Placing Judaic Values at the Center of the Jewish Agenda

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Rabbi Anthony Knopf is Rabbi of Camps Bay Hebrew Congregation, Cape Town, South Africa. He was previously Associate Rabbi at Hampstead Garden Suburb Synagogue in London, and was Rabbinic Liaison for the Tag Institute for Jewish Social Values from 2011 to 2012. This article appears in issue 20 of Conversations, the journal of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

In the modern period, several distinguished thinkers have denied that there is such a thing as Judaic values. For them, Judaism is so radically legalistic that it does not recognize any ethical demands that are not grounded in halakha. Quite aside from this philosophical position, there is a prevalent attitude in the contemporary observant Jewish community that regards the sole goal of religious life as adherence to halakha.

In this article, I argue that an approach to Judaism that is limited to observance of Jewish law is inconsistent with numerous classical, medieval, and modern rabbinic sources. Indeed, these sources emphasise and present perspectives on life that transcend concern with halakhic rules. An approach to life based on Torah ideas carries serious implications, both for character development and for standards of behavior that complement the demands of halakha.

In the final section of the article, I expand on these sources to elucidate the pivotal importance of outlook, character development and ethical and spiritual behavior for a Torah life. While this would be true in any generation, it is all the more crucial that we address these concerns in our own time. The relative neglect of these matters in Jewish scholarship and Jewish life is highly regrettable, and the need to redress that neglect is essential.

Reducing Judaism to a Legal System

In his book, *Judaism, Human Values and the Jewish State*, the late Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz contends that Judaism does not "consist of a specific ethic." Leibowitz argues that Judaism produced no ethical theory of its own and "made no pretences of representing a specific moral point of view."[1] According to Leibowitz's thesis, Judaism consists of halakha—the body of commandments that are to be observed for the sole reason that God commanded them and without appeal to any underlying or

overarching value system.

The position that Judaism is defined exclusively by the legal decisions of halakha was also embraced by such an eclectic range of scholars as Baruch Spinoza, Moses Mendelssohn, Immanuel Kant, and Marvin Fox. [2]

The limitation of Judaic norms to halakha, far from being confined to the writings of philosophers, is a pervasive feature of contemporary Jewish religious life. The late Rabbi Yehuda Amital contrasts this common attitude with the religious approach that was prevalent in his youth:

We live in an era in which educated religious circles like to emphasize the centrality of Halakha, and commitment to it, in Judaism. I can say that in my youth in pre-Holocaust Hungary, I didn't hear people talking all the time about "Halakha." People conducted themselves in the tradition of their forefathers, and where any halakhic problems arose, they consulted a rabbi.... The impression created is that there is nothing in Torah but that which exists in Halakha, and that in any confrontation with the new problems that arise in modern society, answers should be sought exclusively in books of Halakha. [3]

R. Amital deplores a commonplace equation of Judaism with the observance of halakha. This attitude sometimes manifests itself in subtle ways. Rabbi Micha Berger notes that, even those diligent students who show up for "*Mussar Seder*" in yeshiva, often choose the Laws of *Lashon haRa* as their topic of study. Such subject matter, although of undeniable importance, is focused on halakhic behavior rather than character development. The emphasis is on behaving in accordance with Jewish law rather than developing an attitude toward life that is rooted in Torah sources.[4]

Rabbi Eugene Korn[5] presents an insightful explanation for the development of this attitude within the observant Jewish community. R. Korn notes that, over the generations, Jews have been threatened by Greek and Roman culture, the Church, the Enlightenment, rationalism and post-modernism. The Jewish community responded with a reaffirmation of their commitment that generated an antipathy toward explaining the underlying values behind specific *mitzvot* as well as more general philosophical reflection on the purpose of God's covenant with the Jewish people. The latter pursuits were deemphasised in favor of a focus on the importance of authority. Historical explanations aside, it behoves us to ask whether this approach to Judaism is consistent with the approach of Torah authorities throughout the generations.

In 1942, Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler delivered a provocative talk at the Gateshead *Kollel*. Central to R. Dessler's presentation was the thesis that a Jew can observe all the laws of the *Shulhan Arukh* and still only reach "the aleph of Judaism." R. Dessler's student, Rabbi Aryeh Carmel, testifies that this assertion stimulated a good deal of heated discussion. In this next section, I will discuss some of the sources that I believe underlie the position that Judaism requires us to transcend observance of the laws of the *Shulhan Arukh*.

The Centrality of Judaic Values: Worldview, Character, and Behavior

A proper understanding of Jewish sources reveals a concern, not only with proper conduct, but with the development of an appropriate worldview. In a pertinent verse in *Sefer Mishlei*, we are told that "Without a vision, the people perish."[6] Indeed, a true understanding of Jewish tradition is one that includes a vision for the Jewish People and for the world.

The importance of outlook and attitude can be understood through analysis of the Rambam's statements regarding the importance of the mitzvah of *tsedaka*. In *Hilkhot Matanot Aniyim*, the Rambam writes: "We are obligated to be meticulous with the mitzva of charity more than with all [other] positive commandments."[7]

As Rabbi Judah Goldberg has noted,[8] there seems to be no halakhic basis for Rambam's assertion that one must take more care over the mitzvah of *tsedaka*. Halakha does not distinguish between the legal force of the obligation of *tsedaka* and that of other positive commandments. The actual basis of the Rambam's position can be seen from his affirmation that "*tsedaka* is a mark of the righteous descendants of our father Abraham." The Rambam quotes from Sefer *Bereshit*, where Hashem reveals the reason why He singled out Abraham for a special relationship:

For I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of God to do righteousness ["tsedaka"] and justice, so that God may bring upon Avraham that which He has spoken of him. [9]

We see in from this that the Rambam's basis for his emphasis on the mitzvah of *tsedaka* is not based on its legal status but through identification of *tsedaka* as fundamental to the Jewish mission and to our identity as the progeny of Abraham.

In modern times, the importance of developing a Judaic philosophy through which one understands and evaluates one's life experience was emphasised by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch:

The ideal of a perfect personal and national life, along with an understanding of the ultimate goal of all human development, are to be derived from the knowledge of the Torah. It is this ideal and this understanding that, first of all, must become the standard by which to measure and evaluate the modern non-Jewish world with all its spiritual, moral, and social phenomena that mark the lives of men and nations.[10]

As Dayan Isidor Grunfeld explains, Rabbi Hirsch understood that such philosophies should be extrapolated from halakhic texts.[11] In a similar vein, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik supports the development of what he calls "reconstructionist explanations" to discern what religious ideas are presented through the laws. Although R. Soloveitchik rejects the legitimacy of asking about the reason that Hashem gave us particular commandments or even how observance of mitzvoth achieves its desired effect, he does endorse the quest to find the meaningfulness of mitzvoth for the individual and society. According to R. Soloveitchik, Torah-observant Jews should not suffice with compliance to halakhic obligation but should ask themselves the question: "How can I integrate and assimilate this mitzvah into my religious consciousness and outlook?"[12]

On other occasions, R. Soloveitchik emphasised the importance of basing one's worldview on an understanding of *Tanakh*. The Rav's dismay at the failure to read the Bible in this way is instructive:

Many Jews don't look to the Bible for guidance, and its spiritual message, so indispensable for man today, is completely ignored... the most beautiful aspect of the Bible is its Weltanschauung, its world view, its spiritual outlook upon both the world and man.[13]

The approach exemplified by Rambam and advocated by R Hirsch, R Soloveitchik and others is that Judaism teaches a philosophy of life which, while sometimes grounded in halakhic texts, is not limited to commitment to their specific imperatives. The development of a Judaic worldview impacts on another important facet of Torah life—character development. In the understanding of our Sages, Jews are not only expected to develop a worldview but also to develop certain virtuous dispositions.

Indeed, in *Shabbat* 113b, Abba Shaul is quoted as emphasising the imperative to emulate the characteristics of Hashem: “Be like Him! Just as He is gracious and compassionate, you shall be gracious and compassionate!”[14]

This understanding is supported by the Rambam in *Hilkhot De’ot,* where he explains the mitzvah of walking in the way of God to require an emulation of His attributes. He writes that this involves developing the characteristics of grace, mercy, and holiness. The Rambam continues:

In a similar manner, the prophets called God by other titles: "Slow to anger," "Abundant in kindness," "Righteous," "Just," "Perfect," "Almighty," "Powerful," and the like. [They did so] to inform us that these are good and just paths. A person is obligated to accustom himself to these paths and [to try to] resemble Him to the extent of his ability.[15]

These rulings are consistent with Rambam’s writing in *Hilkhot Teshuvah*. In a statement that explicitly negates the notion that Judaism is concerned with behavior alone, the Rambam writes:

You mustn’t say that *teshuvah* (repentance) only applies to sins that involve action such as promiscuity and robbery and theft. Rather, just as a man needs to do *teshuvah* for sins involving actions, so too he needs to search to identify his evil attributes. He must do *teshuvah* for anger and for hatred and for jealousy and for frivolity and for the pursuit of money and honor and for the pursuit of foods and the like. He must do *teshuvah* for all of these.[16]

The character traits listed by the Rambam do not violate any particular negative transgression. Nevertheless, as Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein argues, the fact that the Rambam uses this term to describe them suggests that, to the extent that they are corrosive to one’s optimal spiritual personality, they are sinful.[17]

The same understanding was advanced in the sixteenth century by Rabbi Eliezer Azkiri in his *Sefer* Hareidi*m*. In his explanation of the mitzvah to walk in the ways of Hashem, R. Azkiri cites the rabbinic interpretation that one should emulate the merciful and gracious attributes of God and that one should adopt the golden mean with regard to all character traits.[18]

According to the Vilna Gaon, the development of appropriate character traits is not only essential but foundational to our lives as religious Jews. In *Even Shelemah,* the Gaon is quoted as comparing the relationship of Torah to the soul to that of rain and the ground. Just as rain causes the growth of whatever was planted prior to the rain, so too “Torah causes what is in his heart to grow”:

If what is in his heart is good, his fear [of God] will grow; if what is in his heart is a “root sprouting poison weed and wormwood” then the bitterness that is in his head will grow. As it is written, “the righteous will walk in it, and sinners will stumble in it” (*Hoshea* 14:10, as explained by *Hazal*), and as

it is written, “To those who go to the right side of it, it is a medicine of life; to those who go to its left, it is a deadly poison,” (*Shabbat* 88b)... One who is lazy in weeding out an evil *middah* is not helped by all the legal fences and protections that he practices. For with any disease which is not cured from within...even the fence of the Torah, which protects and saves, will be useless because of his laziness. [19]

The Vilna Gaon’s position, based on classical sources in *Hazal*, carries a remarkable message! If a person whose character traits are desirable learns Torah, he becomes even greater as a result. But learning Torah without attention to character refinement will simply produce more forceful personalities with inappropriate character traits.

As Rabbi Soloveitchik explains, developing appropriate character traits also impacts on the performance of mitzvoth:

When a person visits the sick, he must join in with their pain; when he comforts the mourners, he must mourn with them in his heart; and when he gives a person charity, he must bear that person’s burden and empathize with his pain.[20]

Elsewhere, the Rav gives homiletical expression to this approach when he discusses Hashem’s choice of the Patriarchs and His choice of the Jewish nation at Sinai. The patriarchal covenant is compared to the process of *ibud*, or treating parchment in order to render it suitable for being used as a Torah scroll. The Sinai covenant is compared to the actual writing of the letters on the scroll. The meaning of this analogy is that, just as the letters of the scroll cannot be written without *ibud*, the Jew cannot properly observe the laws of the Sinai covenant, unless he performs *ibud* on his personality—that is to say, he develops a character that is modeled on that of the Patriarchs. The Rav explains that this *ibud* involves efforts to control desire and passion as well as the development of empathy and compassion toward others.[21] From Rav Soloveitchik’s discourse we learn that, in seeking to develop a character in line with Jewish norms, we must model ourselves, not only on the divine attributes, but also on the characteristics of our biblical ancestors.

Thus far, we have discussed the importance of developing both a Judaic worldview and a character modeled on our understanding of the divine characteristics and the examples set by our biblical role models. Both worldview and character relate primarily to the internal world of the intellect and emotion. However, the relevance of Jewish values extends beyond these realms and into the sphere of behavior. Our sources are clear that a Jew must not suffice with ensuring his conduct is consistent with Jewish law. In addition to halakhic compliance, he must behave in a way consistent with broader values.

Marc Shapiro offers anecdotal support for this proposition from an encounter he had with a pre-eminent sage of the late twentieth century. Shapiro relates that he once went to Gateshead to interview Rabbi Betzalel Rakov, the Gateshead Rov, about the latter’s relationship with Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg. Prior to the meeting, Shapiro visited the local Jewish book store. He was informed that, if he were a yeshiva student, he could purchase a book at a discounted price. When Shapiro later met with R. Rakov, he asked him if it would have been acceptable for one of the yeshiva students to buy the book at a discount and for Shapiro to reimburse him. R Rakov replied that there was certainly no halakhic problem involved. But he then added: “Yet it would not be ethical.”[22]

R. Rakov's response would seem shocking to those who assume that Judaic norms can be reduced to halakhic rules. In actual fact, though, R. Rakov is following in the tradition of the Ramban who wrote explicitly that it would be impossible for the Torah to provide instruction for all morally challenging scenarios. The nature of moral decision-making is too dependent on the specific context and situation within which they occur to be defined, in all instances, by technical halakhic rulings. In many instances, the answer to a moral question cannot be answered by learning the relevant area of halakha but, rather, by the application of ethical principles to the given dilemma.[23]

Shapiro's anecdote does not reveal R. Rakov's understanding of the basis for his judgment that the behavior in question was unethical. As we shall see, however, our traditional literature presents a number of approaches to moral judgment that complement the Jew's compliance with halakhic imperatives.

An intimation of such an approach can be found in Rabbenu Bahya's introduction to *Duties of the Heart*. Quoting a wise man who had referred to wisdom in the hearts of the wise, he explains that "[t]he meaning is that wisdom is implanted in man's nature, in his character and his powers of perception." This intellectual stimulus, explains Rabbenu Bahya, helps man to praise truth, denigrate falsity, choose righteousness and condemn injustice. Rabbenu Bahya identifies a moral compass within the recesses of man's intellect that he understands to be, in some instances, a reliable arbiter of correct behavior. It is not clear from this passage, however, that he understands that this can lead to moral judgements that are not already incorporated within halakha.

Such an approach, is, however, affirmed by the Rambam who writes in his *Guide for the Perplexed* that a person will be rewarded for doing what is right and honorable and punished for any deed that he understands to be improper, *even if it is not specifically forbidden*.[24] According to the Rambam, an action can be considered neutral from the vantage point of halakha but recognized by the moral intuition to be inappropriate behavior.

This understanding was affirmed in a different context by the thirteenth century talmudic commentator, Rabbi Menachem Meiri. In explanation of the Talmud's requirement that human beings be treated with the reverence due to a Torah scroll, the Meiri writes that humans are endowed with the capacity for discerning, with their own minds, obligations that are not explicitly stated in the Torah.[25] Hence, it is Meiri's view that human beings possess an innate moral sense with which they can discern ethical imperatives and that, amongst them, there are obligations that are not required by halakha.

In more modern times, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch writes at some length about the moral law that he understands to be implanted in every man. He often writes of "the conscience which is embedded in every human beast" and he stresses that this human conscience is a manifestation of the voice of God.[26] For R Hirsch, therefore, while revelation is encapsulated in the obligations and strictures of halakha it is also manifest in the moral conscience.

We see from the foregoing discussion that, according to an important strand of Judaic thought, a person is expected to use his moral intuition as well as his halakhic knowledge when deciding how to behave. Some of our authorities explicitly recognize this intuitive capacity as a receptivity of human beings to the wisdom of Hashem.

For many authorities, however, the source of Judaic values lies more in Torah sources than the moral intuition.[27] Although the knowledge of halakha is a non-negotiable for the committed Jew, it is necessary to learn both halakhic and aggadic texts with an eye for their underlying values.

One concept that has been used as a foundation for Jewish norms beyond halakhic compliance is the notion of *imitatio Dei*. In the Gemara in *Sotah*, the rabbis interpret the imperative to walk in the way of God[28] as mandating the performance of benevolent actions such as clothing the naked, visiting the sick, comforting mourners, and burying the dead.[29] As discussed above, the concept of *imitatio Dei* was understood by the Rambam and others to require the development of dispositions. Nevertheless, the Rambam also adhered to the interpretation requiring certain modes of behavior on this basis:

This commandment is also repeated in the verse: “Walk after God your Lord.” This too is explained as emulating the good deeds and fine attributes which are used to allegorically describe God, Who is immeasurably exalted over everything.[30]

Another key concept in the understanding of Judaic norms is the paradoxical obligation of *lifnim mishurat haDin* (going beyond the letter of the law).[31] This principle is applied to the returning of lost property and helping a stranded donkey driver load his donkey,[32] the paying of compensation for a loss caused only indirectly,[33] and returning a purchased parcel of land to the original owner who had reason to regret having sold it.[34]

That this obligation is of the utmost importance can be demonstrated by reference to the statement of Rav Yochanan, who cites the failure to go beyond the letter of the law as the reason for the destruction of Jerusalem.[35] We see from this the concept of *lifnim mishurat hadin* that even a generation that complies with all the regulations of Jewish law can be found so guilty as to be deserving of the destruction of the Temple.[36]

According to the Ramban, the requirement to act *lifnim mishurat hadin* is required by the biblical verse instructing us to “do what is upright and good in the eyes of God.” Rabbi Simcha Zissel Broide, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Yeshivat Hevron*, explains the Ramban’s approach as requiring an extrapolation of general principles of behavior based on an in-depth study of mitzvoth:

“And do the right and the good” is not a specific mitzva but a general mitzva: to delve deeply into the understanding of mitzvot and the reasons behind them; to comprehend and contemplate and appreciate, through the mitzvot that we are commanded to perform, also those obligations that are not explicit. We must develop an understanding of what is really God’s desire from us, and what is good and right in His eyes.[37]

Hence, from the Ramban’s perspective, legal imperatives legislated by the Torah constitute a non-exhaustive list of examples of how the ideals of Judaism can be realised. Study of the underlying principles facilitates their application beyond the scope of halakhic observance.

The acceptance of an extra-halakhic norm in Judaism is the unmistakable conclusion from numerous rabbinic sources. According to *Hazal*,[38] a person who fails to pray for another in need is categorized as a sinner. Although such a person would not be in violation of any specific halakhic rule, his insensitivity and inaction warrants such a description. Indeed, according to the Talmud, taking a loaf that a pauper was about to pick up, raising one’s hand to strike another, and making a vow in God’s name even though one fulfills it, stigmatize the perpetrator as wicked even though there is no violation of halakha.[39]

In the ninth century, Rabbenu Bahya ibn Paquda wrote *Duties of the Heart*, one of the great classics of Jewish ethics and spirituality. In the middle of his *Gate of Service of God*, he asserts that halakha “divides human actions into three categories: commands, prohibitions, and permitted acts.” However, in his ensuing elaboration, Rabbenu Bahya explains that those actions that might be regarded from a technical perspective as permitted are, from the vantage point of a broader Judaic ethic, either obligatory or prohibited.

If one is engaging in a (halakhically permissible) activity in order to fulfill his basic needs, he is, in fact, fulfilling a commandment.[40] To engage excessively in that which is technically

permitted—whether it is drinking, eating, wearing extravagant dress, living in overly large homes, talking excessively or being overly preoccupied with money and material possessions—is contrary to many principles found in *Sefer Mishlei* and to the spirit of certain passages in *Sefer Devarim*. They are, states Rabbenu Bahya, contemptible because they bring a person to engage in that which is prohibited. If, on the other hand, a person takes less physical sustenance than he needs then, if he is motivated by piety, his behavior is appropriately classified as a *mitzvah*. On the other hand, if one takes less than necessary in order to save money or in order that he be praised, then this is, in fact forbidden.

On the basis of this analysis, Rabbenu Bahya affirms that "it is now evident that all human actions are either commanded or prohibited." Rabbenu Bahya, when discussing the technical legal status of human actions, had affirmed the existence of the category of the permitted. He now insists that even that which is halakhically permissible must be considered in the light of broader axiological considerations to be either praiseworthy or reprehensible.[41]

For the Rambam, too, The norms of the Torah extend beyond the obligations and prescriptions of halakha. In *Mishneh Torah*, he rules that it is permissible to depart from the land of Israel to learn Torah or to engage in commerce. Indeed, it is permissible to dwell outside the land of Israel indefinitely in the circumstance of a severe famine. After recording this ruling, the Rambam continues:

Even though it is permitted to leave, it is not pious behavior, for behold, Machlon and Kilyon were two giants of their generation and they left out of great distress and they incurred destruction from God.[42]

Hence, according to the Rambam, leaving in such circumstances is halakhically permissible but could be so inappropriate as to warrant premature death! [43]

Congruous with this passage is the Rambam's ruling that "a person who separates from the ways of the community" is "as if he were not from [the Jewish People]" and "has no share in the World to Come" even if "he has not committed any transgressions."[44]

It seems remarkable that the Rambam considers excluding someone from the World to Come even though he has not committed any transgressions! However, this position is well understood when Judaism is seen as not merely avoidance of transgression and observance of precepts but also as an existential bond to the Jewish nation and its destiny. Indeed, Rav Soloveitchik has referred to this passage as an example of the Rambam's ascribing importance to the covenant established amongst the Jewish People through their common experience in Egypt, in addition to the covenant that was forged at Sinai.[45]

Perhaps the most famous affirmation of the unacceptability of a minimal compliance with Jewish law is found in Ramban's celebrated commentary to the mitzvah of *kedoshim tiheyu* (be holy). In this passage, Ramban claims that a person could "indulge in perversion with his wife, or many wives, and revel in wine, eat meat to excess, and use foul language to his heart's content" and still not be in violation of halakha as "there is no prohibition against this explicit in the Torah." In a revealing phrase, the Ramban explains that such a person would be in the category of a "scoundrel with the permission of the Torah."[46] This means that a person can live in a way that is in accordance with the regulations found in the Torah and still behave in such a way that, from the perspective of the value system of the Torah, is deeply reprehensible.[47]

In his *Shaarei Teshuvah*, Rabbenu Yonah listed the different categories of people who do not merit a share in the next world (considered the most severe of all punishments). Included in those categories are those who cannot receive the divine presence, namely, scoffers, liars, fawners, and talebearers.[48] Despite the exceptional condemnation allocated to the perpetrators of such behavior, it is striking that

only the last of these practices is explicitly forbidden by the Torah.[49]

In the nineteenth century, Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin contrasted a life of compliance with halakha with the more exemplary conduct of our forefathers:

And this was the praise of the Patriarchs, that besides their being *tzaddikim*, *hassidim*, and lovers of God in the most perfect way, they were also *yesharim*; that is, they conducted themselves toward others, even toward despicable idol worshippers, with love; they cared about providing for their benefit, as that keeps the world in existence. Thus, we see that our patriarch Avraham prayed for the city of Sedom, even though he hated them and their king with the utmost enmity due to their evil ways, as is clear from his statement to the king of Sedom; still, he sought their survival… For this reason, the book of *Bereishit*, which delineates the actions of the Patriarchs, is known as *sefer ha-yashar*.

According to the Netziv, the Patriarchs were not merely righteous but were upright (*yashar*). Far from being limited to righteous behavior, they behaved with love and care toward all human beings.[50]

Judaic Values and Contemporary Jewry

In the previous section, we have demonstrated that there is a pervasive theme in the writings of Torah authorities to the effect that Judaism requires us to develop a worldview based on Judaic sources. We have argued that such a worldview carries consequences for our approach to character development. Both the character traits that Jews must develop and the worldview that they must adopt carry implications for how they must behave. In this section, we will explain the significance of this emphasis for the Jewish religious life. Although these areas of normative Judaism are essential for any generation in history, we will argue that they are particularly vital for the current Jewish generation. This importance renders the neglect of these areas all the more regrettable and the need to redress that neglect, all the more essential.

Rabbi Yehuda Levi has compared one who carefully studies halakha but fails to develop a Torah worldview to a person who drives very carefully and takes good care of his car but forgets to check whether he is on the correct road and going in the right direction.[51] This analogy is most apt and we will have more to say later on in explanation of the religious significance of an individual's worldview. Before doing so, however, I would like to apply R. Levy's analogy to the Jewish community. As rabbis and religious communal leaders, we rightly seek to promote the observance of halakha. But, in the light of the sources discussed in the previous section, we must also develop an understanding of what the values (other than keeping halakha) a Jewish community should represent. Jewish leaders in every generation must develop a vision for their community—a vision that is based on a sound understanding of Torah sources. It is essential to teach the Jewish community which road we must travel on and in which direction.

Indeed, it is often this very vision that is lacking in our own generation. In Seymour Fox's 1973 essay, "Toward a General Theory of Jewish Education," he argues that issues such as insufficient hours of study and a lack of qualified personnel and curricula were really symptoms of a deeper problem: the lack of a vision of what should be achieved through Jewish education.

"In short," writes Fox:

I maintain that the most urgent problem facing Jewish education today is its lack of purpose and, consequently, blandness... [I]t is my feeling that the investigation of most forms of Jewish education, except for the ultra-Orthodox, would reveal that their curricula and methods of teacher training bear little resemblance to what the leadership of the given movement, school, or institution claims to be central in its conception of education.[52]

The need for a strong focus on outlook and values in contemporary Jewish education can be further substantiated through reference to the attitude of contemporary Jews toward charity and social justice. In the course of this article, the importance of loving kindness from a Torah perspective has been supported by reference to the *raison d'être* of the Jewish People, the goal and imperative of *imitatio Dei* and the example set by the Biblical patriarchs. Despite this, the bestowal of loving kindness is amongst those mitzvoth for which halakha does not define a set measure.[53] This means that the extent to which one is focused on giving to others, and, in many respects, the way in which one does so are not determined by the halakha but must be decided based on Judaic values. As such, a significant facet of a Judaic outlook would be concerned with our attitude toward these issues.

It is, therefore, of great concern that contemporary Jews do not seem to have heard this message. Commenting on the efforts to secure Jewish continuity in England over the last two decades, Dr. Jonathan Boyd, Executive Director of the Jewish Institute for Policy Research in London, reports a worrying state of affairs. Although many Jews are involved in supporting Israel and fighting anti-Semitism, far fewer are regularly involved in charity work. Indeed, the research shows that over a third of Jewish students polled disagreed with the idea that being Jewish is about volunteering or donating to charity or supporting social justice causes. While the aforementioned activities certainly do not amount to an adequate expression of Judaism, the failure to identify them as core aspects of a Torah life suggest that Jewish leaders and educators have failed to communicate this core Jewish value. Boyd perceptively expresses concern about a generation of Jews who seem to have been shaped more by the negative forces that seek to do damage to the Jewish People than by Judaism's own positive internal values system.[54]

On the other side of the pond, the evidence suggests that young Jews in the United States do, indeed, engage in charitable activity. However, the very same reports record that the vast majority of such Jews fail to connect such volunteerism to Jewish identity or Jewish values.[55]

Given the nature of many of the programmes advanced under the banner of "*tikkun olam*," this should not come as a surprise. Often, such projects lack any distinctive Judaic basis and simply resemble what is being done by people of conscience the world over. If this is the case, it is difficult to see how such activities, while valuable in their own right, can constitute a meaningful expression of distinctive Jewish values. As Dr. Yehudah Mirsky has noted, humanitarianism, social justice and ecological advocacy are not distinctively "Jewish" as such. Mirsky writes:

[E]ncouraging young people who are otherwise indifferent to or estranged from Jewish life to engage in humanitarian work with no distinctive—let alone transformative—Jewish dimensions other than the label "Tikkun Olam" will strengthen neither Jewish identities nor Jewish life. [56]

Indeed, if Jewish educators and communal leaders are to engage contemporary Jewry with the substance of Jewish tradition, what is necessary is not the promotion of a bland social justice agenda. Rather, there is a need for a serious exploration of the way in which Judaic values and Jewish life can illuminate problems and potential solutions to issues of broad human concern that might otherwise go undiscovered.[57]

Our recognition of the disparity between Torah values and the outlook of contemporary Jews compounds our conviction that we must address the question of how we can model an educational and communal structure to actualise a vision for a community representing Jewish values. In accordance with the ideology of *Torah im derekh erets*, the Torah's value system can and should be applied to the whole range of worldly endeavours.***[58]*** Contemporary Jews must be taught that Torah has relevance to all areas of human life and should not be seen as confined to technical halakhic questions. In this respect too, our generation often falls short. In explaining what he sees as one of the main causes of defection from Judaism, Rabbi Berel Wein identifies our failure to articulate a national vision:

The Torah [has ideas], but someone has to articulate them. What's our attitude toward the poorer sections of society? Toward the Arabs? Toward anything?... We don't say that we are going to fix the world; we don't say those things even though it is part of our heritage, even though that's part of Torah.[59]

If we neglect to articulate these values, people will see Judaism as unconnected to the issues and realities with which they grapple. At worst, this results in a failure to engage the present generation of Jews. At best, those who are faithful to Judaism will be divided personalities, unable to integrate Judaic wisdom with their worldly activity.

We have argued throughout this article that a focus on the observance of halakha must be balanced by a concentration on the Judaic worldview, character and behavior that extends beyond compliance with Jewish law. Nothing could be further from the intent of this writer than the claim that values provide an *alternative* to adherence to halakha. On the contrary, a focus on Jewish values should reinforce halakhic observance. Our success in inspiring our students and communities to keep halakha will be enhanced immensely if we develop and disseminate a consciousness of the underlying values of Jewish laws. Professor of psychology and education Aharon Hersh Fried, has written cogently in this vein. With regard to the halakhot relating to appropriate speech, Fried emphasises that children will observe these laws when an appreciation is developed for their underlying values:

We must teach our children to respect others and to refrain from disparaging others. Much time and effort is spent on teaching our children the *issurim* involved in speaking *lashon haRa*. Thus we teach them that there are 16 *lavim* involved in every *lashon haRa*. But that is not enough. Unless and until we teach children to respect other people's privacy, and unless we teach them that sticking our proverbial noses into other people's business is inherently disgusting, they will not cease to find "*heteirim*" for speaking *lashon haRa*, if only for the most "juicy pieces."[60]

While Fried refers to the education of children, the same principle holds for our own efforts to adhere to halakhic strictures as well as to our endeavours in educating and guiding adults toward mitzvah observance.

This approach is effective in reinforcing halakhic commitment as it elicits a sense of the meaningfulness of the observance of a given mitzvah. However, the significance of the appreciation of the spiritual meaning of the mitzvot is not confined to its resulting in a more punctilious observance of mitzvot. R Soloveichik has emphasised the intrinsic importance of *avodah she-ba-lev*—worship of the heart—in every religious act:

The ritual as well as moral actions must be endowed with emotional warmth, love and joy and the mechanical act converted into a living experience. Of course, all this unattainable if there is no message to deliver, no idea to suggest, no enriching meaning. In order to offer God my heart and soul, in order to serve Him inwardly, one thing is indispensible- understanding, the involvement of the logos.[61]

The Rav explains that an appreciation of the spiritual meaning of a mitzvah is essential, not only as a means of decreasing the rate of halakhic infraction but as facilitating the passion and spiritual connection that should characterise our *avodat Hashem*.

While these considerations are relevant to every generation, there is reason to believe that they are particularly essential in our own time. Writing about educational priorities in Hareidi schools, Jonathan Rosenbloom has warned that

[I]n our headlong pursuit of covering ever greater amounts of material in the classroom— which is too often the criterion by which our educational institutions compete—we have come to view *middos* development or explaining the deeper meaning of the *mitzvos* as something not quite serious, something "*ba'al teshuvish*."[62]

A failure to concentrate on such elements can lead to an erosion of halakhic commitment. In her study of formerly Orthodox Jews who had left the path of halakhic observance, Faranak Margolese enquired as to the level of spiritual enrichment that such Jews had experienced in the context of halakhic practice. Only 24 percent of respondents felt that their community had fostered spirituality while 56 percent declined to agree that “Orthodox Judaism will make you more spiritual.”[63] What this shows is that our community has been unsuccessful in communicating to its members the spiritual richness that can be found in a halakhic observance based on an appreciation of its underlying meaning. The Jewish poet, Roger Kamenetz, relates that a young woman once told him that “to her, Judaism is an old man saying no.”[64] Unless there is an appreciation for the positive values expressed through Jewish practice, halakhic observance will often seem like a set of arbitrary restrictions, dissociated from its true spiritual richness.

Having reflected on the importance of defining communal and individual objectives based on Torah values and understanding *mitzvot* in such a way that facilitates a committed and passionate observance, we must now reflect on the duty to measure one’s behavior against the standards of Jewish ethics. Referring to both Rav Amital’s observations of the contemporary Jewish scene and the Ramban’s aforementioned condemnation of an unspiritual life within halakhic boundaries, Marc Shapiro has commented insightfully on the occurrence of legal scandals amongst those purporting to be observant Jews:

A major problem we have is that it is often the case that all sorts of halakhic justifications can be offered for these illegal activities. One whose only focus is on halakhah, without any interest in the broad ethical underpinnings of Judaism, and the Ramban’s conception of Kedoshim Tihyu, can entirely lose his bearings and turn into a “scoundrel with Torah license.[65]

Shapiro’s comments are confirmed by Rosenblum’s description of the low priority accorded to *middot* development. He notes that such concerns tend to get “pushed toward the bottom of a crowded

curriculum." More fundamentally, Rosenblum bemoans the prevalent attitude that "developing good *middos* is treated as something primarily of concern for young children."[66] A failure to inculcate a Torah approach to character beyond the stage of infancy is likely to perpetuate a society in which immoral and unspiritual behavior is overlooked due to a veneer of halakhic acceptability.

All the considerations we have discussed above constitute essential elements of a Torah life. They affect our standing before Hashem and apply independently of how they are perceived by other human beings. Nevertheless, there is no denying of the centrality of considerations of *Kiddush Hashem* (and its opposite) to our mandate as committed Jews or of its relevance to the matter at hand. We recall the warning of *Chazal* concerning the potential for those who claim fealty to Torah to bring the name of *Hashem* into disrepute:

He who studies Scripture and Mishnah and serves scholars, but is not honest in his business dealings and whose conversations with his fellow-beings are not calm. What do people say about such a person? "Woe to so-and-so for having learned Torah...".[67]

Conversely, the potential exists to glorify the Torah and its Author:

The Name of Heaven shall become beloved through you; [this obligated a Jew to] study Scripture and Mishnah, serve scholars, conduct his business dealings honestly and converse with his fellow-beings in a calm manner. What do people say about such a person? "More power to his father who taught him Torah, more power to his teacher who taught him Torah, woe t those who did not learn Torah."[68]

The concept of *Kiddush Hashem* incorporates a concern, not only for correct behavior but for how that behavior is perceived. *Bnei Torah* will not succeed in sanctifying the Name of *Hashem* if our way of life is seen to be lacking in moral rectitude and spiritual depth. When we read that 60 percent of formerly observant Jews interviewed by Margolese declined to affirm the position that "Orthodox Judaism will make you a better person,"[69] we must ask ourselves questions about the reputation of our community and how it is impacting on the reputation of *Hashem*.

In a powerful and candid article, Rabbi Ilan Feldman accounts for the decreasing tide of *Kiruv* in exactly these terms. While the goal of Torah observance is to give expression to the glorious spiritual nature of man, R Feldman notes that those who enter the observant Jewish community "will not necessarily discover giants at all"! R Feldman asks the reader to picture a committed family man who respects wisdom and volunteers for good causes joining a world in which *Shabbat* table talk assesses political candidates "purely on selfish concerns of the religious community, with little concern for their impact on broader society." Such attitudes, while deeply problematic in their own right, are distinctly unattractive and, according to R Feldman, lie at the heart of the decreasing tide of *kiruv* in our generation.[70]

Conclusion

We have argued that both the philosophical position and the sociological attitude that limits Judaic norms to halakhic observance are inconsistent with numerous principles advanced by our great rabbis,

from Talmudic times until the modern era. We have discussed the potential consequences of a failure to study, teach and implement Torah ideas relating to worldview, character development and standards of behavior that raise the bar higher than halakhic practice. Such neglect can lead to a lack of clarity in our own lives and those of our students and communities as to how our lives should be guided by the distinctive principles of a Torah worldview. In some cases, a mechanistic halakhic life, unconnected to a deeper sense of meaning and purpose, can lead to attrition from the ranks of the religiously committed. In the best case scenario, the *mitzvah* observance will lack the passion that is expected of one who has the privilege of fulfilling the *ratson Hashem*. As *Ohavei Hashem*, we yearn for a world in which humanity recognises the Chosen People as reflecting the highest ideals and the greatest wisdom. We will move closer to this goal when we complement our essential commitment to halakhic knowledge and practice with a concerted effort to learn, develop and disseminate a Torah understanding of how we can live our lives in the light of Hashem—*leHagdil Torah u-leHadirah*.

[1] *Judaism, Human Values and the Jewish State* (Harvard University Press, 1995), pp. 6–7. See also p. 88: "There is no specifically Jewish morality, no specifically Jewish politics, no specifically Jewish conception of society."

2 See Rabbi Walter Wurzburger, *Covenantal Imperatives* (Urim, 2008), pp. 21, 34. Rabbi Eugene Korn ("Legal Floors and Moral Ceilings: A Jewish Understanding of Law and Ethics," *The Edah Journal*, 2:2 (Tevet 5762=2002), p. 2) notes that this approach is also reflected in the Christian preference to translate the word "Torah" as law. Although Rabbi Wurzburger claims that Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Karelitz, the *Chazon Ish*, also subscribed to this view, Daniel Statman and Avi Sagi ("Divine Command Morality and the Jewish Tradition," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 23 (1995), pp. 47–48) have shown that this is not the only possible interpretation of his writings. For a corroboration of Statman and Sagi's position, see Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "Does Judaism Recognize an Ethic Independent of Halakhah," in *Leaves of Faith, the World of Jewish Learning, Volume 2*, (Ktav, 2004), 38 and footnote 27 on p. 54.

[3] R. Yehuda Amital, *Commitment and Complexity: Jewish Wisdom in an Age of Upheaval* (Ktav, 2008), 48. For a similar view, see Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "A Torah of Life, a Life of Torah," http://vbm-torah.org/archive/sichot67/17-67yitro.htm, (Summer, 2001). R Lichtenstein refers to the attitude of some observant Jews to the effect that one can think, feel and do as he pleases, as long as he does not break any of the technical rules. See also Rabbi Marc Angel, "Re-imagining Orthodoxy," *Conversations* 12 at http://www.jewishideas.org/min-hamuvhar/re-imagining-orthodoxy and Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo, "Correspondence: Eli Haddad and Rabbi Dr. Nathan Lopes Cardozo on Reviving the Halakhic Process," *Conversations* 13 at http://www.jewishideas.org/articles/correspondence-eli-haddad-and-rabbi-dr-nathan-lopes.

[4] Rabbi Micha Berger, "Teaching *Mussar*," http://www.aishdas.org/asp/teaching-mussar, (August 4, 2001).

[5] "The Covenant and Its Theology," *Meorot* 9 (Tishrei 5772=2011), pp. 4–6.

[6] Mishlei 29:18. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks notes the irony that this verse is more often quoted by non-Jews than Jews (*Future Tense* (Hodder, London, 2009), 4).

[7] *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Matenot Aniyim* 10:1.

[8]Rabbi Judah Goldberg, "Independence of *Berit Avot* and Its Interaction with *Berit Sinai*—Part 2," http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/sinai/07sinai.htm.

[9] Bereshit 18:19. In contradistinction to this reference to a narrative text, when presenting the obligation to give *tsedaka*, the Rambam quotes Devarim 15:8 which commands us to "certainly open your hand to [the poor person]." See *Hilkhot Matenot Aniyim* 8:10.

[10] Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Collected Writings*, (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 1997) , vol.7, 456.
[11] Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (translated by Isidor Grunfeld). *Horeb: A Philosophy of Jewish Laws and Observances* (London: Soncino Press, 1962), cxxiv. Although Dayan Grunfeld presents this as his own view, he understands this to be an accurate representation of the approach of R Hirsch. See also *ibid*., cxi.
[12] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Man of Faith in the Modern World: Reflections of the Rav* (Vol. 2), (Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1989), 94.
[13] *Family Redeemed: Essays on Family Relationships*, ed. David Shatz and Joel B. Wolowelsky (New York: Toras HoRav Foundation-Ktav, 2000), 3-4. For an example of how Rav Soloveitchik developed a philosophy of man based on Bereshit and Shemot, see *The Emergence of Ethical Man* (Ktav Publishing House, Inc, 2005). For a strong advocacy and excellent exemplification of how Judaic values can be derived from Biblical and Talmudic sources, see Rabbi Nahum Rabinovitch, "The Way of Torah," *The Edah Journal*, 3:1 (*Shevat* 5763), found at www.edah.org. This position is also supported by Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "A Torah of Life, a Life of Torah."

[14] See similarly, Sifrei Ekev, 49. For other examples of *Hazal's* emphatic condemnation of failure to develop appropriate character traits, see *Baba Metsia* 85a and *Baba Batra* 10b.

[15] *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Deot* 1:6. See similarly, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Positive Mitzvah 8. For an articulation of the same basic position by the Rambam's son, R Avraham, see *Responsa Rabbi Abraham ben HaRambam*, ed. A. H. Freimann (Jerusalem: *Mekize Nirdamim*, 1937), no.63, pp. l 65–68.
[16] *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Teshuvah* 7:3. See also *Hilkhot Issurei Be'ah* 19:17 where Rambam emphasises that mercy and kindness are characteristics that are essential for a Jew.
[17] Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, *By His Light : Character and Values in the Service of God* (Ktav Publishing House, 2002), 203.
[18] *Sefer Hareidim*, Chapter 9, Mitzvah 18.
[19] *Even Shelemah*, 1:11.
[20] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Shi'urim le-Zekher Abba Mori z"l* (Jerusalem,

5745), 170. For a further excellent explication of the importance of performing mitzvot bein adam lechavero in a heartfelt manner and the implications of this for the way in which the mitzvah is observed, see Rabbi Binyamin Zimmerman, "*Tsedaka*—The Heart of the *Mitzvah*," www.vbm-torah.org/archive/chavero3/20chavero.htm.The Importance of these considerations for the effective fulfilment of the mitzvoth in question is underscored by Rabbi Micha Berger who writes that his son, who suffers from Down's Syndrome, tires of teens who come to entertain him on Shabbat. "At some point," R. Berger writes, "he realises that the teen views him as a chesed project, rather than a real friend." Rabbi Micha Berger, "Teaching *Mussar*."

[21] Beis Yosef Shaul, Vol. 4 (R. Elchanan Adler, ed., 1994),"*Ah yid iz ge'glichen tzu ah Sefer Torah*" (A Jew is Compared to A Torah Scroll), pp. l 46–55 (Yiddish); "*Ha'Yehudi mashul le'sefer Torah*" (Hebrew translation by R. Shalom Carmy), pp. 86–95. See also Rav Soloveitchik, *Shiurei haRav*, p. 51. While Rav Soloveitchik underscores the importance of character for a proper observance of mitzvot, Rabbi Yisrael Salanter insists that its significance even applies in a case in which a person fails to observe the mitzvoth in question. The story is told that a businessman requested to purchase all of the books authored by Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan with the exception of *Sefer Hafetz Haim*. The man revealed that the pressures of his business made it difficult to avoid speaking negatively about others and he would rather not buy a work if he felt unable to comply with its directives. R. Kagan responded by referring to a comment that had been made to him by R. Yisrael Salanter: "If all you accomplish is to evoke one sigh from one Jew [who becomes aware of the prohibitions and cannot observe them], the work is worthwhile." (This story is related by the author of the work, *Erekh Apayim*, in his introduction, as well as in that of R. David Kog'ah to his *Dan L'Kaf Zekhut*.)

[22] Marc Shapiro, “Responses to Comments and Elaborations on Previous Posts III,” http://seforim.blogspot.com/2009/09/marc-b-shapiro-responses-to-comments.html (August 29th, 2008).
[23] Ramban on *Devarim* 6:18. For similar observations of the impossibility of Torah legislation providing a comprehensive moral guide, see Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin, *Ha-amek Davar* to *Shemot* 19:6 and Rabbi Joseph Albo, *Sefer Ha-Ikkarim* 3:23. R. Albo’s position is discussed by Wurzburger, *Covenantal Imperatives*, 26.

[24] Guide for the Perplexed III:17. In a similar vein, Rabbenu Yehuda HeHasid writes in *Sefer Hasidim* 153: “We find that anyone who is able to understand [that something should be done] even though it is not commanded, is punished for not heeding.”
This approach to understanding reward and punishment is consistent with that of R. Nissim Gaon in his Introduction to the Talmud (printed in the Vilna Shas at the beginning of *Berakhot*) where he explains how it is possible for the nations of the world to be punished for failure to keep mitzvoth. R Nissim Gaon’s position is elucidated accordingly by R. Avraham Grodzinski in his *Torat Avraham*: “everything that the sechel of man is able to grasp, man is obligated to do and is punished for if he transgresses it, and according to its closeness to sechel, so the [level of] obligation and punishment increases, for dear is man who was created in the image of God, his wisdom is derived from Divine wisdom.” A similar view is expressed by Hizkuni who explains the punishment imposed on the generation of the flood:” There are several mitzvoth that people are obliged to fulfill by reason alone, even though they were not commanded to do so.” (Commentary to Bereshit 7:21). Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin in his introduction to Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan’s *Ahavat Chesed* writes similarly that gentiles are obligated in mitzvoth*sichliyot*—mitzvothwhich can be discerned through the intellect.
[25] Meiri, *Shabbat* 105b.
[26] See discussion by Dayan Grunfeld in his introduction to *Horeb*. See Isaac Heinemann, *Taamei ha-*mitzvoth*be-sifrut Yisrael* (Jerusalem: 1956, vol.2), 95 who notes that the terminology of inner and external revelation was already employed by R. Hirsch’s teacher, Isaac Bernays. For examples of Rav Hirsch’s approach and his support for a sensitivity to values, see his commentary to Devarim 6:18; *Horeb*, paragraph 325; *Horeb*, vol. 1, 219; *Commentary on the Torah*, Vayikra 18:4; *Jeshurun*, 1, 1914, 73ff.

This view is also represented by Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk in a lengthy piece near the end of his commentary on the Torah (*Meshekh Chochma*, *Devarim* 30:11). Rav Meir Simcha’s thesis is that man was created in the image of God with a sense of *yashrut*. When he refrains from overanalysing, man has an inner purified sense of justice and morality.
Rabbi Yaakov Kaminesky (*Emet LeYaakov*, *Bereshit* 14:14) affirms the same approach in his commentary to the story of Avraham and Lot. R. Kaminetsky writes that Avraham was not halakhically obligated to put himself at risk to save Lot. However, Hashem created man with the capacity to be upright (*yashar*) and, through Avraham’s understanding of upright behaviour and *menschlichkeit*, it was incumbent upon him to try to save Lot.
[27] Indeed, Rabbi Ovadia Bartneura at the beginning to his Commentary to *Pirkei Avot* rejects the possibility of moral intuition functioning as a source of Judaic ethics. According to Bartenura, Jewish moral wisdom is based on that which was revealed at Sinai. For other affirmations of this position, see Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *Iggrot Moshe*, *Orah Haim IV:66* and Rabbi Asher Weiss, *Minchat Asher, Devarim* (Machon Minchat Asher 5767), 360.
[28] Deuteronomy 28:10.
[29] *Sotah* 14a. For another example of extra legal norms based on divine conduct, see *Berakhot* 61a. This position is affirmed by R Yosef Albo in *Sefer HaIkkarim* III:5: “A man should understand and know that since I exercise kindness, justice and charity...from this he must understand that these things are desirable to me.”
[30] *Sefer ha-mitzvot*, positive commandment 8.

[31] *Baba Kama* 100a.

[32] *Baba Metsia* 24b, 30b.
[33] *Baba Kama* 99b.
[34] *Ketuvot* 97a. For another application of the principle of *lifnim mishurat haDin*, at least on Rashi's understanding, see *Baba Metsia* 83a.
[35] *Baba Metsia* 30b.
[36] For an erudite discussion of *lifnim mishurat hadin*, see Rabbi Yehuda Levi, *Torah Study* (Feldheim Publishers, 1990), 80–83.
[37] Sam Derekh, *Ha-yashar ve-hatov*, Introduction. The approach of extrapolating from the principles underlying the mitzvoth *sikhliyot* (rational mitzvoth) to provide behavioural norms beyond that which is stipulated by halakha is also affirmed by R. Joseph Albo, Sefer Ha-Ikkarim 3:23 and Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, *Ha'amek Davar*, Devarim 5:30. See also Rabbi Asher Weiss, *Minchat Asher*, *Devarim* (Machon Minchat Asher 5767), 356. For a support of Ramban's position by Rav Yeshayahu Shapiro, the Admor He-chalutz, see Nechama Leibowitz, *Studies in Devarim* (Haomanim Press, 1996), 63.
[38] *Berakhot* 12
[39] *Kiddushin* 59a; *Sanhedrin* 58b; *Nedarim* 22a.
[40] Rabbenu Bahya understands the following verses to command securing one's need for food: "God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the land and subdue it. Behold, I have given you every seedbearing plant on the face of all the earth." (*Bereshit* 1:28–29)
[41] *Hovot Halevavot, Shaar Avodat Ha-Elokim*, chapter 4.
[42] *Hilkhot Melakhim* 5:9.
[43] For further discussion of the significance of Rambam's ruling here, see Rav Dr. Judah Goldberg, "Before Sinai: Jewish Values and Jewish Law, Shiur 7," http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/sinai/07sinai.htm. For another instance in which Rambam severely censors certain behavior while recognizing it as technically permissible, see *Hilkhot Avadim* 9:8.
[44] *Hilkhot Teshuva* 3:11.
[45] *Kol Dodi Dofek*: Listen—My Beloved Knocks, trans. David Z. Gordon, 99n.

[46] Ramban on *Vayikra* 19:2. For additional comments from Ramban on the imperative to abide by Judaic values in addition to halakhic compliance, see Commentary to *Vayikra* 23:24 and to *Devarim* 21:18.

[47] Despite the importance of these concepts to Ramban and others, it is these very concepts which are often downplayed in contemporary Orthodox life. As R. Amital writes (ibid): "Many of the fundamental values of the Torah which are based on the general commandments of "You shall be holy" (Vayikra 19:2) and "You shall do what is upright and good in the eyes of God" (Devarim 6:18), which were not given formal, operative formulation, have not only lost some of their status, but they have also lost their validity in the eyes of a public that regards itself as committed to Halakha."

[48] *Shaarei Teshuvah* 3:172.

[49] This is noted and discussed by R Yehuda Levi in *Torah Study*, p. l 78.

[50] As discussed in the footnote 25, the view that the *avot* are exemplars of ethical behavior transcending halakhic observance is also found in the writings of Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky. The idea that the *avot* conducted themselves according to *yashrut* is, according to R. Kaminetsky, the meaning of the phrase "*derekh erets kadma laTorah*."
[51] Rabbi Yehuda Levi, *Facing Current Challenges*, (Hemed Books, 1998), 397.
[52] Seymour Fox, "Toward a General Theory of Jewish Education," in *The Future of the American Jewish Community*, ed. David Sidorsky (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. l 260–270. Lest the reader suspect that this evaluation is outdated, it is of interest to know that Rabbi Jeffrey Saks reported in 2003 that Fox's assessment resonated strongly with a group of Modern Orthodox educators associated with the Atid organisation, see Jeffrey Saks, "Spiritualizing Halakhic Education: A Case Study in Modern Orthodox Teacher Development," (Mandel Foundation, 2003).
[53] JT *Peah* 1:1.

[54] Jonathan Boyd, “What Kind of Jewish Grandchildren Will We Have?,” http://jewish-peoplehood.blogspot.com/2011/10/what-kind-of-jewish-grandchildren-will.html (October 2011).
[55] This is the conclusion of the Volunteering and Values study of the Repair the World Foundation. The study can be accessed at http://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/pdfs/VolunteeringValuesReport.Final.pdf. Indeed, the recent Pew Report revealed that there are many more Jews who believe that having a good sense of humour is essential to being Jewish (42 percent) than there are those who believe that being a part of a Jewish community is essential to being Jewish (28 percent)!
[56] Yehudah Mirsky, “Tikkun Olam’s Practical Meaning and Potential Significance,” http://www.jewishideas.org/articles/tikkun-olams-practical-meaning-and-potential-signif (January 2009); For corroborations of this view, see Leslie Lenkowsky, “Where Have All the Volunteers Gone?,” http://www.jidaily.com/42834 (July 2011) , Levi Cooper, “The Assimilation of Tikkun Olam,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 25, no.3–4 (Fall 2014) at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2385947 and Hillel Halkin, “How Not to Repair the World,” *Commentary* (January 2008) at http://www.jidaily.com/iRoiv.

[57] For an affirmation of the potency of focusing on Jewish values when reaching out to uncommitted Jews, see Scot A. Berman, “ “So What!?!”: Talmud Study Through Values Analysis,” *Ten Da'at*, vol. 10, 1, 1997, pp. 17–31, http://www.lookstein.org/articles/talmud_values.htm#fn5.

[58] For an eloquent support of this approach, see R. Yitzhak Hutner, *Pahad Yitzhak, Iggerot u-Mikhtavim* (New York: Gur Aryeh, 1998), no. 94, pp. l 184–185.

[59] Faranak Margolese, *Off the Derech*, (Devora Publishing, 2009), 203. For an impassioned call for the application of Judaic values to contemporary social problems, see Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, *Journal of a Rabbi* (Living Books, 1966), 6
[60] Aharon Hersh Fried, “Is There a Disconnect between Torah Learning and Torah Living? And If So, How Can We Connect Them? A Focus on Middos,” p. l 32 at http://www.hakirah.org/Vol percent206 percent20Fried.pdf. In a similar vein, Rabbi Yitzchak Berkowtiz has spoken of the need to emphasise positive values when educating newly observant Jews about halakha - see http://www.jewishmediaresources.com/1346/tapping-into-their-idealism .

[61] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Out of the Whirlwind: Essays on Mourning, Suffering and the Human Condition (Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 2003) 44. For a similar idea, see Derashot Ha-Ran, Derasha 5.

[62] Jonathan Rosenblum, “Tapping into Their Idealism,” *Mishpacha Magazine* (February 14, 2010) from http://www.jewishmediaresources.com/1346/tapping-into-their-idealism.

[63] *Off the Derech*, p. 390.

[64] Roger Kaminetz, *The Jew in the Lotus*, (HarperOne, 2007) 48.
[65] Marc Shapiro, “Responses to Comments and Elaborations of Previous Posts III,” http://seforim.blogspot.com/2009/09/marc-b-shapiro-responses-to-comments.html. In the same post, Shapiro writes: “One of the most important themes in [Rabbi Yechiel Yaakov] Weinberg’s writings is the fact that there are people in the Orthodox community who, while completely halakhic, are ethically challenged.” For a similar view, see Rabbi Efrem Goldberg “Just Because it is Permissible, Doesn’t Mean it is Right,” http://rabbisblog.brsonline.org/just-permissible-doesnt-mean-right/ (January, 2013). The failure to meet Torah standards often extends beyond the realm of ethics into other areas of life. That our halakhic observance has not been matched by an appropriate attitude toward the spiritual life

has been noted by Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein who writes: "We have managed to avoid pig in our foods, but not pigging-out in our tastes for comfort, convenience and entertainment." (*Tradition, Symposium*: The Sea Change in American Orthodox Judaism).

[66] Jonathan Rosenblum, “Dr. Middos is Not Just for Kids,” http://www.cross-currents.com/archives/2011/08/03/dr-middos-is-not-just-for-kids/.

[67] *Yoma* 86a.
[68] *Ibid*.
[69] *Off the Derech*, p. 390.
[70] Rabbi Ilan Feldman, “Why the Giant Sleeps,” *The Klal Perspectives Journal*, (December 2012), http://klalperspectives.org/rabbi-ilan-feldman/.