

## Dinner Marks Completion of Publication Of English Edition of Hirsch *Chumash*

By Dr. Yitzchok Levine

On Sunday, 18 Kislev 5769/December 14, 2008, the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Foundation, with the participation of the descendants of Harav Samson Raphael Hirsch, *zt"l*, held a *siyum* and dinner to mark the completion of the publication of the new English edition of the Hirsch *Chumash*.

Even those who do not subscribe to Rav Hirsch's philosophy of *Torah im derech erez* can benefit from his approach. Harav Eliyahu Meir Klugman, a Rosh Yeshivah and *moreh horaah* in Yerushalayim and the author of *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch: Architect of Torah Judaism for the Modern World* (ArtScroll, 1966), points out, "Clear knowledge and understanding of Rav Hirsch's views, insights, and formulations can help one respond intelligently to most issues in Orthodox Jewish life. From Bnei Brak and Lakewood to Teaneck and Woodmere, from FFB to *baal teshuvah*, from Chazon Ish devotee to modern Orthodox Jew, Rav Hirsch's teachings form an integral part of the worldview of the Torah Jew in the modern world, regardless of whether one takes an active role in that world or not."

Therefore, each of us should be gratified to know that the new translation of Rav Hirsch's com-

mentary on the *Chumash* is now complete. As a result, it makes his insights accessible to all of us.

It has taken twelve long years to complete this new translation.<sup>2</sup>

"In 1995, the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Foundation undertook the publication of a new English version of the Hirsch *Chumash*. Rav Breuer, *zt"l*, had urged that a new English edition of the Hirsch *Chumash* be prepared to accommodate modern English usage. It was felt that despite the enormous contribution of the Levy edition to the world of Torah learning, the style of English used was a demanding one for current and future generations. As Dr. Levy wrote in his introduction, his work was intended as a literal translation of the German. In the current edition, the Foundation has sought to present to the English-speaking public a new work that is a faithful rendering of the Hirsch *Chumash*.<sup>3</sup>

The *siyum* was attended by more than 400 people, most of whom were descendants of Rav Hirsch's ten children, including Roshei Yeshivah, distinguished Rabbanim, accomplished professionals and businessmen, along with their wives and families.

Dr. Elliott Bondi, a grandson of Rav Breuer, welcomed the participants. Rabbi Moshe Katzenstein offered remarks on behalf of Rav Hirsch's descendants. Afterward,

a visual presentation was shown in which *divrei brachah* were given by Harav Yaakov Perlow, *shlita*, the Novominsker Rebbe.

Rabbi Nosson Scherman, one of the founders and General Editor of ArtScroll and the Mesorah Heritage Foundation, then introduced the keynote speaker, Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D., a psychiatrist known world-wide, and a prolific writer who has authored many books and whose columns appear in a number of publications, including *Hamodia*.

Rabbi Twerski spoke about the relevance of Rav Hirsch's philosophy. He pointed out that although his background is chassidic (his mother was the sister of the third Bobover Rebbe, Harav Shlomo Halberstam, *zt"l*), he considers himself a "chassid" of Rav Hirsch. "Hardly a day goes by when I do not read from Rav Hirsch's *From the Wisdom of Mishlei*," he said, holding up a well-worn copy of the *sefer*. "Rav Hirsch changed the way I say *Shema*."

Dr. Twerski described Rav Hirsch as a man who knew how to confront and solve the complex problems faced by German Jewry during the 19th century, and that his brilliance had saved German Orthodoxy. "We also face overwhelming problems today. Where is Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch today? We need him today also!"



Dr. Elliott Bondi



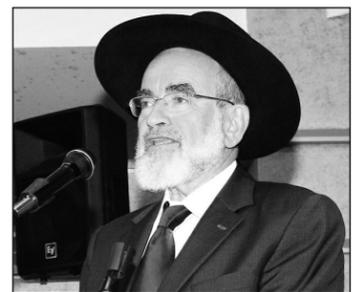
Rabbi Abraham Twerski, M.D.

The final speaker of the evening, Rabbi Yaakov Feldheim of Feldheim Publishers, had come from Eretz Yisrael to attend the dinner. "It is worthwhile to have come all the way from Eretz Yisrael just to witness this illustrious assemblage," he said. He pointed out that his father, Phillip Feldheim, *z"l*, enjoyed a close relationship with Rav Breuer, on whose suggestion he had begun publishing translations of Rav Hirsch's works in the late 1940s.

The publication of the new translation of Rav Hirsch's commentary on the *Chumash* is an important milestone, and the dinner was a fitting way to mark the completion of a work that will be a valuable Torah resource in the coming years.

Yaakov Feldheim also announced the Hirsch *Chumash* Library Distribution Project, whereby Feldheim will offer a set of the new Hirsch *Chumashim* to yeshivos, schools, and shuls at a special subsidized rate. Please contact Feldheim Publishers at (800) 237-7149 for details.

Dr. Yitzchok Levine recently retired after



Mr. Yaakov Feldheim

servicing for forty years as a professor at the Dept. of Mathematical Sciences at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, N.J. He can be reached at [llevine@stevens.edu](mailto:llevine@stevens.edu)

1. *The Hirsch Chumash, Listening to the Dvar Hashem, The World of Hirschian Teachings, An Anthology on the Hirsch Chumash and the Hashkafah of Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, Published for the Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer Foundation, Feldheim, 2008, page 71.*

2. *The first translation of Rav Hirsch's commentary from the original German into English was done by Dr. Isaac Levy, z"l, of London, a grandson of Rav Hirsch. The first edition of this translation was published as individual volumes between 1956 and 1962.*

3. *Editors' Foreword to The Hirsch Chumash, Sefer Bereishis, English translation by Daniel Haberman, Feldheim Publishers and Judaica Press, Jerusalem-New York, 2002, page X.*

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