reason. Its instrument is human genius.[24] With the procession of the suns there is progress in religious, as in social, thought, for men of genius arise and discover new insights. Whether a new insight may be termed revelation, declared Hirsch, can only be discovered pragmatically. "One whose speech was of and about the truly divine will set adrift a call that the ages cannot hush but will ever anew and anew take up."[25]

Hirsch saw the difficulty in making revelation man-centered and identifying it with reason, but insisted that there was no way of avoiding the difficulty. The agnostic strain in him triumphed. God in Himself is ultimately unknowable. He can only be for man a representation, perhaps corresponding to reality and perhaps not, created by man's own mind. In the final analysis theology, Hirsch believed, is not science, but poetry. It makes its own truths.

> But is not this poetry? Is not hereby admitted that man makes his God? Let it be so! Beyond the

> limitations of our humanity even our thought cannot push. We lean on such crutches as the poor symbolism of human speech provides to represent what is finally unrepresentable. 26

III

We have already seen, in our discussion of Hirsch's conception of God, the high place he accorded to man. In his high estimation of man Hirsch was thoroughly in accord with the trend of contemporary thought mirrored, as has been noted, most brilliantly in the philosophy of John Fiske. Like Fiske, Hirsch insisted that Darwinism had not degraded man from his supreme position in creation. He was still the highest creature in nature and ever progressing further.[27] The growing tendency in imaginative literature, especially among the French, German, and Scandinavian naturalists, to lower man to the level of the beast, found no favor in Hirsch's eyes.[28] Contemporary science was of religious value, according to him, precisely because its achievements can give man a deepened sense of his own dignity and glory.[29]

The idea that man is godlike is, Hirsch maintained, one of the cornerstones, one of the eternal verities, of Judaism.[30] The doctrine of fatalism and determinism, popularized in his time by Spencer, Haeckel, and Loeb,

did not recommend itself to Hirsch who insisted that man is a creative being with relative, though not absolute, free will and power of self-determination.[31]

Hirsch argued that the doctrine that man is godlike leads, of necessity, to certain practical results.

> Let one believe, as Jewish theism teaches, that God and man are two phases of one great life; God is for man in man, and man is God-like! If this idea takes hold of him, possesses him, he cannot but feel and ever remember that human life has necessarily a higher purpose than self-indulgence. The recognition of God's indwelling in man is fatal to self-indulgence. 32

Believing as he did that man is a self-ennobling creature, capable of rising from his primordial animal state to true humanity, Hirsch reinterpreted the idea of sin in non-theological terms and in opposition to the Christian doctrine of inherited depravity.

> Sin is not offense against God, but against our humanity. It is not a state which came to us and which we cannot throw off; it is an act of our own. Sin is anti-social conduct, due to the want of resistance on our part to the influences of the animal world behind us, selfishness, or to the legacy of a phase of civilization over which and beyond which we should have passed on. 33

IV

Judaism, Hirsch constantly repeated, is the supreme religion. It had, he maintained, avoided the errors which made other religions defective. It had escaped the tendency, so marked in other religions, toward mysticism and emotionalism, which serve only as opiates or intoxicants but do not further redemptive work and struggle in the great conflicts of life. For mysticism and emotionalism Hirsch had no respect, and his denunciation of these was frequent and vitriolic. [34]

Judaism, Hirsch argued, had also avoided the dogmatism and the creed-forming mania which made other religions intellectually impossible in modern times. Furthermore, it never really succumbed to Bibliolatry.[35] Liberal Judaism, especially of the radical variety, is particularly free from all these defects. It is not creedal; it is not emotionalistic; it does not worship the Bible; it is not otherwordly. It is rather concerned, as was Prpphetic Judaism and Talmudic Judaism, with regulating human life and conduct according to moral ideals. Its chief theological cornerstone is the idea of man made in the image of God, and its chief sacrament is the concept of duty.[36]

Judaism, in Hirsch's view, dissents from the primitive pagan Weltanschauung which looks upon man as the plaything of inscrutable and immoral powers who may be appeased by the magical rites of religion. It disagrees also with religions such as those of India which recommend negation of self and conceive the highest good as non-being. Christianity, which likewise negates and despises this life but holds forth the promise of true life in the world to come, is ~~likewise~~ also antithetic to Judaism. For Judaism, Hirsch maintained, is essentially a religion which affirms life and the world, holding both to be the creation of a God of righteousness. It calls upon man to find meaning in his existence through the realization of his capacities for righteousness and justice and mercy and duty.[37]

Hirsch insisted that Judaism upholds an aggressive ethical ideal, completely opposed to the Christian ideal of non-resistance of evil.[38] Justice, he urged, must be fought for, and Judaism proclaims an ideal of justice for which it is worthwhile to fight.

Hirsch summarized his own conception of the essential nature of Judaism in these words:

> In the common sense of the word, Judaism is not a religion; it is not a system of dogmas, of sacramental grace; it is not a bundle of rites and ceremonies; it is not a road to happiness

> in the hereafter; it is not a scheme of salvation from original sin; it does neither stand or fall with our views as to the character of those books we call sacred, and as to their authorship. But it is a message to the world that righteousness must be its own reward, and is of that force which builds the world and shapes the courses of men. 39

In his attitude toward rite and ceremony Hirsch followed the tradition of radical Reform. While bitterly antagonistic to that pseudo-liberalism which expressed itself chiefly in ridiculing and satirizing ancient customs, he himself cherished no romantic longings for the traditional rites of Judaism.[40] He considered most of these as outmoded products of a by-gone age. Furthermore, elaborate ritual and liturgy were intrinsically repugnant to his temperament. His faith, in which ethical ideals were primary, could find little use for ritualism which he believed to be the by-product of mysticism and emotionalism. His antipathy to the latter has already been noted above.[41]

Yet, being a rabbi, Hirsch had to find a justification and a rationale at least for the public worship in the synagogue. One of the major reasons for public prayer, he held, is that it expresses the sense of Jewish identity and community.[42] But essentially the purpose of prayer is an ethical one: "We pray and we have ritual to remind us of our dignity and worth as men, of the fact that one man must live with others and through others." [43] Prayer, he declared, is not a dialogue between man and God;

it is an address of the lower to the higher within man.

> True worship is not a petition to God; it is a sermon to our own selves. The words which are its raiments are addressed to us. They speak of God and the divine in man, and thus make man find in himself the God that so often is forgotten when the battle rages, and the batteries roar. 44

Hirsch proclaimed that the essential function of the synagogue is to serve as a place of moral and spiritual instruction. This is the basic purpose of the sermon which is itself the most important element in the synagogue service. Prayer is of secondary value in that it prepares the mind and the soul to receive the religious and ethical message of the pulpit.[45]

V

A central doctrine in Emil G. Hirsch's philosophy of Judaism was the concept of the mission of Israel. As in the theology of his own father and of David Einhorn, so in Hirsch's the mission idea served as the basic justification for the preservation of Judaism.

Hirsch insisted that the idea of assigning a special mission to the Jewish people is an entirely naturalistic one. For every civilization and every nation that has existed in human history has had a unique destiny and a unique mission. All have somehow contributed to the spiritual or material possessions of present-day society.

Hirsch clearly stated what he conceived the historical mission of the Jew to be: "The Jew was by history called to be the proclaimer of an ethical view of the universe and of man, of ethical monotheism."[47] Hirsch argued that throughout its history Judaism has been called upon to challenge unworthy conceptions of the universe and of life. Thus in the time of the Maccabees the purpose of the Jew was to hold fast to his ethical religion. If Hellenism, which, though the mother of art and of speculative thought, had no great ethical message, had succeeded in destroying Judaism, there would have been no Christianity. But even with the triumph of Christianity it was still necessary for Judaism to survive. Its purpose now was to challenge the errors of the church: its dogmatism, its narrowness, its theology of sin.[48] To protest against the doctrine of the corruption of man, of the impossibility of human goodness and justice, and of the otherworldliness of God's kingdom - all orthodox Christian tenets - is still, he declared, the mission of the Jew.

> The Jew, being in the historic line of descent the heir of those who first learned to view man and God in such relation (a relation of at-one-ness) receives by birth the duty to illustrate by his own life and his own conduct that man is divine, that justice may be done on earth, to emphasize his belief in the final triumph of righteousness and love and humanity in the Messianic Age, God's Kingdom Come. [49]

Even modern liberalism, Hirsch believed, had not done away with the need for Judaism, for much of the liberal thought of the day was of the sweetness-and-light Unitarian variety to which Judaism, with its bold message of ethical struggle, of the need to fight for justice, is averse. Genuine liberalism, he insisted, is nothing more than true Judaism.[50]

Israel's present-day mission, Hirsch preached, is essentially to continue its suffering existence as a protest against the idols of the contemporary world. By continuing to suffer for the wrongs of the nations, as did Deutero-Isaiah's Suffering Servant, Israel serves to prick their conscience. For this, Hirsch declared, Israel must bear the enmity of the nations, but the suffering which this enmity entails is of supreme importance and value.

> The Jew protests by his very existence against the doctrine that might makes right, that numbers decide truth, and that possession condones every offense. The Jew by his very presence preaches that every man can be virtuous, regardless of a miraculous redemption, whether he accept the vicarious atonement or not...The Jew by his very presence protests against narrow nationalism....The Jew also disproves the now much ventilated theory of favored races. He is the living protest against the theory which says that blood will tell...It is not true that on account of our sins has the world today risen against the Jew, but true it is that the world is not what it should be, and therefore the Jew

> is an irritant that brings forever and ever to the conscience of the people their shortcoming. This is the source of the hatred against the Jew. 51

Much of Hirsch's bitter antagonism toward Zionism was due to his conception of the mission of Israel. He saw, it is true, many other reasons for regarding the attempt to re-establish a Jewish state in Palestine unfavorably. First and foremost, he believed, the attempt was bound to fail, because of Palestine's unproductivity and the Jew's inaptitude for agriculture.[52] Secondly, the acceptance of the Zionist ideology seemed to him a tacit admission of the charge of the anti-Semites that the Jews are an alien and unassimilable element in the body politic of the nations within which they dwell.[53] It is true, he said, that the Jew constitutes a minority, but minorities have a right to exist. It is the historical mission of the Jew to fight for that right and to prove that might and brute majority are not right. The Zionists, however, would give up the struggle altogether, he believed.

Political Zionism, according to Hirsch, assumed too narrow and materialistic a mission for the Jew. Its avowed purpose was merely to help the Jew escape from misery and poverty and to find material comfort. But the Jew, Hirsch maintained, must have a greater purpose

and mission than this. He has a messianic duty and obligation to work for the creation of the spiritual Zion - the great ideal of universal humanity and righteousness - though he suffer direst persecution and oppression in the attempt.[54]

Though Hirsch sympathized with the suffering of East European Jewry and appreciated the fact that the Zionist movement was directed primarily toward the alleviation of that suffering, he could not bring himself to accept Zionism as a Jewish movement valid from an ideological standpoint, apart from its humanitarian and philanthropic aspects. In his mature thought on the subject, presented in a sermon preached in 1917, Hirsch repeated that his antagonism to Zionism was due basically to its conflict with his conception of the greater mission of Israel.

> For me Israel's destiny foreshadowed in its very martyrdom and heroism is to be of greater service and meaning to mankind than what it can be if our rerise as a small political nation in a corner of anterior Asia is the ultimate of our checkered, tearwet, and bloodred career. I cannot bring myself to believe that with Jerusalem only another Bukharest, let us say with stage open for Hebrew plays whether moral or not, with articles of toilette placed on sale in show windows of shops bearing names spelled in Hebrew and other triumphs of Hebrew sartorial art, yea with universities where chemistry tallks Hebrew and economics adds a few technical terms to the Hebrew dictionary, we have justification for singing Lo Amuth Ki E'hyeh, I shall not die, I am alive. I cannot forget to add Weassaper Ma'ase Yah. The purpose of my survival is to witness to the doings of God. 55

Hirsch's conception of the mission of Israel led him to an extremely radical conclusion, namely, that the ultimate purpose of Judaism is to transcend itself. Judaism must strive to bring about that era of universal harmony when creeds and forms will no longer divide mankind but all men will be united under one religion whose cornerstones are justice, truth, and peace. Such is Israel's Messianic mission and destiny.

This idea had been an essential element in Einhorn's philosophy of Judaism. In the Neilah service of his prayerbook Olat Tamid, Einhorn had reinterpreted the prayer "open unto us the gates" as, in Hirsch's words,

> a prayer for the coming of the time when Judaism shall no longer exist. It states that Judaism is but the gate through which humanity may pass to a broader field, and a higher, nobler life. Judaism itself is not the end; it is but the means. 56

Hirsch considered this one of Einhorn's greatest insights and one with which he could fully agree.[57] He contended that the time had not yet come for Judaism to sink its own identity in the great life of humanity, but it would surely come, and not in some far-off, impossible age.[58]

Throughout his life Hirsch never lost his optimistic faith in the coming of the era of united humanity. Israel, he believed, still had much work to do before the universal

religion of humanity would arrive, but when it does come Israel shall be no more. Its mission having been fulfilled, it will gladly give up its separate life. But it must be careful not to give up its life too soon. Until the very threshold of the hour when the universal religion is born, Israel must stand apart and continue to labor for the fulfillment of its historic destiny.

> Until the full Messianic triumph, Judaism will continue to stand at its historic post. But when the last minute of the twelfth hour shall have run its pace, Israel will descend to sink his identity in the warmer life of a new-born, all-embracing humanity. Yet to that hour and upon its very threshold, until the eye of the Jew closes upon his centuried priestly service and trial to open again upon the golden sunshine of man's millennium-triumph, from our lips will ring with the fervor of a conviction possessing heart and mind Shema Yisroel Adonoi Elohenu Adonoi Echod, and as it dies away in the last proclamation, from zone to zone, from globe to globe, from pole to pole and land to land, will it wake the echo of our own, the prophets', and now man's confession: Adonoi Hu Ho-Elohim. 59

Notes to Chapter IV

1. "Pentecostal Gifts", RA, vol. 1, 1891, p. 229; cf. "The Three Rings", vol. 2, 1891, p. 85 and "The New Religious Attitude", vol. 18, 1899, p. 162.

2. "The Three Rings", RA, vol. 2, 1891, p. 85.

3. "The New Religious Attitude", vol. 18, 1899, pp. 161-2.

3a. "Judaism and Modern Religion", RA, vol. 27, 1904, pp. 175-178 and 199-204 (delivered in 1903)

4. "The Centennial of a Book on Religion", RA, vol. 7, 1894, p. 468.

5. "Pentecostal Gifts", RA, vol. 1, 1891, p. 229; "The Centennial of a Book on Religion", RA, vol. 7, 1894, pp. 467-70.

6. "Pentecostal Gifts", RA, vol. 1, 1891. pp. 228-30.

7. "God in Nature", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 357-59; cf. "God's Revelation", RA, vol. 14, 1897, pp. 517-19.

8. "God in Nature", RA, vol. 13, 1897, p. 359.

9. "The Centennial of a Book on Religion", RA, vol. 7, 1894, pp. 467-70.

10. "The Radical's Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894, p. 106

11. "Old Age", RA, vol. 5, 1893, p. 244.

12. "The Ethical Import of Theism", RA, vol. 10, 1895, pp. 766-69.

12a. "The Sociological Center of Religion", RA, vol. 11, 1896, p. 162.

13. "Man's Position in Nature", RA, vol. 6, 1893, p. 220.

14. "The Two Books", RA, vol. 4, 1892, p. 85.

15. "Or", RA, vol. 25, 1903, p. 502.

16. "The Omnipotent", RA, vol. 17, 1899, pp. 632-37.

17. "The Omnipresent", RA, vol. 17, 1899, p. 695.

18. See Note 27 of Chapter III.

19. "The Personal God", RA, vol. 18, 1899, p. 12.

20. "Where Does God Dwell?", RA, vol. 13, 1897, p. 73; cf. "The Doctrine of Evolution and Judaism" in My Religion, p. 252.

21. "In Thy Hands Are My Tides", RA, vol. 52, 1916, p. 231.

22. ibid.

23. "Sinai Congregation's Radicalism", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 195-198.

24. "God's Revelation", vol. 14, 1897, P. 518

25. ibid, p. 519.

26. ibid,, p. 519

27. "The Last Half Century's Thought and Judaism", vol. 53, 1917, pp. 357-62.

28. "Oliver Wendell Holmes: The Poet of Sentiment", RA, vol. 8, 1894, p. 170; cf. "Modern Prophets", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 293-96.

29. "Modern Prophets", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 293-96.

30. "What is Truth?" in My Religion, pp. 78-95; "The Conclusion of the Matter: A New Religion or the Old?" in My Religion, pp. 208-22; "The Crossing of the Jordan" in My Religion, pp. 343-58 (inaugural sermon preached before Sinai Congregation on September5, 1880).

31. "Man's Position in Nature", RA, vol. 6, 1893, pp. 217-221.

32. "The Ethical Import of Theism", RA, vol. 10, 1895, p. 768.

33. "The Psychology of Sin", RA, vol 7, 1894, p. 135

34. See the following sermons: "Sinai Congregation'S Radicalism", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 195-98; "The Radical's Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 104-08; "Wanted: A New Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894,pp. 233-37; "The Christian", RA, vol. 14, 1897, pp. 721-25; "The Sanctuary", RA, vol. 15, 1898, pp. 95-98; "Is Judaism a Religion of Dry Bones?", RA, vol. 17, 1899, pp. 296-301.

35. "Sinai's Anniversary", RA, vol. 9, 1895, pp. 408-12.

36. See the following sermons: "Views of Life", RA, vol. 2, 1892, pp. 369-72; "Discipline of Sorrow", RA, vol. 3, 1892, pp. 342-46; "A Discourse on the Eve of the Day of Atonement", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 202-05; "Wanted: A New Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 233-237; "The Value of Life", RA, vol. 9, 1895, pp. 231-234; "Our Consolation", RA, vol. 11, 1896, pp. 96-100; "God is Our Rock", RA, vol. 17, 1899, pp. 72-76; "The Mystery and the Mastery of Life", RA, vol. 22, 1901, pp. 82-85.

37. "Interpretations of the Universe", vol. 8, 1895, pp. 382-84.

38. See the following sermons: "The Fight for Justice", RA, vol. 4, 1893, pp. 499-502; "Interpretations of the Universe", RA, vol. 8, 1895, pp. 382-84; "Moses and Jesus: ON reform Judaism and Unitarianism", RA, vol. 9, 1895, pp. 345-48; "justice and Judgment", RA, vol. 15, 1898, pp. 192-95.

39. "The True Victor and His Arms", RA, vol. 3, 1892, p. 129.

40. Sinai Congregation's Radicalism", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 195-198.

41. See nnote 34 of this chapter.

42. "The Function of Prayer and Ritual in My Religion" in My Religion, p. 125.

43. ibid., p. 129.

44. "The Function of Worship", RA, vol. 3, 1892, p. 109.

45. ibid., p. 109

46. See the following sermons: "The Passover Lesson", RA, vol. 1, 1891, pp. 172-76; "Conflicting Tendencies", RA, vol. 2, pp. 51-54; "Why Am I a Jew?" - Part II, RA, vol. 10, 1895, pp. 725-26; "The Soul of the Nation", RA, vol. 13, 1897, pp. 341-44; "Jewish Dreams and Dreamers", RA, vol. 18, 1899, pp. 477-81; "The God of Israel" in My Religion, pp. 296-310.

47. "Humanity or Judaism?", RA, vol. 2, 1891, p. 68.

48. "Was It and Is It Worth While to Save Judaism?", RA, vol. 4, 1892, pp. 379-82.

49. "The Philosophy of the Reform Movement in American Judaism", RA, vol. 9, 1895, p. 362

50. "Was It and Is It Worth While to Save Judaism?", RA, vol. 4, 1892, pp. 379-82.

51. "Israel's Natural Mission", RA, vol..1, 1891, p. 425.

52. "the Zionistic Movement", RA, vol. 14, 1897, pp. 549-52, and pp. 599-602.

53. ibid.

54. "Spiritual or Political Zionism?", RA, vol. 16, 1899, pp. 384-86.

55. "The Last Half Century's Thought and Judaism", RA, vol. 53, 1917, p. 362.

56. "Our Great Reformers", RA, vol. 2, 1891, p. 190.

57. See the following sermons: "The Two Books", RA, vol. 4, 1892, pp. 84-87; "Universal Religion and Judaism", RA, vol. 6, 1893, pp. 137-40; "Wanted: A New Religion", RA, vol. 8, 1894, pp. 233-237; "The Philosophy of the Reform Movement in American Judaism", RA, vol. 9, 1895, pp. 359-65.

58. "Judaism a Living Religion", RA, vol. 15, 1898, p. 241.

59. "The Philosophy of the Reform Movement in American Judaism", RA, vol. 9, 1895, p. 364.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

The Reform Advocate, vol. 1-71, Chicago, Illinois, 1891-1926.

Hirsch, E. G., My Religion (A Collection of Sermons Compiled by Gerson B. Levi), New York, 1925.

Secondary Sources

American Jewish Year Book, vol. 27, 1925-26.

Central Conference of American Rabbis Year Book, vol. 33, 1923.

Commager, H. S., Documents of American History, 2 volumes, Third Edition, New York, 1946.

Commager, H. S., The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character since the 1880's, New Haven, 1950.

Faulkner, H. A., American Political and Social History, Fourth Edition, New York, 1946.

Hopkins, C. H., The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism,

James, William, Pragmatism, New York, 1907.

Levy, B. H., Reform Judaism in America, New York, 1933.

Nevins, A. and Commager, H. S., A Short History of the United States, New York, 1945.

Parrington, V. L., Main Currents in American Thought, 3 volumes, New York, 1927.

Phillipson, D., The Reform Movement in Judaism, New York, 1931.

Schneider, H., A History of American Philosophy,

ABSTRACT

The years of Emil G. Hirsch's ministry were marked by widespread economic conflict and social unrest in America. His early sermons are filled with bitter protests against the injustice of the contemporary order. Allying himself with a growing band of reformers both in the secular and religious worlds, Hirsch advocated the abandonment of the principles of Manchester liberalism, in which he saw the root of all the economic evil, and urged an ameliorative program of social welfare legislation. Echoes are to be found in his sermons both of the new schools of economics and sociology which had risen to challenge the doctrine of individualism and of the Social Gospel movement in the Protestant churches.

Though Hirsch tended, in his early years, toward socialism, as reflected both in his negative attitude toward individualism and in his insistence on the primacy of society and the duty of the individual to subordinate his desires to the welfare of the group, he came to think, late in life, that modified capitalism affords the fullest scope for the development of the individual at the same time that it best furthers the interests of society.

Hirsch's theology and philosophy of Judaism were influenced not only by Samuel Hirsch, David Einhorn, and the whole school of modern German philosophy, but also by the intellectual developments of the late Nineteenth Century, notably Darwinism and Pragmatism. In his thinking on the problem of God, Hirsch progressed from the Kantian view that God is a postulate of man's moral nature to the traditional theistic view of God as Lord of nature and of history, the latter view being adopted on a pragmatic basis. However, ethics, not theology, was primary in Hirsch's religion. His central religious premise was the divine nature of man and his possibilities for moral and intellectual advancement. This premise was confirmed for him by the doctrine of evolution.

Hirsch insisted that the immediate mission of the Jew, for the fulfillment of which he must retain his special identity, is to protest, by precept and example, against

the idols of the contemporary world - injustice, exploitation, irrationalism, nationalism, and racialism. Israel must continue to expound an ethical view of the universe and of human life. Hirsch held that Israel's ultimate purpose is to unite all men under one universal religion of truth and justice. When this purpose shall have been fulfilled, Israel's task will be finished, and he will then submerge his identity in the larger life of united humanity.