

REVIEW

What Makes a Book Orthodox? *Wrestling With God and Men* by Steve Greenberg

Reviewed by Asher Lopatin

Abstract: This review focuses on whether *Wrestling With God and Men* can be considered an Orthodox work. It concludes that due to a lack of confidence in Orthodoxy, the book's dearth of Orthodox sources and its failure to utilize the halakhic system to solve the problems it raises, *Wrestling* will not become part of the Orthodox library. Nevertheless, Orthodoxy is open to innovation, controversy, and potentially a new attitude towards homosexuality.

Biography: Rabbi Asher Lopatin is the spiritual leader of Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation, a leading Modern Orthodox synagogue in Chicago. A Rhodes Scholar and a Wexner graduate, he holds a Master of Philosophy in Medieval Arabic Thought from Oxford University, and ordination from both Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University and Brisk Rabbinical College.



REVIEW

What Makes a Book Orthodox? *Wrestling With God and Men* by Steve Greenberg (University of Wisconsin Press: 2004;304 pages)

Reviewed by Asher Lopatin

When Rav Moshe Feinstein, ז"ל, agreed to write an *haskamah*, an approbation for a book of *halakhab*, almost invariably he would write something like: “I have received with joy a new book by the author, *ba-rav ha-ga'on* So and So, who is a God fearing and righteous man. Even though I do not, as a rule, discuss the contents of a halakhic work, since I do not have the time to examine every ruling, I am confident that the author would not say anything that is in violation of the law. Wishing him success in all his endeavors...” Such a *haskamah* would tell us of an important characteristic: it is an acceptable book that is worthy of examination and serious reading from Orthodox tradition.

When I received an early copy of Rabbi Steve Greenberg’s book, I was personally excited, since my wife and I knew how long and hard Steve had worked on this book—and he had finally finished it and gotten a top notch publisher. But immediately after my thoughts revolved around whether this book would be accepted in the Orthodox world as an Orthodox work. It was a question I asked myself, despite my admiration and respect for Rabbi Greenberg as a thinker and an educator. Is

Wrestling With God and Men part of the tradition of Orthodox Torah—the *masoret* or *shalshelet ha-qabbalah*—worthy of a generic *haskamah* of an Orthodox *gadol*, or just an intelligent study, similar to academic or popular non-Orthodox works on Judaism? Turning to the author, as Rav Moshe, ז"ל, did: Would people come to know and accept Rabbi Steve Greenberg as an Orthodox rabbi through this book? Or would people regard him merely as a serious Jewish thinker who happens to have ordination from an Orthodox institution (Yeshiva University’s RIETS), but who is not acting in the Orthodox world?

When Rabbi Joel Roth wrote his paper for the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards for the Rabbinical Assembly, there was no doubt that he wrote it as a Conservative argument by a Conservative thinker. In fact, in defending this paper and its views, Roth said: “For me the most important thing in the world is the halakhic integrity of the Conservative movement,” in an impassioned speech in Chicago, February 23, 2004. No one can question his attachment to Conservative Judaism, even one who disagrees with his findings. No one

can argue that Rabbi Joel Roth's paper is anything but a Conservative analysis of homosexuality and Judaism. The focus of this article will be whether Rabbi Greenberg's *Wrestling With God and Men* contains the same loyalty and adherence to Orthodox Judaism that Joel Roth has demonstrated toward Conservative Judaism. If it does, it represents a major breakthrough in Orthodox thinking on homosexuality and Judaism.

“Would people accept Rabbi Steve Greenberg as an Orthodox rabbi through this book or regard him as a Jewish thinker who happens to have Orthodox ordination?”

If *Wrestling* is seen as a serious work of Orthodox *halakhab*—albeit controversial and novel—I am confident it will gain an audience and will be seriously discussed. A precedent would be Rabbi Mendel Shapiro's article regarding women and Torah reading (*The Edah Journal*, 2002), which has had a significant impact within Modern Orthodox circles. If *Wrestling* is not seen as a serious Orthodox halakhic work, its impact will be limited and passing.

Moreover, if *Wrestling* contains a demonstrably Orthodox approach to the question of homosexuality and Judaism then it will become an integral part of the Orthodox world of *halakhab*. This would mean that even though no one might

rule according to the halakhic teachings of *Wrestling*, it would become one more voice alongside of other Orthodox opinions and rulings on the question. It might remain a singular opinion—a *da'at yahid*—or it might cause a groundswell of supporting arguments, as Rabbi Mendel Shapiro's article garnered the general support of Professor Daniel Sperber. If they were part of the Orthodox world, *Wrestling* and Rabbi Greenberg could light up the world of *halakhab* on this issue through the creativity of new halakhic thinking.

For three major reasons, however, *Wrestling with God and Man*, and Rabbi Greenberg's voice in this book fall outside the bounds of Orthodoxy.

The first reason for rejecting Rabbi Greenberg's approach as Orthodox appears in one of the most compelling and telling sections of *Wrestling*, as Rabbi Greenberg speaks openly about his struggle with being Orthodox and gay. While he starts out by declaring his allegiance to *halakhab*—definitely placing him within striking distance of Orthodoxy—he then retreats from full allegiance to Orthodoxy. “The ultimate aim, of course, is not to be Orthodox per se,” he declares (p.13). Orthodox Jews are Orthodox for all different reasons, but the Greenberg of *Wrestling* is not committing himself fully to Orthodoxy. Remember Rabbi Roth's statement: For him, his life is about being a Conservative Jew. Even if all the Conservative Jews abandoned what Roth sees as true Conservative

Judaism, he would remain committed to it. In contrast, Rabbi Greenberg honestly admits that his aim in life is not to be Orthodox “per se.” My interpretation of that position is that as long as he can square *halakhab* and Orthodoxy with some greater values, then he is fine. But loyal Orthodox Jews understand that Orthodoxy is about clinging to *halakhab* while struggling with any external issues, movements or phenomena that cause tension with *halakhab*. The Orthodox world of Torah and *halakhab* grows because of that very tension, but the tension is lost when the commitment to Orthodoxy is conditional. Orthodox feminists and Zionists have all struggled, but they have made an impact on the Orthodox, halakhic world because their loyalty to Orthodoxy “per se” was unyielding.

“Quoting Torah, Talmud or even some medieval authorities—as Rabbi Greenberg does—might create a powerful, convincing argument, but it does not follow Orthodox methodology.”

Rabbi Greenberg, intentionally or not, loses his Orthodox *bona fides* by stepping away from loyalty to the Orthodox process of *pesaq* and *halakhab*, to a position of merely remaining in an Orthodox environment. “I have chosen to remain inside the Orthodox community because for all its difficulty with contemporary social issues, it is the Jewish community that for me possesses the richest religious resources” (pp.13-14). Remaining inside

the Orthodox community is far less than remaining an Orthodox leader who is committed to the future of Orthodoxy. Rabbi Roth, again, does not just want to remain in the Conservative community; he is committed to Conservative Judaism, and, because that commitment is felt, he wields tremendous authority in the Conservative world despite his strict views on homosexuality. “[The Orthodox community’s] weaknesses are not secret . . . I simply prefer this set of strengths and weaknesses over others,” Rabbi Greenberg writes (p.14). For the author to convince an Orthodox audience that he is Orthodox he would need to use a language of being commanded—such as “I remain Orthodox because that is what God has chosen for me to be through divine revelation at Sinai and the unbroken chain of Torah and tradition.” There are many gay Jews, some whom I know, others who are featured in the film “Trembling Before God” who could make such a statement. Rabbi Greenberg does not, and the only conclusion we can reach from the book is that he cannot make such a statement.

The second reason *Wrestling with God and Men* cannot be classified as an Orthodox work—neither an Orthodox halakhic book, nor an Orthodox biographical or philosophical work—revolves around the methodology and style of the entire book. What typifies an Orthodox approach is to quote accepted Orthodox authorities frequently. These may be contemporary halakhic authorities, or classic, well-known figures from centuries past.

Merely quoting Torah, Talmud or even some medieval authorities—as Rabbi Greenberg does—might create a powerful, convincing argument, but it does not follow Orthodox methodology. I am not arguing that every Orthodox book needs to quote hundreds and hundreds of names, as does Rav Ovadia Yosef with his encyclopedic mind, or that the Orthodox author must be slavishly submissive to every authority he or she quotes—in Artscroll style. However, the pages of the book must “feel” Orthodox. Greenberg quotes Rav Soloveitchik, *זצ”ל*, only one time in the entire book even though he recognizes the Rav as “the dean of Modern American Orthodoxy” (p. 219). Moreover, the quote is a minor one about a sex change, not the main focus of the book. As a *musmakb* of Yeshiva University’s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, where for decades Rav Soloveitchik was the dominant personality, Rabbi Greenberg is surprising in his failure to quote the Rav more often. But almost no contemporary Orthodox authorities make it into the book: Yeshayahu Leibowitz is quoted, but he is a marginal name in the Orthodox world. Dr. Norman Lamm, Chancellor of Yeshiva University, is not quoted at all, although he has written thoughtfully on the subject of homosexuality and Judaism (“Judaism and the Modern Attitude Toward Homosexuality,” *Encyclopedia Judaica Yearbook*, 1974, p. 197).

Even when Rabbi Greenberg does devote a few significant pages to two well-known Orthodox

thinkers, Rabbi Mordechai of Izbica (“the Izhbitzer”) (p. 239-241) and Rav Avraham Yitzchak ha-Kohen Kook (p. 241-243), he reverses the way they are typically used in the Orthodox world. The Izhbitzer is a popular Torah commentator, but rarely if ever cited in Orthodox circles on *halakhab*. Rav Kook is well-known and well-cited by Jews of all stripes as a great religious Zionist philosopher and voice for tolerance and Jewish unity, but only Orthodox thinkers use him as a halakhist, perhaps because he is an extremely conservative, traditional halakhic thinker (see *The Edah Journal*, *Sivan* 5761). Rabbi Greenberg uses Rav Kook at his philosophical and theoretical best—“There are times when there is a need to violate the words of the Torah . . .” (p. 242)—but these words could be easily quoted by a Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist or even atheistic writer. If Rabbi Greenberg had cited Rav Kook as a halakhist, it would have given the book a greater Orthodox flavor. But Rav Kook’s approach here needs to be put in the context of the complicated workings of *aveira li-shemah*, a sin for the sake of heaven, which Rav Kook’s teacher, R. Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (Netziv) explicated in several places. The key requirement for an *aveirah li-shemah* is refraining from any pleasure out of the sin—which is certainly not the case in the homosexual relationships that Rabbi Greenberg is advocating, based as they are on mutual desire. Thus Rav Kook in his halakhic role probably would not have advanced Rabbi Greenberg’s arguments at all.

The only contemporary halakhic authority Rabbi Greenberg deals with at length is Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. But here, rather than using Rav Moshe as a supporting Orthodox authority, Rabbi Greenberg quotes him: Rav Moshe becomes the problematic Orthodox figure in the book that Rabbi Greenberg sets out to deconstruct and reject. Of course many Orthodox writers disagree with Rav Moshe on particular points, either explicitly or implicitly, but they do so at their own peril and almost always show how other weighty Orthodox authorities back up their disagreements with Rav Moshe. Rabbi Greenberg himself recognizes Rav Moshe's position as the pre-eminent Orthodox halakhic authority of the twentieth century, while at the same time admitting that "[Rav Moshe's] gut response to homosexuality will serve as a foil to our endeavors to understand the biblical prohibition" (p.136). But if Rav Moshe is just a foil, Rav Soloveitchik isn't relevant and Rav Kook doesn't get any halakhic play, then with whom in the Orthodox world does Greenberg surround himself?

"My dear one, my friend, you have twice the power of love. Use it carefully,"

Even before *Wrestling* was published, I had heard the moving story of Rabbi Greenberg's encounter with the great Rav Yosef Shalom Eliashav, *shli"ta*, while he was still a teenager. Rav Eliashiv is perhaps the greatest living halakhic authority in the

world—a sage emblematic of the *haredi* Orthodox camp. "Master, I am attracted to both men and women. What shall I do?" the young Greenberg asked. "My dear one, my friend, you have twice the power of love. Use it carefully," Rav Eliashav replied (p. 7). This actually is a quintessentially Orthodox story, involving a classic process: having a question (*she'elab*) and going to the rabbi for an answer (*teshuvah*). It demonstrates that the questioner is connected to the Orthodox world. I know that Rav Aaron Soloveichik, *z"tl*, valued the mere action of people asking questions of their rabbis, even if they did not follow the answers in all respects. Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz, who rules for rabbis across America, connects to people—and thus connects them to Orthodoxy—when they actively approach him with *she'elot*, especially on a regular basis.

The story of the Rav Eliashav encounter could have been a great start to an Orthodox work. But instead of continuing in this direction of interfacing with the Orthodox world, Rabbi Greenberg never makes it back to any other such encounters. Rav Eliashav's words become almost mystical and prophetic, without being transformed into a halakhic framework. True, Rabbi Greenberg says that Rav Eliashav was purposefully vague, but if Rabbi Greenberg takes Rav Eliashav's words as encouragement for being both gay and Orthodox, he must somehow bring those words back to the Orthodox world. *Wrestling* is not within that world.

On the other hand, the people whom Rabbi Greenberg does learn from and cite are outside the Orthodox world: Professors Tikvah Frymer-Kensky, Jacob Milgram, Brad Artson, even Daniel Boyarin are all top-notch thinkers and perhaps personally observant, but they are not authorities for the Orthodox world. In fact, they are much better-known in Conservative and Reform circles. It seems that Rabbi Greenberg has a romantic connection to Orthodoxy, which explains his recalling the encounter with Rav Eliashav, a warm Rav Soloveitchik story, the view of Rav Kook as a philosopher and accepting the Izhbitzer Rebbe as a Hasidic thinker—all sentimental reflections. But when it comes to “*tachlis*,” how to approach tradition and follow it as a practical matter, Rabbi Greenberg reaches for non-Orthodox figures. *Wrestling* reads less like an Orthodox analysis of Torah and *halakhab*, and more like Rabbi Joel Roth’s *teshuvah* for the Conservative movement. Both analyze biblical and talmudic passages and refer to medieval Jewish authorities who discuss homosexuality, but neither quotes from the great halakhic authorities—or even modern or contemporary traditional thinkers. Yet for Rabbi Roth there is no need to so: he follows a Conservative methodology.

Why is it so important for an Orthodox book to reflect not only the vision of the author but the opinion of Orthodox thinkers who would support

the view in that book? Precisely because Jewish practice and thought is so open to change resulting from different ways of viewing the tradition. Rabbi Dr. Solomon Rockove writes in an unpublished essay entitled, “The Ebb and Flow of the Moral Concept in Judaism”:

“Basically, Judaism, particularly the *halakhab*, did not change over the many centuries. What was altered was the attitude of the people, the interpretation of the *halakhab* (ch. V, p. 6).”

For a halakhic work to remain Orthodox, it needs to connect to the vast world of other Orthodox thinkers because *halakhab* is constantly being re-interpreted, and therefore vulnerable. Why do I quote Rabbi Rockove? Not because he is the only person to have both *semikhab* from the Chafetz Chayim Yeshiva and a Ph.D. from Bruno Bettleheim at the University of Chicago. Rather, his Orthodox *bona fides* comes from Rav Aaron Soloveichik, ז”ל, who vouched for Rabbi Rockove’s credentials as a reliable *poseq*. Rabbi Rockove has a *haskamah*—an approbation—by a well known Orthodox thinker. Had Rabbi Greenberg introduced his work with a *haskamah* as Rabbi Rockove had from Rav Aaron, it would have gone a long way toward vouching for this book. But *Wrestling* lacks that *haskamah*: As a brilliant work of creativity and research it doesn’t need it, yet it cannot enter the Orthodox bookshelf without it.

The third reason that *Wrestling* is not an Orthodox book of halakhic practice or philosophy draws on the previous two, but might be the most surprising: *Wrestling* is not sufficiently halakhically creative. If this were truly an Orthodox work it would have combined—in a novel way to be sure—Rabbi Greenberg’s commitment to his homosexual identity and way of life with the binding nature of *halakhab*. Before I read the book, I had heard and read some of Rabbi Greenberg’s arguments for Judaism accepting homosexual acts: re-interpreting the verses in Leviticus to refer solely to demeaning acts of sex (pp. 203-209), and suggesting, based on Talmudic statements, that *halakhab* might recognize an additional gender (the homosexual) who would be permitted sexual encounters forbidden to heterosexuals (pp. 188-189). But instead of being at the center of *Wrestling*, as they would need to be to make this an Orthodox halakhic work, these creative ideas—right or wrong—are relegated to a later section called “Rationales”.

What a terrible word, ‘rationale’--or the Hebrew “*sevarah*”—when it means rationalization. Rav Moshe Hayyim Luzatto rails against it in *Sefer Mesilat Yisbarim*. Rationales are made up by the evil inclination simply to apologize for something wrong, Luzatto writes. Rabbi Greenberg is talking about “rationalizing away” the prohibitions against homosexual acts in the tradition, which undoubtedly have caused pain to homosexual people through the centuries. However, by

categorizing these important creative ideas as mere rationales, and by sequestering them to this part of the book, Rabbi Greenberg denies them any halakhic valiance. In this section he does quote some Orthodox rabbis, e.g. Rapoport, Engel, Unterman, but even if some of them may be well known local Orthodox leaders quoting them means little from an Orthodox point of view, since they are all relegated solely to the “Rationales” section. In the central part of the book, “Conversations”, where Greenberg talks about how the individual homosexual seriously engages the Orthodox world in halakhic conversation, these powerful ideas are nowhere to be found. Instead we get the almost desperate, and therefore unhelpful, use of Rav Kook, the Izhbitzer and the *halakhab* of *oness*—being in an uncontrollable situation.

“By categorizing these important creative ideas as mere rationales, and by sequestering them to this part of the book, Rabbi Greenberg denies them any halakhic valiance.”

Oness is the least original argument that Greenberg could bring. The Orthodox Rabbi Norman Lamm and the Conservative Rabbi Joel Roth have brought it into the conversation regarding homosexuality for decades. Rabbi Greenberg does a fine job of sprucing it up for a twenty-first-century audience: “Instead of [seeing this *oness* as] ugly pathology might gay people be “compelled” by their very

difference?” (p. 250), but he admits at the end of *Wrestling* that he has not essentially changed the standard reading of “*oness Rahmana patrei*”—“The Merciful One absolves one who acts under duress” (p. 253).

“From the book we derive no confidence that halakhab, that argumentation within the community of Orthodox interpreters, can take us to where Greenberg thinks we need to arrive.”

Rabbi Greenberg admits that his hypothetical homosexual Jew must accept as *halakhab* at least two of the “Rationales” listed in the previous section. An Orthodox work of *halakhab* would endeavor to take those innovations out of the category of “rationales” and work with them, be “*mifalpel*—play with and argue them” in Netziv’s language—until they work halakhically. Joel Roth ignores any possibility of such halakhic play; indeed, only an Orthodox thinker, who truly has the confidence that *halakhab* can and must work for our world, will work with *halakhab* in the creative and innovative way necessary to derive the true meaning of the sources and Orthodox tradition. Blu Greenberg (who is unrelated to Rabbi Steve Greenberg) spoke as an Orthodox feminist when she declared that, “Where there is a rabbinic will there is a halakhic way.” Whether or not one agrees with the bluntness of her statement, it is a decidedly Orthodox statement born out of an ingrained faith

in the power and potential of an eternal Torah revealed at Sinai.

Rabbi Greenberg really wants to move the arguments in “Rationales” to “*Halakhab*”, but *Wrestling* gives us no sign that that is possible. From the book we derive no confidence that *halakhab*, that argumentation within the community of Orthodox interpreters, can take us to where Greenberg thinks we need to arrive. If Rabbi Greenberg wants the Orthodox world to receive *Wrestling* into its halakhic discourse, he has to make the plunge only an Orthodox thinker can make: to leap into the great pool of our tradition, certain that he will be received by water rather than by a dry cement bottom.

Even if we cannot regard *Wrestling* as an Orthodox work, we cannot move on without emphasizing that Rabbi Greenberg could have come up with novel halakhic approaches and still preserved the Orthodox nature of his book. We must recognize just how open Orthodoxy—of any flavor, ultra, modern, centrist or open—is to creative, innovative thinking. In a humorous pun, Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Hatam Sofer, might have said that innovation, “*hadash*”, was prohibited from the Torah, but he never prohibited innovative thinking and analysis of our tradition. This innovative, creative thinking is called “*hiddush*” by Netziv, who overlapped with the end of the Hatam Sofer’s life and who lauds his works on *halakhab*. (See his Introduction to *Emeq*

ha-Netziv.) In his classic Torah commentary, *Ha-ameq Davar*, the Netziv states: “The Ark is the place for the written words and also for commanding the oral tradition . . . but missing in this mix is the power of argumentation (i.e. dialectic) and innovation that enables a person to innovate—on his own—a halakhic understanding which was never part of the tradition. This wondrous power—called Talmud—came from the *menorah*.”(Exodus 27:20, p. 346,. New Edition, *Yeshivat Volozhyn*, Jerusalem: 1999).

Rabbi Greenberg’s acceptance of homosexual relationships or his radical interpretations of the verses in the Torah do not necessarily place his thoughts outside the Orthodox camp. As mentioned above, Rambam is arguably far more radical in his reworking of anthropomorphic verses in the Torah. Even though some rejected him outright for these innovations, Rambam was always accepted as a halakhic authority by many traditional communities. Verses in the Torah with which Rabbi Greenberg deals extensively are not the direct sources for any halakhic argument—for or against the homosexual act. Rabbi Yoel Kahn interprets the word “*to`evah*”—mentioned in Leviticus 18 and 20 regarding homosexual acts—as “a *shande*,” a disgrace. But he goes on to state accurately that there is no “*Masekhet Shande*” or even “*Masekhet To`evot*” in the Talmud. And the Talmud is the true primary source for *halakhab* in traditional Judaism.

As provocative as *Wrestling* might be, Orthodoxy can handle such punches. The most controversial parts of the book might be when Rabbi Greenberg suggests that not only David and Jonathan, but also Rabbi Yohanan and Reish Laqish, had homosexual relationships. As questionable as these accusations might be, they would not place this book outside of the pale of Orthodoxy. Abarbanel is accepted throughout the Orthodox world as a classic commentator on *Tanakh*, yet he takes on a Talmudic authority when he condemns King David for unmitigated adultery with Bat Sheva. Outside of the realm of *halakhab*, Orthodoxy has always allowed individuals to declare reality as it makes sense to them, as long as they do not violate any articles of faith.

“Missing is the power of argumentation that enables a person to innovate—on his own—a halakhic understanding that was never part of the tradition.”

Rabbi Greenberg violates no article of the Jewish faith even when he publishes translations of apparently homo-erotic poetry of Moshe Ibn Ezra and Yehuda ha-Levi (pp.113-123). Initially I was shocked reading those parts. When I asked Rabbi Rockove about them, he answered that some might be metaphorical, but even if they were literal the key is that none involved *halakhab*. When it comes to

non-halakhic material, especially poetry written by poets—and Moshe Ibn Ezra is known only as a poet, never in *halakhic* literature—there is such as thing as poetic license, and each person is given their space, even within Orthodoxy. So while the section of Rabbi Greenberg’s book titled “Evidence” might make the book controversial, or even distasteful, it remains acceptable to Orthodoxy. In fact, Rabbi Greenberg himself is respectful and tentative by declaring that he is not trying to show that the figures in Jewish tradition were homosexual lovers, but, rather, “that erotic pull and committed love between people of the same sex were acknowledged in our sacred tradition.”

Rabbi Greenberg’s many friends and students can vouch for his integrity, his commitment to the Orthodox world, and his importance as a voice within the Orthodox community. He is a brilliant, thoughtful and courageous rabbi. My discussion here revolves solely around how people will get to

know him and his thinking from his book. For now, the public has *Wrestling with God and Men* before them, and they have the Rabbi Greenberg of *Wrestling* before them. Neither represents an Orthodox approach to the issue of homosexuality. Yet I am confident that Rabbi Greenberg can write the Orthodox book that will show us that he is committed to staying the long and difficult course of persuasion that Orthodoxy demands. It remains to be determined whether any study could demonstrate the support for each halakhic argument he makes based on teachings of accepted Orthodox thinkers and *poseqim*. Even more importantly, such a study could show us how creative, innovative and relevant *halakhab* can be. We may not agree with him, but if he publishes such a work, it would be taken into the Orthodox library, be debated, scrutinized and even lambasted, and, at the end of the day, make a huge impact on the course of Orthodoxy’s understanding of God’s Torah—*lebagdil Torah u-leha’adirah*.