

Chapter 1 : The Contemporary Jewish Dilemma: Adopt or Reject Zionism and White Supremacy - Palestine

*The Dilemma of the Modern Jew [Joachim Prinz] on blog.quintoapp.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. A Discussion Of The Effect Of The State Of Israel Upon The Jew Of The Present Day Especially In America.*

Ask the organized Jewish lobbies, and most of our institutional leaders, and the answers are simple: Israel, Israel and Israel. I want to make a brash, perhaps hyperbolic, suggestion: Most Jews, polls say, care about a wide variety of issues: Iraq, the economy, Israel, the environment. These are, of course, important issues, but they are only half of the picture. The assumption is that Jewish issues are issues that affect Jews directly, rather than issues that Jews should care about as Jews. The former are the ethical and religious values that Judaism represents: While not necessarily universal, they are about Judaism, not the Jews; values, not tribe. The values of the Exodus, in contrast, are about the Jewish people specifically, and by extension, Jewish self-interest, whether annihilating the Canaanites in biblical times or defending our people today. Of course, every culture requires both of these: But our leaders, first by necessity and now by habit, have long put undo stress on the latter. As the joke goes: Two thousand years of Christian love have worn down our nerves. Support the Jews, our leaders say. Most recently, of course, this parochialism has cropped up in the embarrassing spectacle of Barack Obama kowtowing to the Jewish and Israel lobbies, soothing them with all the right pro-Israel bromides, as if they were nervous little children. Meanwhile, outrageous and often racist e-mails about Obama continue to circulate in our community. My own mother receives them every week. What is at the root of them? Prejudice because many Jews like many non-Jews are racist; fear because we worry that Obama might not be in our corner enough. For young people weary of a decade of doublespeak and deception, Obama represents a meaningful change – not an empty one, as his critics charge, but a substantive one, with real differences in policy, approach and engagement. Even young conservatives, who disagree with Obama on many issues and will likely vote for McCain, do not forward idiotic e-mails about Islam or flag pins. Only scared, old people do that. Including scared, old Jews. Theirs is a Judaism so worried about dying out that it is, indeed, dying out. Christian leaders, especially on the Right, do not act this way. They care about something other than their own interests. If all Judaism means is looking out for the Jews, many young people are right to have no interest in it. A Judaism that just preserves the Jews stands for nothing. What if the Jewish issues this year were the ones our tradition instructed us to act on? These issues challenge the Jewish demand to pursue justice Deuteronomy These are Jewish issues, because of our obligations to clothe the naked and provide for the poor Deuteronomy Since when did core ethical values become luxuries? It would be a dead tribalism worthy of the burial it would receive. In carrying on such a conversation, we enrich both ourselves, as religious beings, and our political discourse. Since I began with Obama, let me conclude with him, as well: After all, the problems of poverty and racism, the uninsured and the unemployed are not simply technical problems in search of the perfect point plan. They are rooted in both societal indifference and individual callousness – in the imperfections of man. Real Jewish issues are not about the Jewish tribe. They speak to real problems, and make our ancient religious mandates seem radically new again – and utterly crucial.

Chapter 2 : The New (Old) Dilemma of the Modern Jew | TC Jewfolk

The dilemma of the modern Jew.. [Joachim Prinz] -- A discussion of the effect of the state of Israel upon the Jew of the present day especially in America.

For me, it evokes a sense of nostalgia and reminds me of the deep roots upon which my Judaism is grounded. Now, what feelings come to mind? Welcome to the dilemma of the Modern Jew. Each week, I struggle with a balance between observing traditional Jewish customs with finding ways to ensure that my religion is relevant in the modern world. Should we, as Modern Jews, adhere to the traditions or be empowered to redefine Judaism as reflected through our individual perspectives and philosophies? We, as Jews, define ourselves by our ability to act within a unified community where our practices bind us to each other and God. By bending Judaism to the aesthetics of a modern world, it loses its identity and ceases to be the community-defining force it has traditionally been. On the other hand, its practitioners, whether they like it or not, are members of a modern society containing smartphones, instant status updates, and a belief that all people are entitled to equal and fair treatment regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion. We, as Americans, must ensure that our religious practice is in harmony with the secular aspects of our lives. If religion cannot be flexible, it will break under the tension of these aspects. Only by adapting our religion to modern sensibility can we ensure it continues and thrives in the ages to come. On the other hand, the more flexible we make the religion, the less of a cohesive community we are. There is a teaching that everyone should carry two sayings in each of their pockets. It is not my role to reshape what has been passed to me from previous generations. I must ensure its relevance and vitality by translating traditions to contemporary life. If you have any thoughts, answers, or ruminations on this subject please leave them below. Also, if you want to experience some collision of traditional and modern Judaism, you can join Noazim and me on a Parashah Pedal Pub , where we combine the traditional study of Torah with the thoroughly modern pedal pub. You can get more details on our Facebook page. Finally, send me a note if you stumble across the Tradition Remix feat. Cats in Kippahs video.

Chapter 3 : Jews - Wikipedia

Welcome to the dilemma of the Modern Jew. Each week, I struggle with a balance between observing traditional Jewish customs with finding ways to ensure that my religion is relevant in the modern world.

Rather than addressing their responses seriatim, I will comment on three cross-cutting themes. Thus, Samuel Heilman focuses on the inordinate influence exerted by haredi rabbis over the Modern Orthodox, a power all too willingly ceded to them by the latter. Asher Lopatin implicitly agrees, lamenting the eclipse, until quite recently, of a more open-minded Orthodoxy. Adam Ferziger consoles his readers with the prospect of new cracks in haredi ranks. Sylvia Fishman is especially exercised by haredi mistreatment of women. In this connection, incidentally. The exception is Barry Freundel who dwells upon the failings of Reform and especially Conservative Judaism. He cites the growing numbers of haredi Jews who seek a college and professional education, engage in outreach to their non-Orthodox coreligionists, and support Israel politically. These indeed do reflect important developments within the American haredi world. Though they are too kind to say so directly, my essay scanted this topic—and intentionally so, because it is very hard to pin down. What these comments highlight is that American Modern Orthodoxy is indeed influenced, if not buffeted, by trends in Israel as ideas and practices flow back and forth between the two communities. Perhaps the only definitive thing to be said is that American Orthodox Jews of all stripes enjoy a far more dynamic and fructifying relationship with their Israeli counterparts than do Conservative, Reform, or secular Jews. And yet, in some interesting ways, a gap is opening between Israeli and American versions of Orthodoxy. American haredim, for example, are far likelier than Israeli haredim to seek gainful employment and pursue degrees in higher education. In fact, haredi rabbis in Israel have disparaged this American trend, while American haredi leaders have given their tacit if not explicit approval. If, on the other hand, Israeli haredim remain more fixed in their ways than their American counterparts, Modern Orthodox Jews in Israel seem far more open to innovation than do their counterparts. From Zion have come forth some remarkably ingenious solutions to 21st-century religious questions. Means have been found, for example, to magnify sound in synagogues without trespassing on Jewish laws forbidding the use of electricity on the Sabbath and holidays. The same approach is evident in motorized carts for incapacitated individuals who otherwise could not attend synagogue services on those days. Nor is the spirit of halakhic ingenuity limited to technology. Interestingly, one is originally from the U. What has made such innovative thinking possible? For one thing, Israeli Orthodoxy, unlike the American brand, has never had to contend with strong Reform or Conservative movements. This has reduced pressure to respond to innovation with a reflexive negativity. Moreover, a sector of the religious Zionist rabbinate in Israel has been intent on bringing religious law into the realm of public policy in a Jewish state. To these rabbis, it is inconceivable that halakhah cannot or will not address the new circumstances created by modern Jewish sovereignty; their interpretive boldness has rarely been matched by Modern Orthodox rabbis in the United States. Rebuilding a Movement Even taking into account differences in nuance, all five of my respondents agree on the need to revamp aspects of Modern Orthodoxy. Some seem more optimistic about the prospects, others more skeptical. Heilman suggests that competition from Chabad will necessitate a more nimble Modern Orthodox response. As I contended in my essay, much has indeed gone right for Modern Orthodoxy, and even its divisions can be regarded as a sign of vitality. For their part, all of my respondents note the sense of well-being in many quarters of the community, and Sylvia Fishman offers a compelling explanation for it: But lurking beneath the surface are several unresolved issues not so quickly dismissed. The late Charles Liebman, the most influential analyst of American Orthodoxy in the postwar era, once even held up the Orthodox tendency to compartmentalize as an ideal for other kinds of Jews to emulate. One of the most astute observers of Jewish life, Liebman no doubt understood how tall an order this was: A second unresolved dilemma concerns the dearth of authoritative thinkers. Freundel tackles this challenge head-on, and both Heilman and Ferziger allude to it. Nearly three decades after Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik ceased functioning as a leader, he remains the totem invoked at every turn. To be sure, one can level the same criticism at the liberal Jewish denominations, which continue to offer ritual obeisance to Abraham Joshua

Heschel, Mordecai Kaplan, and other midth-century figures in justifying religious positions never imagined by them. But Freundel poses the right question: It may be that a mechanism exists within the Modern Orthodox community to contain rising levels of anger and resentment.

Chapter 4 : Modern Jewish Family in the United States | Jewish Women's Archive

Religion & Jewish Life APPRECIATION Eugene Borowitz, teacher to generations of rabbis, defined dilemma of the modern Jew Rabbis David Ellenson, left, and Eugene Borowitz in , on the occasion of the latter's 85th birthday.

Judaism Today Judaism as it is found in the United States today is divided into four major religious movements represented by synagogue membership. A small percentage of Jews identify with more or less extremist, rightwing, cult-like movements such as Hasidism which had their origins in eighteenth century Europe. A far larger percentage of Jews nearing one-half, at any given time identify themselves as Jewish though they belong to no movement -- some of these Jews do join synagogues from time to time, but others prefer to remain "secular" for ideological reasons. Mixed among both secular and synagogue-based Jews, there are others who center their Jewish identity on Zionism. Many Jews who had loose ties or no ties at all with religion became involved with the establishment of the State of Israel. Even today, many years after the successful founding of the State of Israel, there are Jews whose only real tie to Judaism is their belief in Zionism and their support for the State of Israel. They are joined by many Jews who are members of synagogues and support a modern Jewish religious movement, but who also find their prime identity as Jews in the Zionist cause. Broadly speaking, Zionists are proud that a small and struggling state made up mainly of Jews has created a modern democracy out of what were barren mountainsides, near deserts, and mosquito-breeding marshes. Zionists also point with pride at the ability of the Israelis to defend their land against the claims and against the armies of neighboring Arab nations. Nevertheless, many American Zionists express their identity with the Jewish people, in part or in whole, through active support of the State of Israel. Some feel a tie to the State of Israel, but their Zionist leanings are not a strong driving force in their lives. Some feel a tie to Jewish religion and attend religious services from time to time, often on the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as many Christians do at Easter and Christmas , but they do not maintain a lifelong membership in a synagogue or temple. Some secular Jews express their identity through study -- sometimes returning to the study of Judaism in their later years, sometimes seeing study as a way of searching for their roots. Often, secular Jews quest for spirituality -- sometimes turning to Jewish ideas and practices, even if they never fully return to the religious practices of their ancestors. Some few Jews are ideologically secular. They may be atheists who do not believe in the existence of a god. Or they may be agnostics, unsure of whether or not God exists. Among religions, Judaism is somewhat unique in that it makes room for both atheists and agnostics to remain Jewish. It is often pointed out that there is no positive commandment in the Torah the Five Books of Moses requiring a Jew to believe in God. When it comes to belief, the Torah commands that Jews adhere to the laws of the covenant, which means that idolatry the belief in many gods is forbidden. But a person can theoretically live an exemplary Jewish life without a belief in God. Moreover, connection with the Jewish people is determined by birth, not by belief. If a person is born a Jew or converts to Judaism , he or she is identified as a Jew. There is no question about this. Even the most religious Jew accepts birth or conversion as the only criteria for membership in the Jewish people. Orthodox Jews claim to hold the true religion of Judaism. In fact, Orthodoxy only began to organize and solidify its beliefs in the nineteenth century, in direct response to the Reform movement. To this day, there is less agreement among Orthodox Jews about what being Orthodox means -- especially about how particular laws should be followed -- than there is disagreement in any of the other modern movements. So, for example, the State of Israel has two "chief" rabbis to serve the Orthodox -- one of them serving the style of Orthodoxy Ashkenazi that developed in Europe and the other serving the style of Orthodoxy Sephardi that developed in what today are primarily Arab lands. Among Ashkenazi Jews, many of the Orthodox follow the laws of the Torah as explained and expanded in a multi-volume code of Jewish law called the Shulchan Aruch that was written by Rabbi Joseph Karo in the sixteenth century. Generally, all Orthodox Jews believe God gave the entire Torah to Moses at Mount Sinai in two parts -- the Written Torah that contains the mitzvot and the Spoken Torah, the oral traditions and explanations later recorded in the work of the rabbis and sages of the Talmud. Orthodox Jews wear a small head covering called a kippah or Yarmulke at all times. For the same reason, women are not

often encouraged to continue or excel in their Jewish studies. For the most part, Orthodox children are trained in Jewish parochial schools that teach not only the full range of state required subjects but also Jewish subjects such as Hebrew and Aramaic and sometimes, Yiddish, Talmud, Jewish history, and Prayerbook. Those Orthodox Jews who go on to become rabbis study at special colleges called yeshivot singular: For various reasons, the Orthodox movement is the least organized of the modern Jewish religious divisions, with several national associations claiming primacy. In some parts of Europe -- and certainly in the State of Israel, where the majority of the citizens identify as either secular or Zionist -- Orthodoxy is the largest religious movement. In the United States, however, the Orthodox movement is far smaller than either its Reform or Conservative counterparts. Almost immediately, it met with stiff political resistance from the traditional establishment that enjoyed the support of the German government. Though the number of Reform synagogues grew steadily in Europe, its success there was limited compared to its success among Jews in the United States, where there was no connection between the organized Jewish community and the government. Born in a time when scientific and critical study began to triumph over superstition and entrenched traditions, Reform Jews believe that the Torah was written and edited by human beings though some profess the belief that the Ten Commandments were written by Moses and given to the people at Mount Sinai. Nonetheless, Reform Jews generally believe that the Torah and its ideas are inspired. Reform Judaism does not hold that one must wear a kippah, or that one must pray three times a day. The emphasis in Reform Judaism is on ethics: But even when it comes to ethics, Reform Judaism does not follow a single guidebook. Instead, Reform Jews are required to study as much as possible and to make intelligent choices based on what they have learned. Reform Jews generally send their children to afternoon or Sunday schools in addition to regular public schools. In these religious schools, children study the beliefs and practices of Reform Judaism, Jewish history, customs and ceremonies, and so on. Reform rabbis are not trained in yeshivot but attend a special graduate school called the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion with branches in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, studying for five years after they have completed their regular undergraduate college degrees elsewhere. Reform Judaism maintains the complete equality women, encouraging both women and men to conform to the same standards of ethical practice, ritual behavior, and study. In fact, the Reform movement pioneered the ordination of women as rabbis. The Reform movement currently has the largest membership of any Jewish religious group in the United States. It is also well represented in Europe, Asia, Mexico, and Australia; and, in recent years, it has had some limited success in the State of Israel, as well. The early leaders of Conservative Judaism broke away from the German Reform movement in order to pursue a middle route between radical reform and reactionary stagnation. In America, leaders of the Reform movement actually helped to establish Conservative Judaism in the early twentieth century, in the belief that the new Jewish immigrants coming from Eastern Europe could identify more easily with Conservative Judaism than with Reform. Most Conservative Jews believe that some kind of divine revelation took place at Mount Sinai. Some maintain that the written Torah was given to Moses. Others agree with the Reform movement, saying that the Torah is divinely inspired, but the work of human hands. Especially when it comes to Jewish law, Conservative Judaism takes a stance between plain reason and blind reliance on tradition. Unlike the Orthodox, Conservative Judaism believes that Jewish law should be continually examined to meet the needs of every new generation. Unlike the Reform, Conservative Judaism maintains that Jewish law should be modified by rabbis and sages, and not by individual Jews. Conservative Judaism teaches that Jews should offer three prayer services daily and follow other traditional customs, such as wearing a kippah when praying some Conservative Jews wear a kippah at all times, as do Orthodox Jews. But Conservative Judaism also tries to accommodate the modern world. Conservative Jews generally send their children to public schools, supplementing this with religious schooling several times a week. Conservative religious schools emphasize the Hebrew language and knowledge of the Bible. Conservative Judaism originally opposed the idea of women serving as rabbis, but in recent years many women have been ordained as Conservative rabbis. At one time, Conservative Judaism was the largest movement in the United States, but its popularity has dwindled in recent years. Like the Reform movement, it is represented in countries around the world with an especially large following in Great Britain and it has made some in-roads in the State of Israel. This movement broke

away from Conservative Judaism in the s to follow the teachings of a brilliant rabbi, Mordecai Kaplan. In this light, God could be said to be the sum total of all things that are, were, and are yet to be. In its philosophy, Reconstructionist Judaism differs somewhat from Conservative Judaism. In practice, however, Reconstructionist Judaism adheres closely to its parent movement. Reconstructionist Jews generally send their children to public schools and to afternoon or Sunday religious school for instruction in Hebrew and Judaism. As in the Conservative and Reform movements, students train to be rabbis at a special college, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College located in Philadelphia only after completing four years of undergraduate work at another university. Indeed, the first recorded ceremony of Bat Mitzvah was held for the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan. Women in the Reconstructionist movement are encouraged to become rabbis and the first ordination of a Reconstructionist woman rabbi was held in , only two short years after the first Reform woman was ordained. Its beginnings can be traced to the late s, but the group that calls itself Hasidic today bears little resemblance to its early progenitors. Hasidic Judaism began in an honest effort to restore the joy of Judaism to the average Jew. It succeeded due to the charisma of its early teachers; and, where it continues to succeed today, it is still due to its charismatic leaders each one called a rebbe a Yiddish term used instead of the Hebrew "rabbi". Like many other reactionary movements, the main idea of Hasidic Judaism is that Jews should separate themselves from the modern world and continue to live in "the good old ways. It was in such a world that Jews could give credence to the claims that their rebbes worked miracles, wrote effective amulets, and exorcised demons. One group of modern Hasidim -- the followers of the Lubavitch rebbe who call themselves Habad often spelled, Chabad Hasidim -- have proven very canny in the use of modern media to garner attention. Their ever-growing presence on the Internet, for example, makes it seem as if they number in the millions while quite the opposite is the case. Despite their outward look of modernity, their medieval roots persist, as seen in their response to the death of their last rebbe. All mourned him, but some soon proclaimed that the deceased rebbe was either the messiah or the harbinger of the messiah. Such a call, for the resurrection of a charismatic leader, is antithetical to mainstream Judaism and has been so throughout history as mainstream Jews denounced one false messiah after another In terms of belief, the Hasidic movement hardly differs from the Orthodox movement except that it is consistently more stringent and more extremist. While study is encouraged for men and boys, women are still accorded a lesser place in Hasidic Judaism than in any other Jewish religious movement. Unlike the vast majority of Jews in this or any other age, Hasidim read the Bible as the literal word of God believing, for example, that the world was actually created in seven days. Hasidic Judaism is also cult-like in its demand for complete and blind faith on the part of its adherents who live in small tightly knit, carefully controlled communities. The Hasidic movement remains the smallest Jewish religious group in the United States. Its radical, rightwing position today is ironical, considering its beginnings as a movement to bring new vigor to the Jewish world. Early Hasidism set out to be a liberalizing influence and its early form actually influenced and continues to influence all branches of modern Jewish thought. They also tend to share a common fate, sometimes for the good and sometimes not. When one Jew is noticed, all are brought into focus. When the Jewish people, faith, or state is noticed, so is the individual Jew. The Talmud expressed its recognition of this commonality in a positive statement, "All Jews are responsible one for another. Rabbi Seymour Rossel, Genstar Ln.

Chapter 5 : WHO ARE THE MODERN JEWS?

""Michael Morgan has served up an intellectual treat. These subtle and carefully reasoned essays explore the dilemmas of the post-modern Jew who would take history seriously without losing the commanding presence Israel heard at Sinai.

What is the biggest existential issue plaguing the Jewish world in our day? They asked a number of prominent respondents from a wide spectrum of Hashkafos. Advertisement Mishpacha received a wide variety of answers. Interestingly none of them said it was the move to the right. More importantly, no one said that sex abuse is that issue. I tend to agree. Of course to the increasing numbers of victims and their families â€” that is the biggest issue plaguing Judaism today â€” a Holocaust in fact. While I agree that this is a major problem and the one in most need of immediate action, I do not see this by itself to be the biggest issue. Although I do believe it is a major contributor to it. The respondents each stated what they thought. I will briefly list what each one of them said. Jonathan Rosenblum thought it was the idea that too many of us do not think about honoring God. In a nutshell he says that this leads to not thinking about which of our actions constitute a Kiddush HaShem or Chilul HaShem. In many cases we tend to think only about ourselves and our own limited communities and never give a thought to how those outside of our world see our actions and how our behavior impacts on their perceptions of Judaism as a whole. Rabbi Niederman without saying so directly spoke about the dire poverty he must constantly encounter in his Kehilla in Williamsburg. Ein Kemach Ein Torah. To him, poverty is the primary existential threat to Judaism. Rabbi Weil spoke of the spiritual holocaust of assimilation. A holocaust that he says causes more Jews to be lost from Judaism than the actual Holocaust. The great boon to Jews in America is its biggest bane. Because of our broad acceptance â€” it is easier than ever to become completely assimilated. The largest bloc of Jews under 40 are choosing not to live as Jews. The American ideal of freedom and our widespread acceptance is in fact the double edged sword that is both helping us and skewering us. On the one hand observant Jews have been so accepted that we are invited to serve at the highest echelons of government. But at the same time the freedom this country offers allows us to shed any semblance of our Judaism. The push to perfection has created an entire population of young people who feel themselves unworthy, no matter how accomplished they are, they feel they fall short of the ideal expected of them. And finally there is Rabbi Dr. He says we ought not try and isolate issues. Instead he says that all issues need to be studied by professionals which include the entire spectrum of the Frum world â€” rabbis and lay leaders. After clearly studying and defining those issues â€” we can develop solutions to them. What better method can there be for determining that than a scientifically designed study that will be objectively conducted and analyzed by the widest variety of people and professionals available to us.

Chapter 6 : What Are the Jewish Issues? – The Forward

His unadorned statement of the dialectical dilemma confronting the modern Jew attempting to navigate between the poles of tradition and the contemporary world resonated in the very depths of my being.

Modern Orthodoxy[edit] Modern Orthodoxy comprises a fairly broad spectrum of movements each drawing on several distinct, though related, philosophies, which in some combination provide the basis for all variations of the movement today. Thus, Modern Orthodoxy holds that Jewish law is normative and binding , while simultaneously attaching a positive value to interaction with the modern world. In this view, as expressed by Rabbi Saul Berman , [3] Orthodox Judaism can "be enriched" by its intersection with modernity; further, "modern society creates opportunities to be productive citizens engaged in the Divine work of transforming the world to benefit humanity ". At the same time, in order to preserve the integrity of halakha , any area of "powerful inconsistency and conflict" between Torah and modern culture must be filtered out. Other "core beliefs" [2] are a recognition of the value and importance of secular studies see Torah Umadda: Earning a livelihood ; see below. Ideological spectrum[edit] The specific expression of Modern Orthodoxy, however, takes many forms, and particularly over the past years, describes a political spectrum. To the ideological right , the line between Haredi and Modern Orthodox has blurred in recent years; some have referred to this trend as "haredization". Such a world is not chol, but chiloni, not secular, but secularist. It is impermeable to the values of kedushah. Adherents on the ideological left have begun to develop new institutions that aim to be outward looking while maintaining a discourse between modernity and halakhah. The resultant " Open Orthodoxy " seeks to re-engage with secular studies, Jews of all denominations and global issues. Some within this movement have experimented with orthodox egalitarianism where gender equality solutions are found through halakhah. This has led to women taking on more leadership roles. Others in this movement are increasingly re-engaging with social justice issues from a halakhic point of view. The Behaviorally Modern[edit] It is also noted [1] [12] that many Modern Orthodox are "behaviorally modern" as opposed to "ideologically modern" , and, in truth, fall outside of "Modern" Orthodoxy, at least in the philosophical sense; see below. This phenomenon is sometimes termed "Social Orthodoxy". The ideologically modern are "meticulously observant of Halakha", [12] and their interaction with the secular comprises a tangible expression of their ideology, wherever it may lie on the spectrum described. The "behaviorally modern", on the other hand, define themselves as "Modern Orthodox" only in the sense that they are neither Haredi "Ultra-Orthodox" nor Conservative: This "Orthodoxy of convenience" has maintained a certain stability over time: In fact, even among its leadership, there is limited agreement "on the philosophical parameters of modern Orthodoxy". Some elements of Haredi Judaism appear to be more receptive to messages that have traditionally been part of the Modern-Orthodox agenda. In discussing "Modern Orthodoxy", it is thus also important to clarify its position with reference to other movements in Judaism: Further, given this wide range of views, some see the possibility that, in fact, "[t]here is no longer a cohesive, singular Modern Orthodoxy"; [13] see further below. Today, the movement is additionally, and particularly, influenced by the philosophy of Rabbi Joseph B. Religious Zionism , strictly speaking a distinct philosophy, has an indirect influence. Hirsch held that Judaism requires the application of Torah philosophy to all human endeavor and knowledge compatible with it. Thus, secular education becomes a positive religious duty. It comprises all of life Torah im Derech Eretz remains influential to this day in all branches of Orthodox Judaism. Pragmatism[edit] Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer , along with Rabbi Hirsch, was insistent that Orthodox Jews living in the west should not segregate themselves behind ghetto walls. On the contrary, modern Jewish education must teach Jews how best to confront and deal with modernity in all of its aspects. He established Jewish education for males and females, which included both religious and secular studies. He established Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary , one of the first Orthodox yeshivot incorporating modern Jewish studies , secular studies, and academic scholarship in its curriculum. He was non-sectarian, and worked with communal leaders, even non-Orthodox ones, on issues that affected the community. He maintained traditional attachments to the Land of Israel , and worked with the non-Orthodox on its behalf. It envisions a personal - as

opposed to philosophic - " synthesis " between Torah scholarship and Western, secular scholarship, entailing, also, positive involvement with the broader community. Here, the "individual has absorbed the attitudes characteristic of science, democracy, and Jewish life, and responds appropriately in diverse relations and contexts". This philosophy, as formulated today, is to a large extent a product of the teachings and philosophy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik , Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University. Religious Zionism[edit] Modern Orthodoxy draws on the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook - both as regards its views on Jewish peoplehood and as regards the related interaction with the secular world. Here too, the ideological basis is largely drawn from the teachings of Rav Kook, [9] and there is therefore much overlap; philosophical differences, as well as other "non-modern" forms of Religious Zionism, are discussed below. Comparison with other movements[edit] As above, Modern Orthodoxy comprises various approaches, ranging from traditionalist to revisionist, and the movement apparently overlaps with Conservative Judaism and with Haredi Judaism at its respective boundaries. At its centre too, the movement appears to share practices and values with Neo Orthodoxy and with Religious Zionism. Therefore, in clarifying what Modern Orthodoxy in fact entails, its positioning must be discussed with reference to these movements. Haredi Judaism[edit] See also under Centrist Orthodoxy and Divine Providence for further elaboration of the differences discussed here. Although there is some question as how precisely to define the distinction between Modern Orthodoxy and Haredi Judaism , there is basic agreement that they may be distinguished on the basis of three major characteristics: Modern Orthodoxy is, in comparison, accommodating, "if not welcoming", to modernity , general scholarship, and science. Modern Orthodoxy is almost uniformly receptive toward Israel and Zionism , viewing the State of Israel in addition to the Land of Israel as having inherent religious significance. A fourth difference suggested, relates to the acceptability of moderation within Jewish law. Both Modern Orthodoxy and Ultra Orthodoxy regard Halakha as divine in origin, and as such, no position is assumed without justification in the Shulchan Aruch and in the Acharonim. The movements differ, however, in their approach to strictures chumras and leniencies kulas. Modern Orthodoxy holds that strictures are not normative , rather, these are a matter of personal choice; [19] "severity and leniency are relevant only in circumstances of factual doubt, not in situations of debate or varied practice. In the latter situations, the conclusion should be based solely on the legal analysis. In the Haredi view, on the other hand, "the most severe position The similarity between the two groups in their relationships towards the non-Orthodox, and its adoption by some Haredi groups, has blurred the lines between the modern and Haredi segments of Orthodoxy. The movements are nevertheless distinct, and in general, Neo-Orthodoxy has taken a more qualified approach than Modern orthodoxy, emphasizing that followers must exercise caution in engagements with the secular world. Note though that differences between the movements may be more than a question of degree: In the Hirschian view , interaction with the secular and the requisite acquisition of culture and knowledge is encouraged, only insofar as it facilitates the application of Torah to worldly matters. For Modern Orthodoxy, on the other hand, secular culture and knowledge are seen as a complement to Torah, and, to some extent, encouraged for their own sake. Some would suggest that in Modern Orthodoxy, Judaism is enriched by interaction with modernity, whereas in Neo-Orthodoxy human experience and modernity are enriched by the application of Torah outlook and practice. Priority of Torah versus Secular knowledge: In the Hirschian view, Torah is the "sole barometer of truth" by which to judge secular disciplines, as "there is only one truth, and only one body of knowledge that can serve as the standard Compared to it, all the other sciences are valid only provisionally. By contrast, in the view of Modern Orthodoxy, although Torah is the "preeminent center", secular knowledge is considered to offer "a different perspective that may not agree at all with [Torah] Religious Zionism[edit] Broadly defined, Religious Zionism is a movement that embraces the idea of Jewish national sovereignty , often in connection with the belief in the ability of the Jewish people to bring about a redemptive state through natural means, and often attributing religious significance to the modern State of Israel. This attitude is rejected by most Haredim - but not all, particularly the Hardal movement. Thus, in this sense, Religious Zionism in fact encompasses a wide spectrum of religious views including Modern Orthodoxy. At the least, the two are not in any direct conflict, and generally coexist, [1] sharing both values and adherents. Further, in practice, except at their extremes, the differences between Religious Zionism and Modern Orthodoxy in Israel are not pronounced, and

they are often identical, especially in recent years and for the younger generation. Firstly, conservative Religious Zionists differ with Modern Orthodoxy in its approach to secular knowledge. See further under Torah Umadda. Secondly, under Religious Zionism, a "nationalistic coloration" is given to traditional religious concepts, whereas, by contrast, Modern Orthodoxy includes "a greater balance which includes openness to the non-Jewish world"; [26] thus, under Religious Zionism, the Jewish nation is conceived of as an "organic unity", whereas Modern Orthodoxy emphasises the individual. Nonetheless, the two movements are generally described as distinct. Torah mi-Sinai, rabbinic interpretation, and rabbinic legislation". Torah mi-Sinai "Torah From Sinai ": Modern Orthodoxy, in line with the rest of Orthodoxy, holds that Jewish law is Divine in origin, and as such, no underlying principle may be compromised in accounting for changing political, social or economic conditions, [32] whereas Conservative Judaism holds that Poskim should make use of literary and historical analysis in deciding Jewish law, and may reverse decisions of the Acharonim that are held to be inapplicable today. Modern Orthodoxy contends that legal authority is cumulative, and that a contemporary posek decisor can only issue judgments based on a full history of Jewish legal precedent, [32] whereas the implicit argument of the Conservative movement is that precedent provides illustrations of possible positions rather than binding law. Conservatism, therefore, remains free to select whichever position within the prior history appeals to it. In general, Modern Orthodoxy does not, therefore, view the process by which the Conservative movement decides halakha as legitimate - or with the non-normative weighting assigned to particular halakha by the Conservative movement. See further on the Orthodox view and the Conservative view. Modern Orthodoxy clearly differs from the approach of Reform Judaism and Reconstructionist Judaism , which do not consider halakha to be normative. Criticism[edit] This section deals with criticism relating to standards of observance and to social issues. See "Criticism" under Torah Umadda for discussions of philosophy. Standards of observance[edit] See further under Torah im Derech Eretz ; Torah Umadda There is an often repeated contention that Modern Orthodoxy - beyond its approach to chumrahs "strictures" described above - has lower standards of observance of traditional Jewish laws and customs than other branches of Orthodox Judaism. There are at least two distinct types of Modern Orthodox.. One is philosophically or ideologically modern, while the other is more appropriately characterized as behaviorally modern The behaviorally Modern Orthodox, on the other hand, are not deeply concerned with philosophical ideas In contrast to the more traditional Orthodox, they do not observe all of the rituals as deemed obligatory by the traditional community. Their sense of "freedom of choice", although never articulated theoretically, is as evident as it is among many other contemporary Americans who view themselves as religiously traditional, but, nevertheless, are selective in their religiosity. Modern Orthodox Rabbis have been criticised for attempting to modify Jewish law , in adapting Judaism to the needs of the modern world. Thus, in Europe of the early 19th century, all of Judaism that differed from the strictest forms present at the time was called "Reform". Then, as now, Modern Orthodoxy took pains to distance its "reforms", which were consistent with the Shulkhan Arukh and poskim , from those of the Reform movement and the Conservative movement , which were not. It is foolish to believe that it is the wording of a prayer, the notes of a synagogue tune, or the order of a special service, which form the abyss between [Reform and Orthodoxy] It is not the so-called Divine Service which separates us, [rather it] is the theory - the principle [of faithfulness to Jewish law] Modern Orthodoxy is, almost by definition, inhibited from becoming a strong movement, because this would entail organization and authority to a degree "which goes against the very grain of modernity". A related difficulty is that Modern Orthodox rabbis who do adopt stringencies may, in the process, lose the support of precisely the "Modern" group they sought to lead. The very term "Modern Orthodoxy" is thus, in some sense, an oxymoron. Firstly, the ideology entails built-in tensions and frequently requires conscious living with inconsistency [9] [16] even in the term itself:

Chapter 7 : Dilemmas in Modern Jewish Thought

Whether consulting modern texts in the privacy of one's home or joining together with the members of Ivriah, a New York City organization formed in to encourage the study of Hebrew and Jewish culture, Jewish women widely agreed that "the way to make the home Jewish is to make the mother Jewish."

As thousands of young immigrant families poured into America, swelling the ranks of the urban poor, a chorus of concerned social workers, rabbis, sisterhood presidents, and journalists collectively sounded an alarm. The fate of the Jewish family, they feared, hung in the balance. At first, the Jewish community ignored the small but steadily growing number of unwed immigrant mothers; shame and social convention precluded public discussion, let alone intervention. Intelligent Jewish men and women, prominent in philanthropy, were outraged that the virtue of Jewish girlhood and womanhood could be publicly assailed. She often insults me in the presence of strangers. The National Desertion Bureau went further still by taking systematic steps to apprehend deserters. Between , when the bureau was first established, and , when social workers no longer considered desertion to be a serious problem, over twelve thousand cases, many of them including repeat offenders, came to its attention. Why has that unique tower of strength disappeared from our midst? Why has the home disintegrated before our eyes into a house rather than a home? Why has the family become an insignificant factor rather than the bulwark of strength that it once was? To put it another way, the issue at hand was not so much the literal reproduction of the Jewish family as the social reproduction of yidishkayt, or Jewishness. With few exceptions, Jewish communal leaders of the interwar years did not voice much concern over intermarriage, which, they commonly believed, seldom took place. Historic, long established integers will be preserved with little impairment, and America will be unified through means other than racial fusion. On the wane since the s, the American Jewish birthrate has remained consistently lower than that of other Americans. As early as , native-born Rhode Island Jewish families, for example, had an average of 2. A study found that in Indianapolis the Jewish birthrate was twenty-five percent lower than that of Protestants. Despite these rather grim indices, few Jewish communal leaders paid attention, underscoring the extent to which cultural thresholds of alarm vary from generation to generation. Meanwhile, among those who did express concern, more was said about the immediate emotional and cultural drawbacks of small families than about the long-range statistical consequences of physical attrition. The festive meals and even family prayers lose much of their impressiveness and much of their significance as a social expression of religious life, if so few participate. Put simply, what ailed the Jewish family was its failure to act like one. Devoid of Judaica and other tangible marks of Jewishness, the average middle-class Jewish home did not even look Jewish. In such homes it either disappears altogether or retains only a few vestigial [sic] practices. A study by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations of home rituals practiced by urban American Jews, for example, revealed that a striking sixty percent of respondents did not light Sabbath candles, while eighty percent eschewed the dietary laws altogether. Some women, apparently, were out shopping on Shabbat. Others preferred to spend their time reading Browning rather than the Bible, while still others knew much more about opera than cantorial music. The modern Jewish woman stood accused of enfeebling Judaism by her inattention, neglect, and cultural illiteracy. Although attenuated, that intimate connection endures: In other respects, however, the contemporary Jewish family seems to be holding on for dear life. Beset by a staggeringly high number of intermarriages and by fundamental and far-reaching changes in the very definition of family, the Jewish home of today is more likely to inspire a requiem than an encomium of the kind Ruskay published. Still, if Jewish history teaches anything, it is that resilience and change, much like the bonds between family and Jewishness, go hand in hand. Images and Reality ; Edlin, Sara. The Wonders of America: Reinventing Jewish Culture, " ; Kohn, Jacob. Modern Problems of Jewish Parents: Myth and Metaphor ; Ruskay, Esther Jane. Hearth and Home Essays ; Yearbook.

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