

1. Nomenclature.

There is another reason to be dissatisfied with the appellation, "Centrist Orthodoxy." That is, it fails to convey a sufficiently adequate notion of our ideological identity, because it assumes that all others veer to the extremes. Whereas, for instance, Lubavitch considers itself Centrist -- it is regularly attacked by Satmar; the Agudah considers itself Centrist -- it is the perennial prey of the Neturei Karta wing; and so on. I would much prefer our self-identification as, "Torah Umada," in the same way that the Hirschian Movement referred to itself as, "Torah and Derekh Eretz." Nevertheless, because "Torah Umada" has been used principally to define our attitude towards secular culture, and because we wish to identify with Orthodoxy no matter what the particular adjective, it is best that we remain with the name "Centrist Orthodoxy," despite all its shortcomings. (Note: Consider again whether, indeed, we should accept the name "Torah Umada" and use "Centrist Orthodoxy" as a sub-title or ancillary name.)

2. Emphasize the critical confrontation with our envioning culture. Hirsch was an admirer of German culture, and one can hardly fault him for failing to foresee the end product of that culture. After the Holocaust, no sane Jew -- or,

indeed, non-Jew -- can accept Western culture uncritically. Yet this is a far cry from the strong segregationism of so much of the Right-wing. With them, the dialogue with Western culture has been cut off almost completely; with assimilationists, it is not a dialogue but an embrace. What we affirm is a dialogue -- open but critical, willing to learn, but unwilling to accept on faith.

3. The Middle Way. Point out that in moving from "the middle way" in disposition to the middle way in doctrine, I must reaffirm the Rav's view that this is not merely an arithmetic proposition. While such an arithmetic mean can obtain with regard to disposition, with regard to doctrine and tenet . the sum total must be one of moderation, but each individual item must be dealt with on its own merits. Moreover, and this is important, the whole idea of locating the middle for Maimonides means to consider the ends. This implies, in the doctrinal sphere, that one must be "open" in engaging the extremes and then coming to a moderate position. But many of the "extremists" in contemporary society arrive at their positions by an other-directed route, such as the authority of charismatic leaders or the weight of tradition, rather than including these forces in an overall appreciation of the variety of views available and then coming to a decision.