THE ISH HA’EMES: 
The Man of Unimpeachable Integrity

RABBI SHIMON SCHWAB

Frankfurt, 1915: A six-year-old boy is sent by his mother to the store to buy groceries. With the change he buys himself some chocolate, which he eats on the way. When he arrives home, his mother asks him for the change. “Here it is,” the boy answers. “But where is the rest?” his mother asks. “I must have lost it,” the boy replies. But his mother notices a chocolate wrapper in his pocket. “Oh,” she says, with a look that he will remember for the rest of his life, “you didn’t tell the emes.” Later that day his father comes home. He does not hit him or send him to his room. “What is this I hear that you didn’t tell the emes? Your punishment will be that tonight, Friday night, I will not bentsch you. No, I won’t bentsch you tonight.” The young boy never forgot that lesson.

As the subject of this appreciation loathed even the merest whiff of exaggeration, I have attempted to avoid embellishment, which is unnecessary in any case. In keeping with the statement of Chazal (Yerushalmi, Eiruvin 2:5) that one does not erect monuments for righteous men, as their words are their memorial, the thoughts and dereiTorah contained herein are all, unless otherwise indicated, Rav Schwab’s own. To facilitate reading, we have often dispensed with quotation marks.

Radin, 1930: The young Frankfurt boy, now a Mirrer Yeshiva bachur, comes to visit the Chofetz Chaim. When the elderly sage is told that he is “a Frankfurter bachur,” he takes his hand in his own and caresses it gently. “A yeshiva bachur! How fortunate! So many are drowning today. Only through Torah can one survive. How fortunate that you are learning!”

Marienbad, 1934: The Mirrer yeshiva bachur, by now a Rav in Germany, pays a visit to the saintly Gerrer Rebbe. The Rebbe tells him, “Remember, Yungerman! One must be very careful to safeguard the honor of Rav Hirsch, the tzaddik of Frankfurt, for he was a living mussar sefer.”

Washington Heights, 1994: In the last winter of his life, the young Frankfurt lad, now Rav of the largest German Jewish Kehilla in the world and a leader of Torah Jewry, calls in a wealthy benefactor of the kehilla. “I don’t have much time left on this world,” he said, “and I will be going to Gehinom. The Yeshiva’s deficit is close to a million dollars and most of it is in the unpaid salaries of its melamdim. I am Rav of the kehilla that teaches Torah im Derech Eretz. Where is the derech eretz if we haven’t paid our teachers for months? It will not be long before I will be called to give a din vecheshbon for my actions and I will be going to Gehinom for this. I’m begging you. Please take me out of Gehinom.”

Rabbi Klugman grew up in Washington Heights, where he enjoyed a close relationship with Rabbi Schwab. He currently lives in Jerusalem where he is a maggid shir in a yeshiva gedola. He is a frequent contributor to these pages, most recently with “The Hebron Disaster—A Torah Perspective,” April ’94. His biography on Rabbi S.R. Hirsch is soon to be released by ArtScroll.

The Jewish Observer, Summer 1995
The man is shaken. After giving the matter some thought, he agrees to cover the entire deficit in teachers’ salaries, in weekly installments to be completed before the yeshiva’s annual dinner. The last payment is made on the Friday before the dinner. The Yeshiva’s dinner is on Sunday night.

The following evening, Rabbi Schwab passed away.

Who was this man who lived a life of such adherence to honesty and integrity? What is this potent combination of the ideals of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, architect of Torah Orthodoxy in the Western world, and the intense commitment to limud haTorah that is the legacy of the great Lithuanian yeshivos? What can we learn from his life to enable us to make this heady blend the reality of authentic Torah life in America? Specifically, what example did he set for the American ben Torah, whether engaged in full-time Torah study or as a working man?

I. GEOGRAPHY OF A LIFE

Boyhood in Frankfurt-am-Main

Shimon Schwab was born in Frankfurt on 7 Teves, 5569 (1908), to an old German-Jewish family. In the 1850’s, his great-grandfather moved from a small Bavarian village to Frankfurt, soon after Rabbi S.R. Hirsch had become rabbi, so his children could study in Rav Hirsch’s Realschule. Like his father and grandfather, Shimon Schwab studied in the Realschule, which went on until the ninth grade. There he received his only formal secular education.

His parents, Leopold and Chana (Erlanger) Schwab, were erlische, respected baalebattim, who were active in the life of the Frankfurt Kehilla. They produced five sons, each of them a man of note in his own right. Three of them were world famous—in addition to Reb Shimon, there was Reb Mordechai, renowned as a tzaddik, and Reb Moshe, Mashgiach of the Gateshead Yeshiva. (See JO, May ’94, and April ’81.)

What explains their success in child-rearing? The Schwab brothers were fond of telling of the seder night when their father asked his children which of the four sons they would like to be. Most of them answered “the chacham,” as could be expected: young Mordechai responded that he would like to be the “tam.” The father then addressed his children in a stern voice: “If any of my sons becomes a rosho, even if only deviating from a single din or a minhag, I say to him ‘li, vela lo, I will have nothing to do with him.’ I love my children more than anything in the world, but I love the Ribboria Shel Olam even more.” His father’s yiras Shamayim, Rabbi Schwab said decades later, chilled his bones.

He grew up in Frankfurt as a normal child, with no hint of the greatness he would attain. He often stressed that many gedolim were not accomplished talmidei chachamim at age thirteen or geniuses in their youth. Many who were amot ha’aretz at that age, later became Torah leaders. This awareness, he felt, should be an encouragement to many lads who are nothing special at their bar mitzva, yet have the potential to become great talmidei chachamim and Torah leaders.

After completing the Realschule, Shimon learned for two years under the Frankfurter Rav and Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Breuer, son-in-law of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch. There he absorbed the joys of yegias haTorah, the delight of intense effort in trying to ascertain the correct pshat, and an absolute commitment to finding the emes in the dvar Hashem. This strong commitment of Reb Shlomo Breuer to unadulterated emes as the guiding light of his life obtained in communal matters as well as in Torah study. For the rest of his life, Rabbi Schwab always saw himself, in his words, as “talmid talmido” of Rabbi S.R. Hirsch—his disciple’s pupil—and, indeed, he was suffused with Rav Hirsch’s spirit.

In 1926, the Ponevezher Rav, Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman visited Frankfurt and delivered a shiur in Rav Breuer’s yeshiva. The young Frankfurter boy was entranced both by the shiur and by the derech halimud. He wanted more. The Ponevezher Rav suggested Telshe, with its emphasis on seder and its approach to education, as most appropriate.

Shimon Schwab was among the first German bachurim in his time to study in a Lithuanian yeshiva, and a
A Yeshiva Bachur in Lithuania

During the three years he spent in Telshe, he was awed by the regal dignity, the iron will, the sublime mind, and the singing neshama (as he described it) of the Telzer Rav, Rabbi Yosef Leib Bloch. In Telshe he learned about malchus haTorah, seeing the Rosh Yeshiva as a nesiElok. Whereas his relationship with the Telzer Rav was a mixture of awe and fear, for his Rebbi, Reb Avrohom Yitzchok Bloch, there was only the adoring enthusiasm of a seventeen-year-old yeshiva bachur for the Rebbi’s sweet personality. In Telshe, he also learned a lifelong lesson: the meaning of “shteigen”—steady, sustained growth in Torah, yiras Shamayim and character development.

Rabbi Schwab spent six weeks in the summer of 1929 teaching in Montreux, Switzerland. There, he also served as the personal attendant of Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski. Those weeks of intimate daily contact left an indelible imprint on him. Reb Chaim Ozer suggested that he go to study in the Mirrer Yeshiva in Poland, whose mashgiach, Rabbi Yeruchem Leovitz, would be the perfect mentor for the Frankfurter bachur.

So in Elul, 1929, he went to the Mir, where he developed an unusually close relationship with Reb Yeruchem. There too he was a trendsetter for the many German bachurim who followed. Several years later, Reb Yeruchem delivered a regular Chumash Shiur exclusively for these “oislanders,” as they were called. Reb Yeruchem’s Daas Torah on Chumash contains much from those Shiurim. Reb Shimon stayed in the Mir for two years, and received semicha from the Rosh Yeshiva, Reb Lazer Yudel Finkel, as well as from Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzenski.

His visit to the Chofetz Chaim in 1930 is part of the public consciousness. Although he spent no more than a weekend in Radin—from Friday morning to Sunday morning—Ktet Yisroel has learned more from those few days than from many who spent years in Radin. (See JO, Jan. 1984.)

In response to numerous inquiries, we are pleased to announce to the Olam HaTorah the availability of the following:

**حفظ يوميّك**

**למרח הגרי"ר הטוען יוף יsız**

פסח, שביעית, ראש השנה, יום המפורים,
שביעית החג, חנוכה, פורים, לאורים וה كبיס.

Most of these Seforim are now in expanded editions. They may be obtained as a set or as single volumes. For information contact:

Rabbi Shmuel Wolman 718-377-0777
Rabbi Yehaya Thau 718-376-1265
**In Erets Yisroel:** Rabbi Ahron Lasker 02-372-257

The Jewish Observer, Summer 1995
A Rav in Germany

In 1934, Rabbi Schwab was appointed assistant to Rabbi Yonah Merzbach of Darmstadt, who later joined Rabbi Yechiel Schlesinger to found Yeshiva Kol Torah in Jerusalem. The same year, he married Recha Froelich of Gelsenkirchen, who was his devoted and cheerful companion for life, and with whom he had five children. Two years later he was appointed District Rabbi of Ichenhausen in Bavaria. Noting a lack of the spirit of the Lithuanian yeshiva in Germany, he attempted to establish a yeshiva there, but the local Nazis closed it on the day it opened.

He was under constant pressure from the local Gestapo. As the situation deteriorated, he began to sleep at night with his clothes on. He later explained that one of his acquaintances who had been outspoken in his criticism of the regime was taken away in the middle of the night and was found the next morning hanging. Should the same fate await him, he wanted to meet it fully clothed, as befits a rabbi. Matters in Germany reached a point where it was only a matter of time before his arrest, and he decided to seek a rabbinical position overseas.

Refugee Rabbi in Baltimore

Upon the suggestion of Rabbi Leo Jung, a leading Orthodox rabbi in New York, he was accepted as the rabbi of the German Jewish Shearith Israel Congregation of Baltimore. He arrived in the U.S. with his family on 10 Teves, 1936. Soon after his arrival, he was faced with his first crisis. He insisted that the by-laws of the congregation, which conferred voting rights only on Shomrei Shabbos, be upheld. As a result, two hundred members, the overwhelming majority of the membership, who considered themselves Orthodox but were unable to resist the pressure to work on Shabbos, left the shul and established their own congregation. Shearith Israel was left with a skeleton of a congregation of barely two dozen members, sometimes without a minyan during the week, and almost no wherewithal to cover his salary. He was forced to borrow and scrape to make ends meet; there were times when he did not receive his salary for months. It was not the only time in his life when he was willing to sacrifice position and livelihood for principle. It was, in fact, one of the Hirschian tenets upon which he was weaned: "Learn how to withstand animosity and to weather unpopularity, and to carry on the struggle to uphold Hashem's ideals." Despite his poverty, in 1943 he auctioned off his only possession of value, a sefer Torah that he had brought with him from Germany, and gave the proceeds of $2,000—a substantial sum at the time—to the Vaad Hatzalah for saving Jewish lives in Europe. He was active in securing affidavits to facilitate the entry of Jewish refugees into the United States, and the Schwab home in Baltimore became a way station for many poor, newly-arrived refugees from the European inferno.

Baltimore of those years was hardly a spiritual oasis. The kashrus situation was a mess. Rabbi Schwab told the time, soon of...
Although many of the formed he was instrumental in founding the for the next twenty-three years they hardly an uncomfortable moment. The Rebbetzin was one of only a handful of women in the city who covered her hair. Even Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, headed by the illustrious Rabbi Chaim Samson, had almost no shomer Shabbos students. One of the Schwab boys had only one shomer Shabbos friend. He pleaded with his mother not to give him sandwiches for lunch in school because the boys laughed at him when he washed his hands before eating.

Before the establishment of the Bais Yaakov, Rabbi Schwab would gather the few shomer Shabbos girls in his home for a weekly shuir. "Ess passt nisht," he was told by a local rabbi, "for a rav to teach girls." Rabbi Schwab replied that the Gemara says that a chassid shoteh, a pious idiot, is one who refuses to save a woman who is drowning because she is a woman. "I don't want to be a chassid shoteh." Together with a few local baalebatim, he founded the Bais Yaakov of Baltimore, despite the derision of local rabbis who considered the undertaking a waste of time, effort, and especially resources. "Why," one Orthodox rabbi asked him, "are you bothering with these insignificant mitzvos?" This "insignificant mitzva" is today the largest such institution outside the New York area.

The Frankfurt Kehilla in New York

In 1958, Rabbi Schwab's Rebbi from Frankfurt, Rabbi Joseph Breuer, when seventy-five-years old, decided that K'hel Adath Jeshurun of Washington Heights needed a vigorous presence on the rabbinate, and he invited his talmid to serve alongside him. It is testimony to the greatness of these two men that for the next twenty-three years they served the kehilla side by side with hardly an uncomfortable moment. Although many of the kehilla institutions were in place when he arrived, he was instrumental in founding the Mesivta and the Bais Yaakov High

Rabbi Schwab with Rabbi Y. Breuer
School, the Beis Hamidrash and the world-renowned Rika Breuer Teacher's Seminary. It was during these years in Washington Heights that Rabbi Schwab's leadership and influence in the affairs of American Torah Jewry reached their peak.

II. THE EMBODIMENT OF MALACHI'S PROPHECY

A Kingdom of Priests

The Jewish People, the Rav never tired of declaring, must be a Mamleches Kohanim Veyey Kadosh, a nation of priests and a holy nation. A kohanim, he explained, is one who by word and example spreads the knowledge of the Almighty. The kohanim imperative of the Jew, which he epitomized, was the constant theme in his life. Living in Golus America, a Malchus shel Chessed, only strengthened this obligation. Every form of Chillul Hashem, he taught, lowers the awareness of the Divine presence in this world. If the perpetrator is a supposedly observant Jew—or worse, a so-called Torah scholar—then the offense is even greater. The Chillul Hashem strengthens the hand of the non-observer, gives ammunition to the scoffers, and fosters yet more rejection of religion: and it is responsible, directly or indirectly, for the increase of frivolity, heresy and licentiousness in the world. How can one who cheated his neighbor or defrauded the government, he asked, have the audacity to stand in front of the congregation and recite Kiddush, a prayer for sanctifying G-d's Name in the world? There can be no white-washing, no condoning, and no apologizing on behalf of the desecra-

ARE YOU MOVING?

IS YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS PRINTED INCORRECTLY ON THE JO MAILING LABEL?

We need your help to ensure proper delivery of The Jewish Observer to your home. Please attach current mailing label in the space below, or print clearly your address and computer processing numbers that are printed above your name on the address label.

Affix old label here

Name __________________________________________________________________________
New Address ____________________________________________________________________
City, __________________________________________________________________________
State, __________________________ Zip
Date Effective _____________________________

Send address changes to: The Jewish Observer/Change of Address
84 William Street, New York, NY 10038

Please allow 4-6 weeks for all changes to be reflected on your mailing label. We will not be responsible for back issues missed unless you notify us 6 weeks prior to your move.
When the father insisted, "and I will stick my fraud, he refused. Our opponents. And the more prominent a person is, the more scrupulous and painstaking he must be in his business dealings to avoid even the slightest hint of a Chilul Hashem. When the Rav was asked to assist in efforts to secure the release of a religious Jew who was incarcerated for fraud, he refused. "Help him be released? He's a rodef of K'hal Yisrael. Because of him, frumme Yidden will suffer. Let him sit!"

Traveling once with his son on the subway, the boy found fifty cents on the floor in front of the change booth, which he intended to pocket, thinking that there was no obligation to return it. "Give it to the attendant," his father insisted, "and I will stick my beard in his window so that he sees that religious Jews do not want other people's money."

The prophet Malachi, speaking of the End of Days, described the attributes of the kohanim, and these qualities are perhaps the most accurate description of Rabbi Schwab. His life and his teachings: "Toras emes hayasa befihu, ve'avlu lo nimtzan bi'gafsnu; beShalom venishmor halach itti, verabbim heishiv metsav. The teaching of truth was in his mouth and no injustice was found on his lips; in peace and in straightforwardness he walked with Me and he turned many away from sin."

MALACH 2, 6-7

"Toras Emes..."

He viewed his mission in life as being a marbitz Torah, giving shiurim to those of all ages and backgrounds in his kohillah—men, women and children. He had a unique approach to Aggada and shared with his talmidim and congregants countless original insights into Chazal. A lengthy series of shiurim on the Siddur Tefilla presenting invaluable insights were recorded for posterity. Many of his chiddushim on Chumash and Midrash were recently published in his magnum opus, Maayan Bais Hashoeva (Mesorah Publications, New York, 1994). Some of his public addresses of the last decade, and many essays of the last half century have been published in three volumes of his collected works (CIS Publishers).

He exhorted his followers to learn "with an inner glow and persistence, with arder and singleminded passion, with noble joy and a serene spirit," and he put great effort into inspiring the youth of his kohillah to continue in advanced yeshivos. The thousands of beis Torah at his funeral and the overwhelming majority of beis Torah at a hesped in his memory in Jerusalem—children and grandchildren of his congregants—are eloquent testimony to his success in this realm.

Besides serving for many years as the Av Beis Din of the justly respected Beis Din of K'hal Adath Jeshurun, and the Beis Din of Torah Umesorah, he was frequently called upon to decide crucial dinai Torah dealing with major Torah institutions.

Rabbi Schwab was not a bridge between two worlds, between East and West—bridges are not for living. He was rather the embodiment of the Eilu veEilu Divrei Elokim Chaim ("These and those are the words of the living G-d") of two sacred traditions. He embodied in one person two diverse Torah cultures—the glorious Frankfurt tradition of Rabbi Hirsch, with its emphasis on adherence to the emes and insistence on putting the stamp of Torah on every area of public and private endeavor... combined with unwavering devotion to intense Torah study, which was the hallmark of the great yeshivos of Lithuania. On the one hand, he absorbed the Chezfetz Chaim's caress; on the other, he observed the admonishment of the Alter Gerrer Rebbe who characterized Rabbi Hirsch as "a lebedike mussar seger." That combination was the reason why he was the inspiration and source of guidance to so many in the Torah community of America.

Rabbi Schwab was convinced that Torah im Derech Eretz offers a vision of Judaism "in a way that can be accepted... by the five-and-a-half-million uncommitted Jews in the vast spiritual wasteland that is today's America, in a language they can understand."

He exemplified the "Torah im Derech Eretz-ben Torah." Torah im Derech Eretz means "the subjugation and control of all mundane affairs by the royal sovereignty of the Torah." It is the goal to take the Torah out into the world in order to sanctify the Divine Name on earth by our every action. It demands the Torah's conquest of the world in order to sanctify the Name. Rabbi Schwab understood that the Torah im Derech Eretz-ben Torah is well aware of what happens in the world that surrounds him, "for he is constantly called upon to apply the yardstick of halachah and the searchlight of hashkafah to the realities that confront him." He also knows that Torah im Derech Eretz cannot be separated from Rav Hirsch's Austritt (secession) principle, which requires absolute separation from institutionalized heresy or any view of Judaism based on anything other than Torah. Without Austritt, Torah im Derech Eretz is merely a cover for a convenient lifestyle, and a rejection of its essence, which is the total domination by Torah of all of life.

Torah im Derech Eretz means hon-
esty and integrity in the business world and in the professions. It means seeing G‑d in the wonders of Creation, in the magnificence of nature, in the breathtaking discoveries of science and in the grandeur of plant and animal life. It means an awareness of the fact that everything in the physical world is a manifestation of the Shechina.

Rabbi Schwab himself attended neither high-school nor college; knowledge of the world and the wonders of Creation were self-taught. On nature walks with his children, he would tell them the names and nature of the flora and fauna. But the greatest revelation of G‑d is the Torah, and without that, man will not know what to do with the awareness of His existence. Whereas nature shows the wonders of the Creator, Torah reveals, as it were, the Creator Himself.

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski once put it all in perspective. While taking a walk in Switzerland, young Shimon Schwab pointed out the awesome Divine beauty of the Alps. "S'iz shaim," Reb Chaim Ozer agreed, "ober a Yid mit a bord iz noch shenerer." It would seem to this writer that the message was clear. One can perceive the Divine in nature as it performs G‑d's will instinctively. That, however, can never match the beauty of the Jew who performs the Divine imperative in free-willed volition.

"Torah of Truth"

early in life, his father taught him the importance of not only speaking the truth, but of living the truth. This writer recalls visiting the Rav as a young boy on the last day of Pesach, when the Rav told the following story.

"As a young boy around the age of Bar Mitzva, I decided to stand for the entire selihos on the night and day of Yom Kippur, a custom cited in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 619). My father, who was not one to ignore things like that, made no comment. On Motza'ei Yom Kippur, one of my younger brothers did something that was not to my liking, and I let him have it physically. My father slapped my face. I thought that you had perhaps attained the madrega of observing even a custom brought as yesh omdim (some stand) in the Shulchan Aruch," he said. "But your behavior immediately following Yom Kippur indicates that you reached no such level at all, and were just showing off. For that you got the potsch."

His insistence on emes extended to things which usually go unnoticed. His stationery said...TZN "Head of the Beis Din of the Kehilla Adath Jeshurun." When Rabbi Gelley joined the rabbinate, Rabbi Schwab began to cross out the words TZN on the stationery, even though he was still the Rav of the Kehilla, since he no longer sat on dinet Torah.

His first exposure to the insistence on emes in public life was from his revered Rabbi, the Frankfurter Rav, Rabbi Shlomo Breuer, who followed in the footsteps of his father-in-law. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch. Reb Shlomo Breuer refused to recognize any Jewish community not absolutely governed by Torah, firmly opposed cooperation between Jewish communities and organizations based on Torah with those opposed to it. "He hated the untruth," Rabbi Schwab wrote of his Rabbi, "but he despised even more the easy compromise between emes and shoked. the political double talk, which in the name of unity would relocate the Torah Nation to a modest niche, to a mere 'branch' within the superstructure of a nondescript Jewish People."

The Jewish Observer, Summer 1995


The Jewish Observer, Summer 1995

The Kehilla as an Instrument of Truth

The kehilla, Rabbi Schwab taught, is a microcosm of Halacha and as such is not beholden to any non-Torah authority, not associated with any board, federation, council, roof organization—local, national, or international—that is not absolutely and exclusively identified with the Law of Torah. The true kehilla will not subscribe to or encourage any Jewish orientation or philosophy which is not based on the truth of the Torah.

This was not mere talk. The Kehilla that he headed suffered great financial difficulty for its principled stand. Rabbi Nachum Sauer, c/o Yeshiva of Los Angeles, has developed a series of 67 in-depth tapes on assorted problems of Jewish law, to be within the parameters of Torah. The true Kehilla will not subscribe to or encourage any Jewish orientation or philosophy which is not based on the truth of the Torah.

The insistence of the absolute truth, and their adherents, who are tinokos shelamos (innocent victims), to whom we must reach out. The insistence of the absolute standard of emes in public life is impossible unless it is the outgrowth of unshakable honesty in one’s private affairs. And it is not enough, he never

Copying Tapes - Taxes - Bankruptcy - Maaser Kesafim - Ribis - Laws of Beit Din

These are among the most relevant Halachic issues of our day and affect the lives of every individual. Rabbi Nachum Sauer, Rosh Kollel of the Yeshiva of Los Angeles, has developed a series of 67 in-depth tapes on assorted problems of Jewish law, to be within the parameters of Torah. The true Kehilla will not subscribe to or encourage any Jewish orientation or philosophy which is not based on the truth of the Torah.

The insistence of the absolute standard of emes in public life is impossible unless it is the outgrowth of unshakable honesty in one’s private affairs. And it is not enough, he never

For a complete list send for a brochure. Each tape is approximately 90 min. long.


Name         Address         Phone

Send check to: Rabbi Nachum Sauer, c/o Yeshiva of Los Angeles, 9700 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035. A series of 70 tapes on assorted Halachic issues is currently available. Send for brochure for complete listing.
Revision, For the Sake of Truth

H is adherence to enes was such that he was willing to revise long-held views, even if that meant a reassessment of publicly stated positions. His views on the relevance of Torah im Derech Eretz are a case in point. With the rise of Nazism in the 1930's, Rabbi Schwab was convinced that Torah im Derech Eretz as expounded by Rabbi S.R. Hirsch was no longer relevant, not as an educational program and certainly not as a Weltanschauung. The barbarity of the Nazi beast (even before World War II), the virulent anti-Semitism in Germany, and the total failure of the ideals of enlightened humanism and Western culture to change the essential nature of gentile society led him to conclude that the only path for the Torah-observer German Jew was to return to the "Torah Only" approach, and to shun Western culture and the world at large as much as possible. Rabbi Hirsch's Torah im Derech Eretz ideal, he averred, was only a hora'as sha'ah, a temporary measure for a temporary situation. In 1934, he aired these views in a slim volume entitled Heimkehr ins Judentum (Homecoming into Judaism), which caused a sensation in German Orthodoxy.

But after coming to America, he concluded that the realties of the ghetto and the shul where one could spend all one's life in the local beis hamidrash, with its total dissociation from the rest of society, was a way of life that had also been consumed in the flames of the Holocaust. The realties of life in the United States and other Western countries, where the Jew traveled in non-Jewish circles and could not live totally apart from the society around him, were not ess-

sentially different from the situation in the Western Europe of Rabbi Hirsch. Furthermore, a careful study of all of Rabbi Hirsch's writings led him to the inevitable conclusion that he had never meant Torah im Derech Eretz as a hora'as sha'ah at all. It was not a compromise, a kada, or a heter. Although Rav Hirsch did not insist that it was for everyone, he certainly did not see it as time bound. Rabbi Schwab then publicly retracted his earlier insistence on "Torah Only" as

the sole way of life for the Torah Jew in Western society. (Rabbi Schwab always viewed the situation in Eretz Yisroel as essentially unique, but that is beyond the purview of this article.) To that end he published in 1966 a booklet entitled These and Those (Eilu v'Eilu), wherein he set forth the arguments and counter-arguments for both positions, with the conclusion, as the title indicates, that both, in their proper time and place, are legitimate ways of life for the Torah Jew in Western society.

There is an old Ashkenazi custom to call out "Emes" in the Aleynu prayer recited during the Chazaras Hashatz of Mussaf on the Yomim Noraim. He retained this custom even in America where others had ceased to observe it. His last words to a disciple were, "Re-

member, you must always tell the emes. I have many failings," he continued, "but one thing I never did was chianfa (flatter) people."

"...Was in His Mouth"

He taught himself to speak and write eloquent, polished English, for that was the medium to reach the hearts and minds of American Jewry. Even the best of speakers sometimes have an off day, but of him it was said that he never spoke less than perfectly. He was always inspiring, stimulating, never...
humdrum. At the Siyumei Hashas of the Daf Yomi, at Agudath Israel and Torah Umesorah conventions, his carefully crafted addresses set the tone and inspired the audience. He could admonish and suggest areas in need of improvement without alienating his listeners. Why? Because he respected his audiences and never took them for granted. Because of that respect, he was always well prepared. His listeners knew that whatever he said derived from a sense of heartfelt concern. And he spoke of nothing to which he himself did not adhere.

He viewed his ability to influence others in a totally different way. He felt that it was because he was a dachl rabbanan, one who feared the Sages. The Gemara says that such a person will either become a tzurva m’rabbanan, a sage in his own right, or, if incapable of that, will be listened to as if he were a sage. He put himself in the latter category.

His son once found his father standing and talking on the telephone, at a
halachically there was no problem whatsoever.

Kosher, he always stressed, refers not only to food but to money as well.

"While those who resort to cheating, trickery, dishonesty and fraud may at times have the outward appearance of being G-d-fearing Jews, they are, in fact, irreverent. They may well be strict in their observance of certain mitzvos, but in their business dealings they reveal that they are kofrim (infidels) in regard to Hashgacha pratis, Divine Providence. Since they certainly do not believe that G-d wants them to take what is not rightfully theirs, they are conducting their business as though He does not exist."

Glatt yosher, Rabbi S.R. Hirsch often said, is the child of truth; not the reverse.

He personified the imperative of the prophet Micha to be a hatzne'a leches in Elokecha, to walk humbly with G-d. Although requested at various times to serve on the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudath Israel, he refused, saying that he was not worthy of being a member of this august body.

The tzniut referred to by the prophet Micha means not only humility, but more importantly, a lack of ostentation. He despised conspicuous consumption. He pleaded incessantly for tzniut and simplicity in simchas, in manner of dress, and comportment, in lifestyles and vacations.

Tzniut, lack of ostentation, is no less important in spiritual matters. How does one walk with Hashem inconspicuously? For a person who truly walks with G-d, being in the public eye is no reason to manifest one's devoutness. Le'olam yehei adam yeret Shemayim beseter avechaty. One must always fear G-d, in private and in public. The question is obvious: One who does not fear G-d in private does not fear G-d at all. What does it mean to fear G-d in private? Hatzne'a leches, the Rov explained, requires that one's yiras Shamayim be something one has no need to show off. True yiras Shamayim is between you and G-d, and the more yiras Shamayim one has, the less should others be aware of it. The Gemara tells us that the Isha Hashunamis (Shunanite woman) knew that Elisha the Prophet was a holy man because flies did not disturb him, among other private indications. Couldn't she tell that he was a kedusha by just looking at him and watching his behavior? The answer is that true kedusha, true yiras Shamayim is not readily apparent to the casual observer. One sees nothing extraordinary on the externals of the true tzaddik. He learned this, he said, from the Chofetz Chaim. If one was zocheh, one could see the Shechina on his visage, but otherwise, he looked like a plain man dressed in the clothes of a simple laborer, with an ordinary cap pulled low over his forehead. The greater the gadol, the more simple the comportment. Real kedusha is within; as soon as it becomes manifested outwardly, it is diminished.

The Rov personified this in his daily life and in his davening, which was without noise or fuss. From his early youth, when no one watched or cared, the first pesukim of Krias Shema took him an inordinate amount of time to recite. Only his family knew that he began davening at home, much before he came to shul, and when the congregation was at Borchu, he was already holding by the second berachah of Krias Shema. In his later years, or when illness prevented him from davening with a minyan in shul, his teffilos at home were wrenching in their intensity—but

PINCHAS MANDEL

Over 40 Years Experience In Kvura In Eretz Yisrael
Personal Responsibility Throughout Service—NO AFFILIATES
ORIGINATOR OF THE PRESENT METHOD
Highly Recommended by Gedolai Hador — Here and in Eretz Yisrael
1569-47th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11219
Day & Night Phone: (718) 851-8925

The Jewish Observer, Summer 1995
never when anyone was watching.

For years he would buy two esrogim for Succos. The exquisite one, for which he spent a large sum of money, he kept at home. He took the simpler one to shul.

The hiddur mitzva was pure, with no element of public display. Kavana in mitzvos was not limited to the more glamorous ones. One must have no less kavana in one's daily benching, he used to say, than one has when eating the first k'zayis of maizah on Pesach.

One who walks with G-d feels that he is always in the Divine presence. Rabbi Schwab's regal bearing reflected that. He was his children's best friend, yet his son testified that until his father was 83 years old and in the hospital, he never saw him in bed. He spared himself little time for rest, citing Rav Hirsch on the verse, "Vayikatz Yaakov mishnaso: Ehr hat sich ge'ekelt fun sein shlyk—He was revolted by his sleep." Yet for all his busy schedule and his dignified demeanor, he always had time for his children. His Shabbos and Yom Tov table were occasions of sheer delight.

When one walks with G-d, it is insufficient merely to start the journey with his Creator. Every step of the way must reflect that reality. The prophet Isaiah criticized the Jewish People, "Vatehi yirasam osei mitzvas anashim melumada—they did their mitzvos as if by rote." Rabbi Schwab explained that not only one's mitzva performance, but even one's yiras Shamayim can become mechanical. Even a person's kanaus and path in life must be under constant scrutiny so that it not become stale.

Walking withHashem means constant awareness of His presence. He always stressed that the prime necessity of the Jew was emuna peshuta, an uncomplicated awareness of G-d's closeness and Hashgacha pratis. Emuna (which Rav Hirsch relates to orein, nurse) is the feeling of security and well-being one must have, sensing the protective and caring presence of G-d—as a nursing child feels in his mother's arms. In this manner Rabbi Schwab lived for eighty-six years, and when the time came for him to leave this world, it was in the same calm and trusting manner.

On Rosh Chodesh Adar I, 5755, he was hospitalized after a heart attack. On the eve of Purim Katan, he suffered another severe attack. Now that his teachers were paid, he could leave the world. His family gathered around his bed and he calmly recited Vidduy, Shema Yisroel, Boruch Shem, and the seven-fold Hashem Hu HaElokim. With the seventh Hashem Hu HaElokim, he returned his soul to his Maker, moving on to the Olam Haemes as he lived, declaring "Hashem Hu HaElokim," the fundamental truth of the universe.