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The Haredim in Israel

Who Are They and What Do They Want?

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FOREWORD

A recent *New York Times* article focused upon a struggle within the Orthodox Jewish community over the permissibility of mixed dancing in kosher dining facilities. Articles in other media have centered upon Orthodox "heresy-hunting" and initiatives to increase religious legislation in Israel, most notably efforts to amend the "Who is a Jew" clause in the Law of Return. Pervading these disputes has been the struggle between the Orthodox "right," often termed "haredi Orthodoxy," who seek to limit contact with the broader society, and the "Modern" or "Centrist Orthodox," who seek to establish parameters for fruitful and constructive engagement between Judaism and modern culture.

Although media coverage of these disputes has been widespread, much misunderstanding and confusion prevail concerning these groups. Many assume that all haredim are anti-Zionist and emulate the Ayatollah Khomeini in seeking to inspire compulsory religious legislation. Others have misinterpreted the "Who is a Jew" debate in Israel as an effort to communicate to American Conservative and Reform Jews their lack of personal standing under Jewish religious law -- a rather sad commentary on how public signals from Israel affect the Jewish identity of American Jews. Still others have lamented the influence in Israel's multiparty system of haredi political parties, which exact high prices for their participation.

The haredi Orthodox, like most other religious groups, are a complex phenomenon. Clearly they merit considerable credit for the revitalization of Jewish tradition in a secular world. Haredi Orthodox, for example, spearheaded many of the initiatives to strengthen Jewish education in America. Modern Orthodox educational institutions often turn to the haredi community for educational personnel and staff. Similarly, given the high fertility rates of haredi families -- itself a signal of a willingness to defy modern American norms -- haredim promise to become more rather than less influential in the next generation. Perhaps their most cogent message to contemporary Jews concerns their belief in a "transcendental imperative" -- a sense that leading a Jewish life is not a matter of convenience or personal choice but rather a divine requirement.

Yet the complaints against the haredim are also serious. Many decry their spirit of triumphalism, which has inhibited the development of Modern Orthodoxy as a bridge between the religious movements. This triumphalism is reflected in their certitude of opinion, their belief in the absolute truth of haredi doctrine and the falsity and even heresy of dissenting opinion.

The weaknesses of this triumphalism should be self-evident. It closes doors and limits access to modern Jewish scholarship, asserts the absolute immutability of Jewish law even in the face of legitimate moral counterclaims, and restricts the grounds for cooperation with -- to say nothing of learning from -- non-Orthodox Jews.

Haredi triumphalism, in short, contradicts the spirit of pluralism that underscores so much of American Jewish identity. Haredim approach the non-Orthodox, and even the Modern Orthodox, with contempt and disdain. The advantages of diversity within the Jewish community are lost upon the haredim. For them, dissent and pluralism are code words for heresy.

Finally, as haredi groups become more numerous and influential in Israeli culture and polity, the special relationship between Israeli and American Jewry may become attenuated. American Jews understand little of the diversity of the haredim, often assuming that all haredim advocate throwing rocks at moving vehicles on the Sabbath and burning immodest posters at bus stops. Haredi cultural values often conflict with the liberal consensus underlying American social values, creating grounds for future clashes over visions of Israeli society, particularly the role of religion in the public arena. Haredi political influence may be expressed in directions that are dissonant with the political values and preferences of American Jews -- for example, the efforts to amend the "Who is a Jew" clause in the Israeli Law of Return. Conversely, haredi leaders reject the ideologies and alternatives to Orthodox Judaism that have been the cornerstone of the religious identity of American Jews.

To explain the inner life and worldview of the haredi community, the American Jewish Committee commissioned two scholars -- one Israeli and one American -- to provide a background paper on haredi doctrine, culture, economy, politics, and demographics. Professors Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman write of the historical background of the haredim, their conflict with Zionist parties, and their most recent emergence to prominence and visibility in the Israeli political and educational systems. Similarly, the authors shed new light on the haredi economy and their controversial and complicated relationship with the Israeli military sector. Finally, the authors focus upon the haredi communities in American Jewry, emphasizing the Lubavitch hasidim and their relationship to Israel and Israeli politics.

It is our hope that this paper will help clarify the many misunderstandings concerning the haredim. We also hope that this paper will catalyze response to the haredi challenge to modern Jewry: how does one define being Jewish at all in a world of modern values and norms?

Steven Bayme, *Director*
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THE HAREDIM IN ISRAEL

One of the more surprising results of the 1988 Israeli elections for the Twelfth Knesset was the success of the so-called "religious parties" (representing orthodox Jews), which won 18 seats of a total 120. This number seemed at first to constitute the crucial margin of victory that would enable one of the two major parties -- Labor or Likud -- to form a governing coalition. That the major parties would have to invite a religious party to join the government was no surprise; these parties had played a role in state politics since 1948. What was surprising -- at least to those who had not been following the evolution of Israeli orthodoxy -- was that the parties forming the majority of the religious bloc represented the most stringently orthodox. These are the so-called haredi (Hebrew for "God-fearing") Jews, men in black hats and caftans, with beards and earlocks, who question the very legitimacy of Zionism. They are not the modern orthodox Jews of the National Religious Party (NRP), the heirs of the religious Zionism of the Mizrachi movement, who recognize the validity of Zionism and have been from the start willing to join with the majority secular Zionist political parties in governing the state. This time, the NRP, although winning five seats, was outnumbered more than two to one by the ultraorthodox haredim. Suddenly, it seemed, a coalition with the orthodox would mean an association with Jews who questioned the entire Zionist enterprise, who did not serve in the Israel Defense Forces, who saw themselves as outsiders, and who acted as if they were still in exile. To many, it seemed, as a November 3, 1988, *Ma'ariv* headline boldly suggested: "The State is becoming haredi."

To get beyond the headlines and understand what really happened in this election, however, it is first necessary to briefly review the last two hundred years of Jewish history. Such a review will help identify the players in this drama and allow one to discern the roots of the various orthodox parties, which do not constitute a single body. Moreover, it will also explain why the religious parties were able to achieve their highest level of electoral strength -- numbers they had not seen since the first elections in 1949.

Who Are the Orthodox?

The question with which we begin is simple: Who are the orthodox? The beginnings of what today is called "orthodoxy," a strain of Judaism identified with a high degree of religious observance, attachment to tradition, and doctrinal devotion, may be traced to a period of Jewish history in Europe that began approximately two hundred years ago. After European Jewry went through the profound changes wrought by revolution, both political and industrial, and emerged as part of the mainstream of European society, some began to make moves to reform Judaism. To be sure, reform was not the only response to the changes; even more popular was assimilation, abandonment of Jewish life and what seemed to many "enlightened" Jews its parochial worldview.

Ashkenazim, who made up the bulk of European Jewry, passed through a period of political and intellectual ferment during which they entered into the main currents of the surrounding culture and into societies that had until then barely tolerated them. This process was given many names; among the most common for the political process was the term "emancipation" and, for the intellectual or ideological

change, "enlightenment" or *haskalah*.[1] At its outset, orthodoxy was a reaction against emancipation and enlightenment. Orthodox Jews were those who sought to preserve the traditional Jewish way of life.

What orthodoxy rejected was the idea that religious tradition and tribal ties had to be abandoned in order to fulfill the demands of emancipation and enlightenment. They saw increasing numbers of Jews forsake kashrut, the dietary laws, because it precluded fraternization and intermingling with those who did not keep those laws. Observing the Sabbath on Saturdays separated Jews from those who observed it on Sundays, and so many dropped this practice. Indigenous Jewish languages such as Hebrew and Yiddish hampered communication with the host cultures, and so more and more Jews spoke the local vernacular -- German, English, French, Polish, or Russian. Distinctive Jewish dress and grooming, a product of internal Jewish custom and externally enforced codes, made Jews stand out from the rest of society, so they cut their beards and earlocks, changed out of their characteristic clothes, and began to look like everyone else in the general culture around them. Even certain ideas had to be dropped, like the notions of a separate "chosen" people and its messianic redemption, for these emphasized the difference of Jews from others.[2]

To be sure, the process that led to emancipation and enlightenment did not occur all at once. The winds of change that began as light breezes in the eighteenth century and ended as tempests in the twentieth moved gradually and unevenly eastward across Europe, arriving relatively late in Poland and Russia, where the great bulk of Ashkenazi Jewry lived.[3] Moreover, these changes were met in different ways by different communities. The reactions may be grouped into three broad categories: *assimilation*, the process of deserting completely one's original identity and culture and adopting the culture of the larger society; *acculturation*, promoting cultured contact with the world outside the Jewish community but eschewing complete absorption; and *contra-acculturation*, turning away from the contemporary way of life altogether and preserving traditional ways.[4]

Those who chose assimilation ceased being Jews. Those who embraced acculturation sought to become hyphenate Jews (French Jews, German Jews, American Jews, British Jews, etc.), moving beyond exclusive attachment to the local Jewish community (for example, having non-Jewish friends or political concerns), sometimes getting a university education and pursuing a secular profession. They shared the values and some of the ethos of the non-Jewish world and aimed to participate in the host society without dissolving the Jewish one. Some acculturationists invented Zionism, a political ideology that merged Jewish nationalist aspirations with the modern secular notions of liberalism, socialism, and the nation-state. Not only could a Jew be like all other people, a citizen like all other citizens, yet remain a Jew; a Jewish state could be like all other states without losing its specific Jewish character. The basic premise of all these Jews was that cultural contact with the world beyond the Jewish one could be beneficial.

Generally, those who emerged as the most orthodox rejected the attractions of the host cultures. They chose not to change their dress, not to sever their tribal ties, and to accommodate themselves as little as possible to the world outside the Jewish one. And they were punctilious -- sometimes to the point of obsession -- about maintaining the integrity of ritual and Jewish law, halakhah. They were, in short, contra-acculturationist.

Others, those more moderately orthodox, sought to retard the movement outward by demonstrating the capacity of historic Judaism to harmonize its teachings with modern conditions. These orthodox Jews accepted the substance of their host cultures and tried inductively to create a synthesis of Judaism and contemporary civil society. They repudiated the contra-acculturation of stricter orthodoxy, avoiding the rejectionism and social insularity it fostered, wishing to be *of* as well as *in* the host culture rather than confined to a social and cultural ghetto. At the same time, they would not abandon the Jewish attachments embedded in orthodoxy.[5] They were very simply acculturationist.

For many years, however, "orthodox" was the term most often associated with the uncompromising

rejection of modern culture and Western life-styles. Overwhelmingly reactionary and negational in character, orthodoxy responded to the temptations of assimilation and acculturation in the same way that it did to much of non-Jewish culture: with profound contempt and "great stubbornness and resistance," a stance that became a badge of honor.[6] To many, including some who do not completely share their point of view, this sort of orthodoxy continues to "represent 'true Orthodoxy' in its purest form," and "all other forms are compromises and, therefore, less authentic."[7]

Those who chose contra-acculturation tended to look upon anyone who embraced or gave legitimacy to modern culture, which to them remained essentially anti-Jewish, as a potentially contaminating influence. They strived to separate themselves not only from every aspect of the outside culture but also from people or things that, having passed near or through that world, carried contaminating elements of it. This had ramifications in every aspect of life, instrumental and institutional, social and cultural -- not the least of which was the creation of dissension within the Jewish community between orthodox and nonorthodox Jews and even within orthodoxy itself as various groups argued over who was getting too close to the foreign ways of the Gentiles.

Yet foreign (modern) culture increasingly impinged upon even the most contra-acculturationist orthodox, and they found themselves increasingly dependent, economically and politically, upon the very world they were pledged ideologically to reject. This was particularly the case in Palestine, where the orthodox Jews of the old Yishuv (the pre-Zionist settlement) were increasingly dependent on the political and social power of the secular and socialist Zionists of the new Yishuv, those who would in time become the government of Israel.

Paradoxically, this situation fostered a constant concern (some would say an obsession) among the orthodox with maintaining an antagonistic stance vis-a-vis Jews different from themselves. Even as the orthodox became increasingly dependent upon those who had learned to navigate the rapids of mainstream culture, the most stringent among them had to prove to themselves and others that they were indeed different and still true to the traditions. Hence, in addition to the energy that they, like all people, had to invest in building a positive culture, these orthodox also had to devote additional energy to maintaining their separation from other cultures. Preserving a balance between ideological opposition and instrumental cooperation became a key concern of these stringently orthodox Jews.

To say that orthodoxy, even from its earliest days, was a movement that negated assimilation and reform and distrusted acculturation; and that it was more or less divided in two parts, those who were ideologically confirmed in their contra-acculturation and those who wished to engage in a kind of tempered or tentative acculturation, is not enough. It does not really convey fully the landscape that would be called "orthodox." There were other dividing lines, among them the divisions between hasidim and their Lithuanian opponents, the mitnagdim.

Both hasidim and Lithuanian-style yeshiva-oriented mitnagdim created separate communities that demanded the total allegiance of their followers. While hasidim looked upon their charismatic rebbes as *tzaddikim*, sources of ultimate authority, mediators with heaven, and spiritual wellheads, mitnagdim considered the yeshiva heads, their teachers and role models, as *their* ideals. In both cases, a new, voluntary, and somewhat separatist community, dedicated to a totalistic involvement in some form of Judaism and willing to subordinate itself to a rabbinic (and often charismatic) authority, evolved. This tradition of following the rabbinic leaders' dictates played an important part in the 1988 Knesset elections, when some of the lists of orthodox candidates were determined by councils of rabbinic sages who themselves remained outside the electoral process.

To be sure, hasidim were divided among themselves as to whose rebbe was superior, but the differences with the mitnagdim were even greater, for these people embodied a variance in worldview and ethos. While the mitnagdim remained attached to scholarship, the law, and the yeshiva head or *rav* who

best interpreted it, the early hasidim looked upon inflexible adherence to the letter of the law as an obstacle to true religiosity. For their part, the mitnagdim disdainfully looked upon hasidism as folk beliefs and practices carried on by the unschooled, a Judaism of often misplaced and wrong-headed piety. They further considered the hasidim to be perverters of Judaism who made their own emendations and deletions to a tradition that mitnagdim believed could be interpreted only by rabbinic authorities.[8]

Both groups shunned acculturation and viewed those who were not in their worlds as adversaries. While historians often focus on the differences between hasidim and mitnagdim -- differences that often erupted into bitter hostility -- both groups shared an even greater enemy than one another: the reforming acculturationists and apostate assimilationists. They might perceive differences between the acculturative, moderate orthodox and the more extreme reformers and assimilationists, but they did not regard these differences as significant. In some ways they saw moderate orthodoxy as a more insidious influence because it gave the false impression that there was a way to be true to both the contemporary and the traditional Jewish worlds -- something the contra-acculturative orthodox absolutely denied. Perhaps this is why these orthodox are sometimes called "ultra"-orthodox.

Pressed together by the circumstances of history, later hasidic rebbes and their followers began to act more like mitnagdim, emphasizing Torah study and yeshiva learning (especially to distinguish themselves from what they considered the boorishness and ignorance of nonorthodox Jewry). And in the process, mitnagdic yeshiva heads acquired some of the spirituality and charisma of hasidism.

For their part, the moderately orthodox found themselves torn between their interest in the non-Jewish world and their devotion to traditional orthodoxy. They valued the positive Jewish essence of the hasidim and the Lithuanian-type rabbis, venerating many of their leaders even as they dissented from their rejection of secular culture. This was as true of the modern orthodox in the Diaspora as it was of those who pursued religious Zionism in the land of Israel.

In political terms, this meant that alliances were made between erstwhile enemies. In the first Knesset elections, a coalition of many orthodox groups put up a single religious list (the "United Religious Front"). The coalition, however, proved fragile.

Agudat Israel and the Crisis of Traditionalist Orthodoxy

A political party that united nearly all orthodox groups was Agudat Israel. Founded in 1912 in Kattowitz, Upper Silesia in Eastern Prussia, to resist reform and secular Zionist trends, Agudat Israel brought together all the various orthodox groups -- moderate and traditional, hasidic and mitnagdic -- in one organization.

To be sure, the coming together in Agudat Israel did more than foster unity. It also sharpened the consciousness among many that the world of the orthodox was in fact not unitary but pluralist. And it allowed various religious guides to transform themselves from local heroes to more universal, generic Jewish leaders and symbols of a worldwide orthodox Jewry. These leaders were accepted by all orthodox streams, and their symbolic power became enhanced while the differences among them (which remained real) became at least temporarily blurred. Thus there was to an extent a breaking of old boundaries and loyalties at this time.

Ironically, while the orthodox were evolving a generic leadership and political organization, there were fewer and fewer Jews in Europe interested in such leadership. Abandoning religion and tradition, most Jews became caught up in generational rebellion against their elders and undermined the self-confidence of the traditional institutions of Jewry. Many yeshiva boys from Eastern Europe and even some hasidim saw a need for an orthodoxy like that in the West -- particularly Germany -- that seemed able to resist the erosion of modern society. Eastern European traditionalists, however, remained anxious

about this attraction to the modern orthodoxy of the West. This inner tension -- attraction and anxiety -- is part of the history of Agudat Israel from its beginning until today.

Thus Agudat Israel's founding was an expression both of the crisis that orthodoxy was undergoing in its confrontation with modernity and of the emergence of a new, universalistic orthodoxy.

Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah: The Council of Torah Sages

Within Agudat Israel, an effort was made to give formal institutional expression to this growing body of rabbinic leaders. Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah, the Council of Torah Sages, included from the outset rabbis who represented those streams of orthodox Jewry that were ready to participate in the new movement. There were hasidic leaders, yeshiva heads, respected *poskim* (adjudicators), and renowned Talmud scholars. Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah was to emphasize the common and unifying elements of the Jewish people and their rabbinic leadership and downplay that which divided the orthodox community, which now sought to represent European Jewry. It was to be the rabbinic crown on the head of Agudat Israel.

From the outset, Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah was supposed to represent a definitive and unrestricted religious leadership. Suddenly, there was now a universal religious leadership that those who felt an obligation to halakhic Judaism could not ignore and were forced to accept. This was true even for the most modern of orthodox who had to look upon this leadership as symbolizing Jewish continuity and commitment to halakhah. This went beyond all local allegiances. Thus the Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah protected Agudat Israel from the modern and acculturative orthodox left.

On the other side, even though there might be some to the contra-acculturative right of the Agudat Israel who opposed it for having contact with the more modern elements, the presence of the rabbis on the Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah served to offset any efforts to delegitimate it. They gave the new organization a legitimacy that contact with modernity and the West might have otherwise taken away from it. Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah was thus a crucial element in the emergence of Agudat Israel. The party needed its *g'dolim*, sages, to negotiate the narrows between left and right in orthodoxy.

Agudat Israel: The Next Generation

Agudat Israel, while the expression of a new and more universal orthodoxy, did not arise as a result of conflict with local authorities. Rather, it emerged naturally as a superstructure of orthodoxy for reasons already mentioned. The blurring of boundaries of jurisdiction and authority cited earlier became even more pronounced among members who emigrated from Europe to Israel, which became the new center of Aguda activity.

This new generation of immigrants, made up of various hasidim and misnagdim, met in the new and neutral territory of the new world -- America and Israel. Here they were no longer only part of some particular sect -- a particular hasidic court or a specific yeshiva -- but were from the start part of a universal haredi community.

The key instrument of this community was the network of Israeli schools set up with the help and support of Agudat Israel. These were in a sense modeled on the pattern already set by institutions like Volozhin. That is, they drew their students from various local orthodox groups. Yet unlike Volozhin, they absorbed not only Lithuanians but also children from the hasidic world who were attracted to this new sort of institution.

Beyond the schools, in the institutional and political spheres one could also see this growing tendency toward coalition. In addition to Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah, other organizations emerged within

Agudat Israel. One was the Poaley Agudat Israel movement ("Workers of Agudat Israel"), founded in 1922, which sought to embrace the workers' ethic of socialism -- an important theme of the early return-to-Zion movements -- and endow it with religious significance without at the same time embracing Zionism. Its social institutions -- affiliated synagogues, youth organizations, and pioneer groups -- were not differentiated according to local origins but were expressive of a more universal character, including, for example, Ger hasidim, Lithuanian yeshiva boys, and German Jews who found in the movement a way of coexisting.

Similar points could be made with regard to the Tzieray Agudat Yisrael (Youth of Agudat Israel), founded in Israel during the early 1940s by young immigrants, most of whom came from Eastern Europe. They too were no longer identified with only a local and particularist orthodoxy and thus also saw the great rabbis of Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah as ultimate authorities. These boys assembled around Rabbi Abraham Isaiah Karelitz, the Chazon Ish, and encouraged the mythos of Torah scholarship as the primary source of leadership. As such, they reinforced the attitude that had already been growing in the yeshivas and in Agudat Israel. The Chazon Ish became for this generation what the Chofetz Chaim was for the previous one -- the universally revered scholar/teacher/leader.

All of this symbolizes the transition from Agudat Israel in Europe to the new Agudat Israel that emerged after the war in the new State of Israel. If the former was born in an atmosphere of localism, the latter was reborn in an atmosphere of universalism.

Yet for all of this, Agudat Israel remained a fragile union of orthodox Jews united by their opposition to assimilation and reform but pulled in a variety of directions by the party's constituent elements. Agudat Israel was able to bring together erstwhile opponents like hasidim and misnagdim. It held onto the young in Tzieray Agudat Israel and the worker pioneers of the Poaley Agudat Israel. But it also included a Hungarian Jewry that stressed the need to reject the compromises with secular culture that German orthodoxy embraced, however gingerly. While Mizrachi, founded in 1902 as the religious component of the World Zionist Organization, was never part of Agudat Israel because of the latter's refusal to embrace Zionism, some German Mizrachi members did indeed join Agudat Israel in 1912 in the spirit of orthodox unity. But very soon these people found that they could not be both actively Zionist and Agudist, and most -- elevating their Zionism above all else -- broke away from Agudat Israel. Mizrachi would remain the home of many moderately orthodox. Yet while they were part of the early Agudat Israel, these Mizrachi members to some small degree softened the Agudist anti-Zionism, an attitude that stemmed both from its members' opposition to acculturation and from their commitment to the Jewish condition of exile, which they believed could be ended only by divine intervention.

This latter doctrine was based on the belief that it was religiously revolutionary to hasten the divine redemption and return to nationhood in the homeland. Moreover, given its opposition to secular Jews, Agudat Israel could not see itself joining forces with those secularists who espoused Zionism. In the end, Agudat Israel adopted a stance that tried to ignore Zionism. It became a coalition whose major role was to press for legislation that enhanced orthodox Jewish life. As such, it tried to focus on a single interest, almost like a political action committee. That interest was the maintenance of orthodoxy. At least, this was the case in Europe. Agudat Israel did not want to control the state; it just wanted to make certain that the state did not infringe upon its members' freedom to maintain their brand of Jewish life. In the Jewish state of Israel, matters were different.

Enter Zionism

As already noted, for many people, modern Zionism represented a secular, acculturationist movement. It was therefore for many of the most stringently orthodox an embodiment of *chukos ha goyim* (non-Jewish culture). This notion, whose source is the verse in Leviticus 18 in which the Israelites are warned to emulate neither the Egyptians nor the Canaanites, became for many Jews a general

prohibition, affirmed by the rabbis to be a religious obligation prohibiting Jews from adopting the customs and ways of the Gentiles. To the most stringent haredim, the observance of this obligation became tantamount to separatism and isolation from *anything* not manifestly Jewish. It meant, for example, maintaining a separate language (Yiddish), different dress, and a pattern of behavior and culture totally dissimilar from anything popular in the world around them. To many who endorsed this interpretation of what Judaism required, Zionism, as an activist ideology closely allied with liberalism and socialism, was nothing more than a form of *chukos ha goyim*. Moreover, it embodied for some of the stringently orthodox (hasidim and misnagdim alike) a menace, for it suggested that one could be Jewish without being traditionally observant. A Zionist state would, after all, provide a Jewish identity for those who wanted to be Jews without also accepting all the requirements of orthodoxy. This was anathema to many in Agudat Israel. But as they had learned to lobby all sorts of authorities, they imagined they could succeed in doing so even with Zionist powers.

To the Mizrachi orthodox, however, Zionism was not simply another incarnation of gentile culture. Rather, it enhanced Judaism and resolved the dilemma of the dualism of acculturated modern orthodoxy. That is, if the problem for an acculturated modern orthodoxy was that one had to be divided between a secular and a Jewish identity, the modern Zionist state solved that problem. In such a Jewish state, one could be a citizen and orthodox and in either sense be a Jew. Thus for the modern orthodox Mizrachi religious Zionists, the Zionist enterprise represented a completion, a possibility of wholeness, that had been impossible anywhere else. To be sure, the Zionist state was secular and hence lacked full religious significance. This would change, at least for some, particularly those influenced by the thinking of Rabbi Abraham I. Kook and his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook, the elder being the first chief rabbi of Palestine and his son an influential yeshiva head, both of whom endowed the State of Israel with religious -- indeed, messianic or redemptive -- meaning. To the Kooks and their followers, the state was *atkhalta d'geula*, the beginning of redemption. From 1967, this quest to endow the Zionist enterprise with deep religious and messianic meaning was accelerated in certain quarters as people began to believe that there was theological significance in the astonishing victories of the Six-Day War. Much of this became articulated in the desire to resettle the reclaimed ancient tribal homeland conquered in the war.

On the other hand, for the contra-acculturationist orthodox -- including Agudat Israel -- who found their way to Israel, secular Zionism represented a great threat. It endowed a secular state apparatus with religious significance. The Zionist state was not just another state; it was a Jewish one, and to give it legitimacy was to give legitimacy to nonorthodox versions of Judaism. To cooperate with it was to cooperate with and share in nonorthodox Jewish definitions of reality.

As for Agudat Israel, it ended all involvement with the Israeli government in 1953 -- over the issue of women serving in the army, which Agudists rejected on religious grounds. The party did not join in any government coalition again until 1977 after Likud's rise to power. Then it joined the governing coalition, but it still refused to be formally part of the government. Finally, in November 1990, Agudat Israel joined the Likud-led government. Clearly, as haredim have gained political influence, Agudists have moved closer to the powers that be.

Today's Orthodox Parties and the Forces Leading to Their Development

In Israel, the orthodox evolved four stances toward Zionism and the apparatus of the state. Two reflected acculturative modern orthodoxy and two emerged in the context of contra-acculturative haredi orthodoxy. Where are they today?

The acculturative, modern orthodox, religious Zionists -- those who were affiliated with the Mizrachi party and its later incarnation, the National Religious party -- saw in Zionism and subsequently the State of Israel a positive enhancement of their Jewish identity. One group saw this enhancement as primarily one that allowed them to be simultaneously secular and religious. It members generally compartmentalized

the secular and religious elements of their identity and tended to ignore the contradictions of participating in a secular Jewish state. They worked to adjust the state to religious ideals, helping, for example, to set up a state-supported, public religious-education system, seeing to it that the army provided kosher food and that there was a chief rabbinate and a ministry of religions. Yet this group, while trying to make the state responsive to religion, was willing to settle for less than a complete remaking of the state in religious terms.

The other group, like the first, saw their national and religious identities combining in a new synthesis. For a time they sought to endow the secular Zionist state with religious meaning, finding in the return to Zion the beginnings of messianic redemption. But after 1967, they began increasingly to endow the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*) with the significance they once saw in the State of Israel (*Medinat Ysrael*). This land-based Zionism offered a way to distance themselves from the secularity and compromise implicit in the state Zionism. In effect, these Zionists wanted to radically remake the State of Israel so that it was identical with the Land of Israel and to remake secular Zionism into a reflection of religious Zionism. Their ideology offered a way of being fully orthodox and Zionist, for it based Zionism primarily on a religious return to the heritage of the Bible, in which the land was promised to their forefathers, even though it would use the modern state and army to accomplish its ends.

The former adaptationist group may be called the original orthodox Zionists, while the latter, radical one may be called the new orthodox Zionists. Both groups are vexed by the inconsistencies and conflicts inherent in dualistic identities, and both firmly locate themselves within the modern Zionist enterprise and as such embrace some form of acculturation. But while one adapts to Israeli realities, the other tries to radically change them.

In the Israel of 1988, these two groups coalesced around two political parties. The first group, who could live with their compromises and who put messianic dreams of wholeness and the settlement of the whole Land of Israel out of instrumental reach, were the founders and supporters of the newly formed Meimad party. This party remained dedicated to synthesizing orthodox life-style with Zionist (now Israeli) principles, but it eschewed tendencies to remake the state and refused to see in political events immediate religious messages and imperatives. In practical terms, its members vigorously opposed viewing territorial expansion as the only legitimate way to demonstrate their orthodoxy.

The other religious Zionists -- many of whom became caught up with the more radical politics of Gush Emunim, the bloc of the faithful, who found transcendent religious significance in the vicissitudes of Israeli history and political developments and who led the move to resettle the reclaimed tribal homelands after 1967 -- gradually took over the heart of the NRP during the twenty years following the Six-Day War. By 1988 -- in part because of the intifada and because the settlement policy had not led to a religious renaissance of the sort its supporters had hoped for -- some elements of the NRP were moving back toward more traditional Mizrachi politics. They were concerned with maintaining the religious accomplishments of the early years -- religious public education, a chief rabbinate that controlled matters of personal status, and other everyday issues of religious life -- but were not caught up in the expansionist and revisionist fervor that swept up religious Zionists.

Two other orthodox stances toward Zionism and Israel emerged from the contra-acculturationist camp. These groups ignored or denounced the positive religious implications of Zionism as inimical to Judaism. They saw the Land of Israel as "the Holy Land," while seeing nothing holy in the State of Israel. They considered themselves still in exile, an exile that happened to be within the boundaries of the biblical Land of Israel, but an exile all the same. If they were part of Agudat Israel, they were a-Zionist -- neither for nor against the state. At most, what they expected from Israel was what they expected from any other state where Jews found themselves: a fulfillment of their instrumental religious needs while they waited for divine redemption to end the exile.

One group, Agudat Israel, remained an amalgam of erstwhile antagonists who stayed united because they shared a common conviction that secular Zionism and its product, the State of Israel, were the greatest threats to Judaism. For a long time the party was constituted by Ger and other hasidim as well as by those who were affiliated or identified with Lithuanian mitnagdic yeshivas like Ponovez and Mir. The party evolved a modus vivendi with the State of Israel: it would serve in the Knesset and join coalitions, but as an outsider to Zionism it would, after the early 1950s, never serve formally in the cabinet at the ministerial level, for to do so would be to take responsibility for the state and thus tacitly give it legitimacy. No matter what, however, Agudat Israel would always maintain to its supporters that, were it not to exist, the state would trample on religion. Just as the party had fought for Jewish religion in Poland, it would do so in Israel. With this strategy it managed to become a fixture in every Knesset.

The other group saw in Israel not just another state. On the contrary, they saw religious significance in it. But the religious significance was a *negative* one -- that is, the existence of the state would hasten acculturative tendencies that would in turn activate national assimilation and ultimately threaten the Jewishness of the Jewish people. Israel would become a nation like all other nations, the Jews a people like all other people. Judaism would be destroyed. To have any truck with Israel was to lend a hand to this destruction. These orthodox were not just a-Zionist; they were anti-Zionist, for only thus could they protect the Jewish heritage. They abstained from voting, which they saw as heresy and sacrilege. In Israel, they supported Naturei Karta, the Eda haredit, and other groups that fervently opposed any involvement in Israeli political life.

Haredi Life in the Modern State and Israel

Life in Israel fostered important changes in haredi life. Beginning in the second half of the 1950s, young haredi boys began to enter yeshivas in greater numbers. There were several reasons for this. First, the welfare state and free education -- including haredi education -- allowed young people to stay in school rather than go out to work to help support their families. Second, for haredim as for everyone else in the West, living standards became higher. While their secular counterparts sent their offspring to universities, the relatively affluent haredi Jew sent his child to the yeshiva. (This was true in post-World War II America as well.) Third, after the Holocaust, collective survival guilt led to increased donations to the world of the yeshivas, which seemed to many -- including the nonorthodox -- to be the incarnation of the world that was destroyed in the Nazi firestorm. The rapidly growing yeshivas were thus beneficiaries of the convergence of economic well-being in the postwar Jewish world and feelings of guilt. Fourth, enrollment in a yeshiva became in Israel a way for the young to remain out of the army and thus untouched by the Zionist state and its corrosive values and secularity.

Beyond the yeshivas themselves was a superstructure called the kollel. This was an institution for Torah learning after marriage. The development of the kollel and of a kollel culture meant that marriage was no longer a transition that forced the young man out of the rarified and purist atmosphere of the school into the realities of the society and economy in which he was forced to make a living. On the contrary, the young married man -- the *avrech*, as the haredim called him -- could remain in the protective environment and the uncompromising atmosphere of the institution of learning until a fairly late age. Here he received a stipend for learning which enabled him to survive, especially if his wife went to work. In Israel, where this was most developed, he remained in school until he was well past the age of serving in a combat unit in the army, into the mid-thirties and in some cases even to the forties.

Now this meant that the yeshiva was no longer a selective institution that accepted only scholars. Suddenly the yeshiva was not simply an option for a few; it was a possibility for everyone. This in effect created among haredim a new society of men who were, at least from the outside, a "society of scholars," persons who first and foremost saw themselves as people of the book. As for the women, they became supporters of scholars and in many cases -- especially among those who went to the Beit Ya'akov network of schools -- primary-school teachers.

There were many repercussions of this change that go beyond the scope of this paper. What we need to focus on here are the political and economic consequences of this revolutionary development.

Primary among the consequences was the increased cost of maintaining such a system. As the haredi community grew, it found itself needing greater infusions of funds to support itself. The more money the yeshiva world got, the more it needed. This need brought about two important consequences: a requirement to become politically active -- for politics would bring in money from the state as well as from private foundations and donors -- and, second, a need to find more and more donors. The yeshivas turned to Agudat Israel, their most supportive political body, to increase their resources. By 1977, the party, by responding to haredi demands, had transformed itself from an ideological party into a mechanism for obtaining economic support for the world of the yeshivas. To this end, it became actively involved in Israeli coalition politics, its Knesset members serving as chairs of the Knesset Finance Committee in order to provide these sought-after funds for its constituency.

But this development also led to internal competition within the haredi world for the limited economic resources. Suddenly, as the various institutions grew in number, hoping to create their own educational infrastructures and protect their own heritages and people, all the old conflicts and antagonisms that had been muted within Agudat Israel now revived. Ger cared about Ger, Ponovez about Ponovez, Belz about Belz, and so on. The unity of Agudat Israel, so fragile in any event, began to disintegrate, and localism and particularism grew. From one party, there now emerged many sectarian interest groups -- each with its own Knesset members (at first all under the banner of Agudat Israel). Ultimately, they would become more than interest groups; they would become new parties.

The Sephardi Element

In the 1950s, there entered into this political and ideological framework one more element: traditionally religious Jews from Moslem countries. These Jews, sometimes, called "Sephardim" and other times *edot ha'mizrach* (ethnics from the east) were committed to a traditional kind of Judaism but had never experienced the confrontation with acculturation and assimilation that had formed Ashkenazi (European) orthodoxy and could not, therefore, be considered part of European orthodoxy. Nevertheless, when they came to Israel, and experienced the culture shock that this move engendered, many abandoned strict observance while remaining emotionally attached to tradition. Others -- albeit a small minority -- because they were not secular and certainly not hasidic, were absorbed into Lithuanian-mitnagdic-style yeshivas. They learned Yiddish, dressed in the black of the haredi world, and began to take many of the positions that characterized that world.

Others, more numerous, were absorbed into Sephardi yeshivas that were modeled on Ashkenazi institutions. But their teachers here were not Sephardim but Ashkenazi haredim. In time, there developed a Sephardi educational structure that ignored the diverse origins of the Sephardim. Those who controlled it saw natural allies in the Lithuanian yeshivas. Indeed, some of its controlling elements were Lithuanians. But all this happened when the haredi world was becoming increasingly particularistic. Now the Sephardim found themselves powerless, for they did not have fully developed local structures. They had jumped into the world of the haredi yeshivas without having developed their own institutions to fall back on in the era of haredi balkanization in the late 1970s.

As the money began to flow from state coffers, particularly since the mid-1970s, these Sephardim -- without a local address -- found themselves last in line. In the atmosphere of particularism and with the economic needs attendant on the growth of the Sephardi religious population, the Sephardim found it necessary to form their own interest group, which in time would emerge fully blown as a party: Shas Torah Guardians, with its own Council of Torah Wise Men (Moetzet Khakhamay HaTorah). Until this, happened, the Sephardim had counted themselves as Agudat Israel supporters.

There was another element which helped precipitate a Sephardi-haredi break. In 1977, secular Zionist Israel ceased being a single large left-leaning bloc when Likud and its traditionalist supporters came to power on the strength of Sephardi voters. Now orthodox Jews were offered an alternative coalition partner, one that did not resonate with secularity the way the socialists had. Agudat Israel at once began to find a place for itself in the political penumbra of Likud and shared in its spoils.

But as Agudat Israel became less of an outsider in the corridors of power, it also found itself setting the stage for its own undoing. When Agudat Israel people became chairs of the all-powerful Knesset Finance Committee, it was harder for them to rail against the enemy Zionist state of which they were part.

But there was something else that directly affected the Sephardim. As Likud had demonstrated by unseating the once all-powerful Labor coalition, everything was suddenly up for grabs. Establishment parties were in danger. Furthermore, the Sephardim inside Agudat Israel had not missed the message of the Likud victory. The period of their novitiate was over.

For a long time, Sephardi Jews -- the largest group of whom were Moroccan -- allowed their rabbis to study in Lithuanian yeshivas and become part of Agudat Israel, while the laity grudgingly supported the majority Labor party. But with the rise of Sephardi political power under the Likud government and at the initiation of several rabbinic figures -- most prominently Ovadia Yosef, the former Rishon LeZion (Sephardi chief rabbi), and Eliezer Schach, head of the Ponovez yeshiva -- the traditionalists among these Jews formed a new organization, the Shas Torah Guardians, which ran candidates for the Eleventh Knesset.

Rabbis Yosef and Schach each had their own reasons for forming this party. Yosef keenly felt betrayed by Agudat Israel, which has not supported his bid for another term as chief rabbi. His ouster, moreover, could be portrayed as an affront to all those who looked upon him as a holy man. It was another case of Ashkenazim holding down Sephardim, a pattern that had characterized most of the state's first twenty years. Moreover, he and his supporters had been cut out of the spoils that were flowing to the yeshivas. Schach, on the other hand, was concerned that Sephardi Jewry was becoming too influenced by the hasidic trends within Agudat Israel, and he wanted an ally who would help pry funds loose from the burgeoning hasidic institutions.

Furthermore, as a staunch mitnagid, Schach had become troubled by the tacit alliance of the Sephardim with the hasidim. He saw the emphases that the Sephardim placed on holy men and their blessings as too close to hasidism. Encouraging the formation of a separate party for the Sephardim was one way to demonstrate to Agudat Israel that they needed to pay more attention to the nonhasidic elements in the party or risk losing ground. That is, after three decades of power in Israel, the contra-acculturative orthodox were beginning to splinter again into hasidic, misnagdic, and Sephardi camps. Of course, that these parties should be subject to the decisions of rabbis and sages was consistent with traditional patterns.

Shas victories in the Eleventh Knesset were dramatic -- the haredi echo of the Likud displacement of Labor -- and came at the expense of Agudat Israel. The two seats they gained in 1984 were equal to the number lost by Agudat Israel. At the same time, Shas generally adopted principles similar to those of Agudat Israel. Yet because they emerged in the context of a Zionist state and lacked the historical baggage of Agudat Israel and its role as a Diaspora party, they could more easily engage themselves with Zionism and Israeli political life. As chief rabbi, Ovadia Yosef after all had been a functionary of the Zionist state, and many Shas supporters served in the Israeli army. Shas people, aggressive in their support for Jewish law and tradition, were not quite sure what their relationship to the Jewish state should be. Moreover, because many of their supporters were acculturated Jews, people who were very much part of Israeli secular culture even as they maintained strong folk ties to Jewish tradition, they

could run on a popular platform that advocated a general return to fundamental Jewish values without becoming caught up in the minutiae of religious legislation that often characterized the Agudat Israel campaign and limited its potential electorate in the population at large. Thus, even as they engaged in a *Kulturkampf* against contemporary culture, Shas leaders campaigned on television (the only haredi party to do so), directing their appeal to all voters.

To be sure, the beginnings of this disintegration of the Shas connection with Agudat Israel, which reached its peak on the eve of the 1988 elections in Israel, could already be seen in Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah by careful observers. Here particularism had begun to grow, ending the relatively brief period of universalism that had characterized the early days of Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah. How and why?

While as individual rabbis these sages were consulted only on the "great questions," as had also been the case in the early days of Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah's existence, they were now in the small State of Israel confronting and contending with one another about all sorts of small, everyday matters and politics. They were plunged into the little contests that turned them into little men. The scramble for funds intensified the rivalries and conflicts. This forced them to compromise or else remain immobile and indecisive. So now they were no longer a council that was symbolic of the universal Jewish community; they were instead representatives of different interest groups. Rabbis left the Council of Sages. Rabbi Eliezer Schach of the Ponovez yeshiva walked away. Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, the rebbe of the hasidic court of Ger, remained as the representative only of hasidim. With the Lithuanians out, the Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah ceased to function as a universal body.

All this sets the scene for the situation which confronted Israel on the eve of the 1988 Knesset elections. It was a situation in which both Zionist modern orthodoxy and the more stringent contra-acculturative haredi orthodoxy found themselves divided: the former between the new and original religious Zionists, the latter between Shas and Agudat Israel. Moreover, it was a situation in which old conflicts -- between hasidim and misnagdim and within hasidism -- once set aside had begun to reappear. Moetzet G'dolay HaTorah was immobilized. Moreover, there still remained those who saw in Zionism the great Satan and chose to remain outside the electoral process altogether.

The Elections for the Twelfth Knesset

Into this cauldron, two new elements were added on the eve of the elections for the Twelfth Knesset. The first came out of 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York, world headquarters of the Lubavitch (ChaBaD) hasidim. Here Menachem M. Schneerson, the rebbe and a man in his eighties, decided that his followers and supporters, who in the past had never formally endorsed a particular Israeli political party, should now vote for Agudat Israel. The purported reason for this move was the rebbe's concern that the haredi world was becoming fragmented. Others, however, offered less generous reasons for this move, among them Schneerson's desire to have Agudat Israel press for a change in the Israeli law defining "Who is a Jew" that would more closely align the law with halakhah (traditional Jewish law) -- a concern particularly important for the theological concerns that inform much of Lubavitch ideology of late, of which more below. Yet another reason for Lubavitch formal endorsement of Agudat Israel was, according to some, the desire of the hasidic rebbe to challenge the misnagdic Rabbi Schach in response to recent efforts by the latter to reduce Lubavitch influence in the haredi world, efforts that were focused on preventing the Lubavitchers from advertising their program in the haredi press. Whatever the true reasons for the Lubavitch move, its action galvanized the haredi world. Suddenly, the old hasidic-mitnagdic antagonism was again public and salient.

Rabbi Schach demanded that Agudat Israel separate itself from Lubavitch influences, disallowing its advertisements in its newspapers. But the Ger hasidim, who were a dominant element in the party, were not ready for this sort of boycott. Schach left the party, and Lubavitchers -- until now political neutrals -- became its boosters.

But who is Lubavitch? On its face, it is a hasidic sect. Yet from its inception it was unique in its philosophic doctrines, which had universal aims that sought to attract all sorts of Jews. It was therefore never altogether bounded by its particular location -- whether in the Pale of Settlement or in Brooklyn. It was from the start interested in Jews far afield from its origins. Why?

Founded by Shneur Zalman of Lyadi (1745-1813) in czarist Russia, Lubavitch hasidism for many years found itself in a situation of wandering. This became particularly acute during the period when the czarist regime was on the verge of falling. At this time Lubavitch hasidism found itself often exiled to places far from its origins -- to eastern Siberia, the Caucasus, Bukhara in Central Asia -- where it had to learn to keep the fires of its doctrines and Judaism ablaze. Lubavitch thus molded itself from the outset to serve Jews of all sorts under all conditions.

Its activities in America must be seen in this light. These begin with the arrival in 1940 of the previous rebbe, Joseph Isaac Schneerson, and become more intensive under the influence of the present rebbe, his son-in-law, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, who focused many of his energies on the campuses. Having himself experienced university life at the Sorbonne, he saw the need to protect Judaism on the campus. But in this context, Lubavitch found itself with a double dilemma: First, it confronted directly the question of who is a Jew, for many of its targets for Jewish renewal on the campus were the products of mixed marriages. Second, it also seemed to some on its haredi right to be undermining its haredi stance by having such direct and unmediated contact with the nonorthodox.

Both of these dilemmas could be solved by actions in the Israeli elections. To make the issue of who is a Jews a primary matter would solve their problem on the campuses because it would allow Lubavitch activists to sidestep the problematic offspring of mixed marriages by stating simply that Israel would not accept their Jewishness and so they could not either. Second, it would show their critics on the right that they, Lubavitch, were more concerned than anyone else with the principles of orthodoxy. Those critics of course included Rabbi Schach and the Lithuanians. This led them to try to take over the Agudat Israel party over this issue.

There was one other reason for their activity: the matter of messianism. The Lubavitcher rebbe, who at 86 has no obvious heirs, is at once the center of the movement -- particularly among the new recruits to Lubavitch who belong to no hasidic tradition -- and the source of concern about its continuity. Thus the issue of messianism has been raised as a solution to the problem of continuity. To say that "we want Messiah now," as do the Lubavitchers, at once solves the Lubavitch problem while raising tensions with other particularisms. That caused open conflict with sectors of the haredi community, most prominently Rabbi Schach and the Lithuanian world.

Shaken by this split within the community that once had to choose between it and not voting at all, Agudat Israel was reconstituted. It managed to attract Lubavitch, hold on to Ger and Viznitz hasidim (the largest groups), and even restore Poaley Agudat Israel to the fold. On the other side, however, it lost the Sephardim and was about to lose many of the Lithuanians. Rabbi Schach and the mitnagdim (sometimes called the *p'rushim)* wanted a party to oppose Lubavitch, which now seemed poised to claim Agudat Israel for itself. Shas, more and more an independent entity and highly identified with Sephardi Jews, could no longer serve this need. Accordingly, on the eve of the elections, the mitnagdim at the instigation of Rabbi Schach formed a new party, Degel HaTorah. Its supporters would be the mitnagdim as well as those Ashkenazi haredim like the hasidim of Belz who felt alienated from Agudat Israel.

There was one other element of support for the new Degel HaTorah party: the old Tzieray Agudat Israel. In the 1950s this youth wing of Agudat Israel represented the world of the yeshivas. But in the 1980s they were no longer youth. They were grown up, and their rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Schach, was in his nineties. Together they were ready to create their own party. This was Degel HaTorah.

Ironically, this party included Belzer hasidim, who proved that, even in the world of ultraorthodoxy, politics can make strange bedfellows. The Belzers, a hasidic court reconstituted after the Holocaust, had estranged themselves from many in the contra-acculturative and non-Zionist haredi world by accepting funds for their educational institutions from the Ministry of Education. This had earned Belzer hasidim many adversaries in the precincts of ultraorthodoxy for whom such compromises were freighted with theological and ideological significance, for one who takes money from the Zionists gives them legitimacy -- or so many haredim argued.

Degel HaTorah offered a way to prove that they were not hurt by this enmity, for a victory of the party would once again demonstrate the Belzers' power and support in the ultraorthodox world. It would also be an important show of power for their new rebbe, who after many years in waiting was a leader of one of the fastest-growing hasidic groups.

So here is what the Israeli voters found at the polls. Representing the options for the modern orthodox religious Zionists, formerly Mizrachi voters, were NRP and Meimad. For those who used to vote only for Agudat Israel, there was now Agudat Israel, dominated by the hasidim and enforced most prominently by Lubavitch, and Degel HaTorah, the party of the mitnagdim and Belzer hasidim. And for the Sephardi voter who wanted the power of the holy men behind him and who wanted to return the pride to his heritage, who in the past might have voted for Agudat Israel, the NRP, or even one of the major secular Zionist parties, there was Shas. And of course for the Naturei Karta and the most extreme haredim (like Satmar [Hungarian origin] hasidim), there was the option of not voting at all. None of them could or would see themselves as liberals (with the exception of the small Meimad group).

Thus the elections for the Twelfth Knesset represented not only a contest for the parliament but also an arena in which other rivalries and enmities within the orthodox and ultraorthodox world could be played out. The foreground of contention would be the Israeli elections, but the background, the deeper structure of contention, was less Israel and more a test of strength between time-worn antagonists -- mitnagdim and hasidim, religious Zionists and religious Jews who were not Zionists, expansionists and nonexpansionists, Land of Israelists and State of Israelists -- and between one orthodox establishment, the Ashkenazim, and another one seeking to find its place, the Sephardim. And it was a sign of renascent localism and declining universalism in the haredi world. As such, victory in the elections had a double aim: to achieve power in the Knesset and to demonstrate dominance in the increasingly particularistic religious world. The internal competition within the orthodox world -- between the NRP and Meimad followers -- and within the haredi, ultraorthodox world -- among the followers of Agudat Israel, Shas, and Degel HaTorah -- served as at least as great a stimulus for participation as any external national matters.

This competition brought out a massive vote and all sorts of political realignments. Indeed, the big losers in the elections were the most vigorously contra-acculturative and anti-Zionist Jews who had for years urged their followers not to participate in any way in Israeli electoral life. The polling places in the precincts of the haredim were beehives of activity. Few wanted to stay out of the fray.

That the campaign in the haredi world should be focused on rabbinic personalities and old rivalries was no surprise. This world had, as already noted, long organized itself this way. Here the actual candidates for the Knesset were but puppets; the rabbinic leaders -- the Council of Torah Sages in the case of Agudat Israel, the Council of Torah Wise Men (essentially Rabbi Yosef) for Shas, and Rabbi Schach for Degel HaTorah -- really pulled the strings.[9] Yet the councils could not act decisively, for they were immobilized by particularism.

As election day approached, voters were bombarded by appeals from the religious parties. The NRP, apprehensive about the challenge from Meimad, downplayed its expansionism and emphasis on settling the conquered territories (in anticipation of the Final Redemption). It once again made its classic appeal for voters as a way of guaranteeing a level of "belief" and observance in the legislative process.

Likewise, Meimad appealed to these voters, trying to persuade them that it, the nonextremist party, was the true heir to the principles of religious Zionism.

For their part, the haredi parties made altogether different appeals. Shas asked voters to return the crown of Torah to its glory and raise religion to higher levels and thereby reinsert morality into Israeli life. This was an appeal that aimed not only at haredim but to all those who, frustrated with the realities of contemporary life, hoped for some return to simpler virtues. Shas was broadly populist in its appeal. But as a religious party, this populism was couched in the promise of a blessed existence for everyone. Indeed, in one of the more remarkable developments of the campaign, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef offered his personal blessing to anyone who voted for Shas, promising that such a vote would bring the grace of heaven on the voter. Lubavitch and Ger hasidim similarly distributed leaflets that offered their rebbes' benedictions for anyone who voted Agudat Israel. The Lithuanians, who shunned this sort of promise and saw in this the work of the devil, urged their voters to repudiate this sort of idolatry (a ploy that not only fortified their split from Agudat Israel but also estranged them even more from their former allies in Shas and Rabbi Yosef in particular).

When it was all over, everyone could point to some victory. The NRP held five seats, a rise over its showing in the Eleventh Knesset. Meimad, although failing to pass the minimal electoral threshold for representation, could argue that they had forced the NRP to return to its old principles and would reappear in future campaigns with a greater mandate.[10] Agudat Israel -- now a realigned party that owed a great deal to the Lubvitchers -- had also made gains and likewise held five seats. Degel HaTorah, a party with no history, had come from nowhere to claim two seats. And Shas, with six seats, was now the third largest party in the Knesset. With two ministerial positions, they would no longer be at the end of the receiving line for funds or anything else. Labor had 39 seats; together with its possible coalition partners, the Civil Rights Movement (Ratz), Mapam, Shinui, and perhaps the Arab Democrats, the total came to 50. Likud had 40 seats, but Tehiya, Tsomet, and possibly Moledet brought the total to 47. The religious parties thus found themselves able to tip the scales and therefore make increased demands in return for joining the government.

But the rivalries and particularism within the orthodox world which had stimulated the large electoral victories did not dissipate in the face of those victories. On the contrary, the poll results only sharpened the conflicts. The NRP was frustrated by the fact that, although its representation in the Knesset was increased, it was nevertheless subordinated in the postelection politicking to the haredi parties, whose numbers were more important. It blamed its weakness on Meimad, and also railed against the extremism and non-Zionism of the haredim. Within its own ranks, as well, the NRP was divided over its leadership, swinging between Avner Shaki, who championed the settlements and all they symbolized, and Zevulun Hammer, who represented a more traditional Mizrachi point of view.

Within the ranks of haredim, the divisions remained sharp. As each party jockeyed for advantage in the coalition talks, it kept its eyes not only on what it could gain but also on how successful it could be in keeping its rivals out of positions of influence. Thus, Agudat Israel and Degel HaTorah -- hasidim and mitnagdim -- seesawed back and forth between the two major parties in endless meetings. But what drove them in one direction or another was not always present-day issues or even foreign-policy or domestic concerns but old conflicts and competitions for the hearts and minds of the ultraorthodox. Even the search for funds was predicated on the conviction that the kind of education each group gave assured the future of Judaism. And even the NRP found itself fighting the haredim for a position in the cabinet.

And what were the ramifications of all these negotiations? While there are many implications of the process, perhaps the most important was the fact that -- for all their contra-acculturative tendencies -- all the religious forces, including most of the haredim, had become caught up in the apparatus of Zionism and contemporary political life. At one level, they might argue -- as many did in their campaigns -- that their quest for votes was only a means for achieving a more religious society. But at another, they

had to admit they were now no longer outsiders; they were part of the system, and for a short time almost the key to it. Finally, given responsibilities for running things in the government -- as several Shas people were -- they found themselves suddenly having to look beyond their parochial concerns. Aryeh De'eri, for example, could be a Shas functionary during the campaign and make all sorts of sectarian demands. Once, however, he became minister of the interior, he had to serve all the people of Israel. The price for this success, as members of Agudat Israel who served as chairs of important committees in the Eleventh Knesset had discovered, was a loss in the great battle of culture. If one served his country's government, could one still serve the narrow needs of the party and its supporters, especially when they were in conflict with national interests? Would the tensions between universalism and localism reemerge in the years ahead, or would the haredi Jews unite again? These were the questions that confronted the religious parties as they digested their victories. In the light of new developments, new alliances and enmities have begun to form. And while the national unity government pushed the religious parties from the center stage of political concern, their part in the drama that is Israeli politics is far from played out. Its precise character will become apparent only in the years ahead. That changes will occur is, however, beyond doubt.

How Many Haredim?

With all the concern about the haredim, there has often come an exaggerated notion of their numbers. It is difficult to get exact numbers for several reasons. In Israel, while all citizens are counted, no distinctions are made in the census according to one's style of Judaism. Moreover, there are numbers of haredim in Israel who maintain foreign citizenship and live in the state as foreign nationals. As such they do not appear on all sorts of official registers -- tax rolls, voting lists, etc. Moreover, even many of those who do live in Israel and who hold Israeli identity cards cannot automatically be identified as haredim. Commonly, estimates are made by extrapolating from two figures: census tracts of particular neighborhoods and regions in which haredim cluster and voting results for parties that are identified with haredi causes.

In the Diaspora in general and the United States in particular, there are also problems in getting an exact count. One reason is that the U.S. census does not include religion in the information it collects; thus most counts of Jews are based on estimates made from counting affiliations with Jewish organizations. Accordingly, in America, the number of haredi or ultraorthodox Jews is based upon calculations of memberships in organizations like Agudat Israel or the various hasidic courts. Such calculations have a tendency to become inflated when it behooves the reporters to exaggerate numbers (as for example when larger numbers yield more funds) and understated when there is a perceived need to make them smaller (as for example when organizations like various hasidic courts make a claim for funds for "minority" group consideration).[11]

Having set forth these caveats, certain estimates can be made. In Israel, orthodox Jews constitute about 20 percent of the Jewish population. Of that 20 percent, about a quarter are haredim. With a birthrate of about 4.5[12] children per family (versus the general Israeli birthrate of approximately 3.2), the haredim are growing, but they still remain a very small proportion of Israeli society, about 200,000 people. Concentrated in two or three cities, the haredim have their greatest population in the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Geula, Mea Shearim, Kiryat Sanz, Kiryat Mattersdorf, Ezrat-Torah, Har-Nof, Bayit-VeGan, and various sections of Ramot. In the Tel Aviv area, they are to be found around B'nai B'rak. There are also communities in Ashdod, Safed, Tiberias, and the Samarian settlement of Emmanuel. There is no accurate way to determine what proportion of these haredim are hasidic and what Lithuanian/mitnagdic. However, judging by the support for Agudat Israel versus the support for Degel HaTorah, one might conclude that the hasidim represent the larger group. However, since hasidim are subdivided by rabbinic courts, their collective strength is often diluted. Sephardi haredim are even more difficult to count, particularly because so many of the voters for Shas were not themselves ultraorthodox Jews.

Yet in spite of their relatively small numbers, haredim in Israel have wielded significant political power because of the peculiar brand of coalition politics in that country. Since the foundation of the state, every government has had to make political alliances with minor parties. The deals that were made with the ultraorthodox for many years -- particularly since 1977 -- appear to have been the least demanding ones, requiring only enhanced funds for haredi educational institutions, maintenance of a conservative stance on matters of personal status, military deferments for yeshiva students, and exemptions for orthodox women (about which more in the following section).

In the United States, where approximately 15 percent of the 5.5 million Jews are orthodox, about 20 percent of those would probably qualify as ultraorthodox, yielding about 165,000. The power of these Jews is mostly symbolic. Whenever American political candidates want to attract Jewish votes, they have themselves photographed meeting with one or another hasidic leader (the Lubavitcher rebbe has been the leader of choice in recent years). Short of a statement of support for Israel, such meetings are ways of demonstrating support for Jewish causes. This is of course ironic, since these rebbes represent only a fraction of American Jewry, even if they can deliver the votes of those who support them. In addition, to many American Jews, the picturesque haredim represent a nostalgic image of traditional Jewry, an image to be revered in some vague and ambiguous way.

While there are important differences between American and Israeli haredim which go beyond the scope of this paper, one can say that perhaps an essential difference is the family structure. The American haredi young man, like his Israeli counterpart, attends yeshiva from a very early age. At about 18, he enters a postgraduate yeshiva or kollel, where he continues his studies. During the next two or three years, he also marries -- commonly via a matchmaking arrangement worked out between the parents of the bride and groom. Following his marriage to a woman who, like him, has received an intensive Jewish education -- very often in a Beit Ya'akov school for Jewish girls -- he continues for two years more in the kollel while his new wife works. The new wife works in Jewish education, as a secretary, in retail sales (often in a Jewish-owned business which allows her to take off Jewish holidays and leave early on Friday afternoons to prepared for the Sabbath), or some other white-collar occupation. However, upon the birth of the first child, the husband generally leaves the kollel and finds work. His work, often within the domains of the orthodox life, may involve education, retail sales (the electronics and diamond businesses have become mainstays for many American ultraorthodox), and lower-echelon white-collar jobs that do not require advanced secular education. Thus by 23 or 24 most haredi men are at work while their wives are involved in childrearing (though some may try to continue to work on a part-time basis out of their homes). The income that the American haredi couple brings in is not insignificant, and there are many who are able to support themselves.

The case in Israel is somewhat different. While the new Israeli wife will work to support her husband who is a student in a kollel, that husband will not leave the kollel to go to work for a long time. Unlike the American haredi who at work often comes in contact with total strangers and is forced therefore to make social and cultural compromises to get along with them, the Israeli haredi, who stays enclosed in his own world of the kollel, evolves a greater sense of isolation and solidarity with his own haredi community. Along the same lines, the American haredi may come to feel a greater connection to Jews outside his milieu while the Israeli from within the kollel society can continue to look at all those Jews around him as hostile and alien. In any event, for the Israeli, his wife will need to work longer, and the extended family and community will have to provide greater economic support. To understand precisely why this difference exists, why the Israeli stays in the kollel separated from the rest of society much longer than his American counterpart, it is necessary to understand something about the haredim and Israeli army service.

The Haredim and Israeli Army Service

The haredim's avoidance of military service reflects even more clearly than the political process the

uniqueness of their place in Israeli society. By and large, haredim do not serve in the regular draft for the IDF, which all Israelis between the ages of 18 and 27 must do for at least three years. This is essential to the maintenance of their separateness from Israeli society, which they celebrate as their great strength.

Their exclusion does not always sit well with the general Israeli population, which looks upon army service as an integrative force in Israeli society, crucial to national unity. The living Israeli soldier is a hero, the dead one is a martyr; haredim, by virtue of their exclusion, can be neither heroes nor martyrs in Israeli society. They are therefore viewed as peripheral at best and as antagonists at worst. They are strangers in the Israeli world, a position that the haredi sages encourage.

The haredim choose to live apart because they fear the influence of secular Israeli society, which they are convinced is most powerful in the army. If young men and women serve during their formative years with nonreligious Jews, share the intense experience of combat or even basic training, they might emerge with their faith and way of life undermined. This the haredi sages and elders will not permit. And so they continue to encourage their young followers to avoid army service, especially during their young years.

The tension between haredim and the general Israeli public over the matter of army service became particularly acute in the last elections. When Likud sought to form a coalition with the haredi parties -- including Shas -- the media asked: How can haredim serve in positions of ministerial authority that might require them to send young men and women to fight when they have excluded themselves from this service?

The question of haredim serving in the army first arose when Arab forces attacked Jerusalem immediately after the UN resolution of November 29, 1947. Extremists among the haredim (Naturei Karta) declared publicly that they opposed all service in the Zionist army.[13] As the battles grew more fierce, and on the eve of the fall of the old city of Jerusalem (May 2, 1948), the rabbinical court of the Eda haredit unequivocally prohibited any service for yeshiva students in the army. This was not quite as extreme a position as Naturei Karta had taken, for that group had in principle forbidden military service for anyone. By contrast, the pronouncement of the Eda haredit seemed to be a compromise since there were few haredi yeshiva students of military age in Jerusalem in 1948. To the Eda haredit, however, most of whose members were yeshiva students, this was not a concession.

At this time Agudat Israel and Poaley Agudat Israel were deeply engaged in negotiations with the Haganah (the prestate army) to solve this problem. An agreement was reached not to draft yeshiva students. There were then essentially two types of students in the yeshivas: (1) Jews of the old Yishuv, the pre-Zionist settlement in the land of Israel, who lived entirely for study and (2) new Lithuanian immigrants who expected to study for a time in the yeshiva but ultimately, after marriage, to leave it and make a living outside. There were about 400 of the first type and about 150 of the second. To defer these few men from army service seemed a small price to pay for Jewish harmony when the young state was struggling for its very existence. To be sure, many haredi Jews -- most of the young generation of 1948 -- did in fact serve in the War of Independence precisely because most of them were not yeshiva students.

But the numbers in the yeshiva did not remain small. The Lithuanian students gradually diminished in numbers, and a new type of yeshiva student emerged. This was a young man who studied in a yeshiva, married, and then continued his studies in a kollel. Here he stayed for at least another eight years until he was about 28, at which time he was a father of at least two children. It was then too expensive for the army to pay him a family allowance and get him into better physical condition.

There was a brief period between 1956 and the late 1960s when some haredim undertook military service in all-haredi units. These were meant for haredi boys who did not see themselves as scholars and

who thought they could make a life for themselves in a "religious" unit of the army (*Nachal*). However, as the society of scholars became the norm in the haredi world, those who chose this option were viewed as losers, men who could not succeed in the yeshiva. These young men found it difficult if not impossible to return to haredi society; no one would marry such a "loser," and even in haredi neighborhoods these veterans were shunned. Because, in effect, haredi army units attracted only the misfits of the haredi world, they were ultimately disbanded.

Certainly none of those authorities who agreed to the original deferment of yeshiva boys ever envisioned the emergence of a "society of scholars" in which nearly every haredi young man of draft age would find himself in the yeshiva/kollel. But this is what happened.

Israeli law[14] stipulates that every young man of army age -- including yeshiva boys -- must undergo an army induction physical and mental examination. If he is found fit to serve, he is qualified for the draft. However, anyone who is in a yeshiva at this time may defer his draft as long as he remains a full-time yeshiva student. This is the option that most haredi young men select. Some, of course, are exempted for physical and mental reasons, not unusual for boys who spend their youth bent over books.

Obviously, there are several ways to interpret this law. On the one hand, one may claim that everyone must serve in the army, including the haredim. No one is officially exempted (except Arabs). Thus haredi leaders may argue that, in the long run, most yeshiva boys do serve. But is this really the case? And if so, what is the nature of the deferred service?

When they finally leave the yeshiva/kollel, about half of the haredi young men are in fact forced to serve in the IDF. However, the required service is usually minimal, three months instead of the three years they would have served had they been single and under 28.[15] They get basic training in their own units made up of such older recruits. They are given rudimentary military tasks, because they have not been trained long enough (though some of the haredim often see these assignments as an expression of bias against them by the nonreligious authorities). Then these haredim serve -- like all other Israelis -- in the reserves for thirty days each year. In many cases, they serve as grave diggers, guards, or supervisors of kashrut.

Those who do not serve in the army remain in the yeshiva/kollel. The most qualified among them become yeshiva heads or rabbis, and the least qualified become elementary teachers in seminaries and receive a permanent divinity deferment. Thus the society of scholars turns into a society of scholar/teachers, many of whom avoid the army altogether.

To secular Israelis, haredi army "service" is not truly army service. They see this arrangement as tantamount to not serving at all. And they resent the haredim for it.

What kinds of numbers are we talking about? Until 1977, when Likud swept to power, there had been a formal limit of 500 yeshiva students who could receive this sort of exemption. After the election of 1977, Agudat Israel made as a primary demand for its participation in the Likud coalition the cancellation of this limit. The Begin government accepted this condition and allowed an unlimited number of yeshiva boys to receive army deferments. Today the numbers have exploded.

The universally agreed-upon figure today is 16,000 yeshiva deferments. In 1987, during a special session on the subject convened by then MK Menachem HaCohen, this number was reported by the IDF to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. However, we can look at this 16,000 differently, as in fact many Israelis do. If we include not only those currently exempted but those who did not serve in the past, the numbers is even greater, and hence more disturbing for the nonharedi population,

How long will Israeli society tolerate haredi exemption from army service? The relative tolerance

of the Israeli public in the past was based upon two elements. First, they looked upon the haredim as a relatively small minority and thus, like the early Zionists, who agreed to this arrangement, saw the exemptions as insignificant. Second, the haredim remained ghettoized and therefore out of view of the general public so that it was easy to forget about them and their deferments. However, in recent years the haredi population has grown dramatically. Moreover, the emergence of Shas, which claims army deferments for many of its supporters, and the visibility of several *ba'alei tshuvah* (returners to orthodoxy), who have claimed the same exemptions, have served to reawaken objections in the Israeli public to the status quo. The HaCohen subcommittee recommended a reassessment of the entire arrangement and suggested that the method by which outstanding university students are deferred -- examinations and interview -- be applied to haredi yeshiva students.

For the moment, the peculiarities of the Israeli electoral process and coalition politics have muted this issue. The need of the major parties for haredi support has kept them silent. As long as there is no war with heavy casualties, it is likely that the current quiescence will continue. However, in view of the instability of the Middle East, it is conceivable that public opinion could change dramatically. The haredim are quite aware of this possibility and have been willing to make many compromises in coalition politics simply to avoid the dismantling of the system of deferments. Their support of the national unity government and their flirtation with both major parties was in part based upon a desire to protect these deferments.

Yet, even supposing that the situation allows for a continuation of deferments, there are factors within the haredi community undermining this arrangement. The continuing growth of the haredi population has placed an enormous economic burden on haredi society. Having so many of its members unemployed, not part of a dynamic economy, forces it to find increasing economic support from the outside. The limited nature of that support pressures the haredim to find ways of getting their boys out of the yeshiva. But of course as soon as they get out of the yeshiva they would be drafted into the army, with all the attendant risks of acculturation and religious erosion that would flow from such an eventuality. This remains an abiding anxiety for the haredi community in Israel.

One question remains: Why do the haredi young men not elect to serve, as do other more moderately and nationalist orthodox, in the *hesder* yeshiva/army system? This would be tantamount to their accepting the legitimacy of the entire Zionist enterprise, something their ideology proscribes. And by serving in such units, the haredim would become secondary to the modern orthodox, who are the dominant element in the *hesder* system, and would thus give the national religious camp an ideological victory that until now the haredim have refused to give.

Finally, even supposing that some elements in the haredi world would accept this option, others would not. Thus to enter into the *hesder* arrangement would serve to emphasize the difference among the haredi yeshivas and would result in an internal struggle that could end by destroying the institutions that are the heart and soul of haredi life. This the haredim cannot afford to do. Hence, the matter of haredi service in the army is a volatile one, in which many factors play a part. But there are too many imponderables here to make any predictions about the precise nature of the change. We can only say that change itself seems likely.

The Economic Basis of Haredi Society

Economically the haredim continue their traditional dependence on the surrounding society. They do not fill all the roles required for a fully functioning community. Thus, for example, they are overwhelmingly not physicians, engineers, or pharmacists, nor are there today very many who are blue-collar workers. For these functions they must generally call upon nonharedim. Instead, haredim today by and large work in only a few occupations. These include the supply of religious services and artifacts (Judaica), a field in which they are dominant; jewelry trades, including precious stones; electronic supplies

(more so in America than in Israel); currency exchange, both licit and illicit; and finally, clothing and food production.

Religious services include working as teachers and yeshiva heads, rabbis and religious judges, ritual slaughterers and kashrut supervisors, as well as scribes. Dealing in religious artifacts ranges from collecting exotic items of Judaica such as rare scrolls and manuscripts to merchandising arts and crafts related to Jewish life. Such activities are harmonious with the worldview and life-style of the haredim. Further, few in the general society choose to pursue them so there is not a great deal of external competition. Finally, they do not require extensive training or schooling outside the haredi world.

An additional factor has led many young men to select the scribal arts as an occupation. One may remain within the yeshiva, officially a student who enjoys all the benefits of this status (including exemption from army service), while quietly sitting over a desk writing mezuzas, tefillin, and even a megillah or Torah scroll. Moreover, one can sell these items at a premium for cash, which in the haredi world -- as we shall show below -- is of great benefit.

For generations jewelry was a traditional trade, particularly for those wealthy Jews who could afford to acquire and sell it. This was particularly true for the diamond trade, diamonds being an especially appropriate commodity for a people who traveled from place to place. In the last century Jews created thriving diamond-trading centers in Amsterdam and Antwerp. This occupation, dependent in great measure on family secrets and skills, trust and contacts, easily lent itself to a traditional society which handed down the father's way of life to the sons.

In recent years, particularly in America, haredim who used to deal in diamonds and jewelry began to enter electronics merchandising. Often this began by exchanging gems for the newer portable riches, radios, watches, telephones, and lately computers. Many haredi currency dealers began to buy electronic equipment as a way of protecting themselves from fluctuations in the currency market. In time, these objects -- which they acquired at wholesale prices -- became not only a means of protecting their income but a means of expanding it. Moreover, because this industry was not developed and was not in the hands of any particular group, there was an opportunity for a new group of entrepreneurs. Instead of being shoemakers or fish mongers as they might have been in the old country, haredi immigrants could now be computer dealers and radio salesmen. And none of this required them to compromise their worldview. Nor did it even require them to be engineers. The Japanese had made it easy for the relatively unschooled to be merchandisers of their products. All it took was the capacity to read a catalogue.

But why did the haredim in Israel not enter this trade? In part, it required an investment of time and a willingness to travel and learn a new trade that the scholar society could not afford. They were in a sense hostages of the yeshiva world they had created. They could not leave to become anything else. So they were scribes while their counterparts in America became computer dealers.

With regard to currency exchange, there is also a long tradition of Jewish involvement in such spheres. As the haredim consider themselves unbonded to any particular piece of geography -- at least until the coming of the Messiah -- they have in effect created for themselves an international community. A haredi in Jerusalem and one in Antwerp or Brooklyn conceive of themselves as belonging to a single community -- although they do recognize ethnic and national nuances of difference. They intermarry, share resources, and visit one another constantly. This is even more enhanced in the case of hasidim who may all be part of a particular dynasty even though they live on different continents. Modern communications and technology have helped them to maintain these links in spite of the vast distances that separate them at times. Such an international network, with people using different currencies but sharing the same community, makes it possible for -- indeed, encourages -- them to easily engage in money changing.

The fact that their activities are sometimes illegal does not disturb them at all. What is important above all else is that they continue to be able to exist in order to preserve their "holy" way of life. And currency exchange enables them to do this. There are even advantages to it. These include the fact that one can engage in such business from home or even from the yeshiva without having to break the cycle of life which makes up the haredi world. Moreover, currency exchange can be carried on at all hours of the day or night; flexible time in an occupation is useful for one who is a full-time student.

Interviews with some haredim reveal that, at least for some, there is another reason for their engagement in currency exchange in Israel. To deal in dollars -- when the official currency is the Zionist shekel -- is yet another way to demonstrate to themselves (and at times to others) that they are not completely absorbed by the Zionist state. That is, while the economic structure of the society would seem to be the most encompassing -- after all, everyone should have to use the same currency in a single society -- the haredim show that they can be in Israel but not part of Israel even in their money. That the state disapproves of this and declares it illegal may make such dealing even more acceptable and laudatory. It's not an accident that many of those in Israel who engage in black market currency exchange are precisely those who are most vehemently anti-Zionist.

To be sure, there is no ideological obligation for a haredi to be a black marketeer in currency or any other illegal enterprise. But that they should discover that something they have chosen to do is in fact illegal by Israeli standards does not disturb them, for they hold the standards of Israel in contempt at worst or irrelevant at best. This is true as well in the Diaspora. Because they remain unbonded to any particular place, they consider themselves sojourners wherever they are and therefore not bound by any secular law.

Finally, involvement in clothing and food production emerges from the haredim's needs. They must produce for themselves the men's distinctive caftans and hats and the women's modestly tailored dresses. In food, they also have rigorous standards of kashrut, which they find no one can be trusted to uphold save themselves. Their food is marketed to the entire kashrut-observant Jewish public, including many institutions in Israel and abroad.

One final point needs to be made in connection with the haredi economic system. Since, as we have pointed out, so many of the men are engaged in ungainful employment such as studying in the yeshiva/kollel, there has arisen the need for women to help support the family. To be sure, this is not the first time men have depended on women to support them, but never has the extent of dependence on female labor been as great as today. Indeed, the entire infrastructure of haredi economic life has become so dependent on women's work that it could probably not exist without it. Women work as teachers in religious girls' schools, particularly in those serving the haredi system which is supported in great measure by state funds. They also work as clerical and sales staff in the haredi neighborhood. Finally, some -- although the numbers are still quite small -- have begun to do work with computers, jobs they can do at home for employers outside of the haredi society.

Conclusion

If we review all that has been said here about haredi society, particularly in Israel, we see that this society lives in an ambivalent relationship with the larger culture and society. It shuns the values of that larger world while depending on it for support of all sorts. It has developed a politics that is intimately tied to the Israeli system of coalitions. It has evolved a scholar society made possible by army exemptions. And it has an economic life that reverberates with the impact of the larger society even as it tries to ignore that society.

On the surface, it might appear that the haredim have succeeded admirably. They practice politics effectively, avoid the rigors of army life, keep themselves in the money, and evade the corrosive effects

of modern life. While this may be so, these successes have exacted a price. They have placed the haredim in the center of modern life and action. They must now defend an ever-growing empire. They must deal with their large numbers of unemployed scholars. They must remain in the yeshiva/kollel or risk plunging into a hostile culture and environment. They must find ever newer and greater sources of financing this world. Much here could go wrong. Whether or not it will remains the central question in the future of haredi life.

Notes

1. It is interesting to note that the Jews did not have an indigenous term for emancipation; perhaps this was viewed as a process that was initiated by outsiders (i.e., the host societies). But enlightenment, which was an internal transformation, guided by Jewish will and needs, was given a native appellation, *haskalah*, a word whose roots are the same as the term for intelligence and common sense.
2. See Jacob Katz, "Religion as a Uniting and Dividing Force in Modern Jewish History," in Jacob Katz, ed., *The Role of Religion in Modern Jewish History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Association for Jewish Studies, 1975), p. 1. Undeniably, these trends toward secularization and democratization affected all peoples in the Occident. However, because the shape and character of Western secular life was built upon a foundation that was essentially Christian, Christians by and large did not have to abandon as much of their beliefs, tradition, and way of life as did the Jews. But matters were different for Jews. The Jew faced a dilemma: should he succumb to the temptation of society at large if it involved accepting Christianity or remain a member of a socially inferior minority.
3. We say "unevenly" because there were early contacts with the outside cultures even in the farthest reaches of the East, in the Pale of Settlement. However, by and large, these were isolated and limited to people who in one way or another had traveled or had contact with travelers. But when communities as a whole are considered, it is possible to state that generally emancipation and enlightenment began in Western Europe (and America, which was at first only an outpost of German Jewry) and only moved eastward rapidly after the First World War and the Soviet revolution.
4. Melville Herskovits, *Man and His Works* (New York: Knopf, 1948), p. 531.
5. Leo Jung, "What Is Orthodox Judaism?" *Jewish Library*, 2nd series (New York: Bloch, 1930), p. 115.
6. Hayim Greenberg, "Golus Jews," in *Voices from the Yiddish*, eds. Irving Howe and E. Greenberg (New York: Schocken), p. 273.
7. Chaim I. Waxman, personal communication. See also his *America's Jews in Transition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983). Indeed, to this day, the struggle for the spirit of orthodoxy goes on between those who say that it must remain steadfastly contra-acculturative, rejecting the attractions of Western civilization, and those who argue that only an adaptive orthodoxy that allows for acculturation without assimilation provides the wherewithal for survival in a world that does not allow for total isolation from other ways of life.
8. This attitude toward the unschooled Jews was not new in Judaism. Already in Talmudic times, the rabbis distinguished between *haverim*, those who were part of the academies of learning, rabbis who knew and properly interpreted the law, and the *am ha'aretz* the simple folk who based their practices and beliefs on custom and everyday wisdom rather then scholarship. The mitnagdim were simply the latest version of the *haverim*, who in turn looked upon hasidim as *am ha'aretz*.
9. One of the most striking illustrations of this was the appearance of Labor and Likud party leaders before several of these rabbinic councils, trying to make them endorse a particular coalition. And when Shimon Peres met with the two newly elected Degel HaTorah Knesset members, the senior among them explained at a meeting filmed by Israel Television and shown on the national news that all negotiations would have to be carried out with the rabbis because they, the MKs, were only "functionaries" who were to be guided in all major decisions by their rabbis.
10. Many potential Meimad voters were put off from voting for the party because of a fear that in the end the party would join a coalition with the right and thus turn out to be a weak player in a game it had no hope of winning. Meimad's inability to publicly state that it would never join a Likud-led coalition probably cost it key voters.

11. This sort of demographic imprecision is not particular to haredi Jews; it is true for all Jews. Indeed, the numbers assembled by the *American Jewish Year Book*, a basic source of information, were for many years gathered by calling a Jewish activist leader or federation official in a particular community and asking for an estimate of the size of the Jewish population in the area. Often the activist would give a number based upon a reading of the previous year's *American Jewish Year Book*. In this way, for example, the 20,000-person count for New Haven Jewry was maintained for years until an independent survey by New Haven's Steven M. Cohen yielded a number of 28,000.
12. The number of orthodox families with 10 or more children is extremely small.
13. *Ha'Choma*, Dec. 3, 1947.
14. The Armed Services Law 1959, section 28.
15. This is the same arrangement that new immigrants older than 28 have.