expressing an instinctive, conservative response, and who criticized the methods in front of the conclusion. However, beyond Orthodoxy's fundamental objections to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, a number of response strategies can be seen, starting from the second half of the nineteenth century. The first one appeared to be a continuance of the negation.

**CRITICISMS OF WISSENSCHAFT DES JUDENTUMS**

Despite the Orthodox leadership's opposition to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, they did more than merely express and explain their negative attitude. They also participated in and supported criticisms of those studies carried out by *Wissenschaft des Judentums* that impinged upon Orthodox values. These criticisms included polemics aimed at the "problematic" deductions, in an attempt to negate the legitimacy of the way in which the author reached his conclusions, sometimes by blatantly demeaning him.

Between 1855 and 1858, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch adopted this approach himself, publishing several critical essays on the fourth section of *Geschichte der Juden*, the great work by the historian Heinrich Graetz. This particular section focused on the history of the Tannaim and the Amoraim, and Rabbi Hirsch saw fit to analyze the historicist foundations of Graetz's research. Using an academic approach, Rabbi Hirsch undermined the academic credibility of Graetz's version of the history of the Tannaim, claiming that through his many distortions of the history of the greatest Tannaim he had presented them as people whose deeds were influenced by personal traits such as pedantry, pacifism, and so on. He maintained that Graetz's book was constructed on errors that stemmed from misunderstandings and hasty conclusions, and that in many cases Graetz inflated single facts to heap conclusions on them, while deliberately ignoring other sources:

*Instead of viewing the moral and spiritual heroes of Jewish history as products of the theoretical study and practical observance of the Law, he regards the Law as the product of individuals of greater or lesser creative or spiritual talents. As a result, we receive, in place of a true history of the development of the Jews, a fictional account of the development of Jewish Law.*

It is this inversion of cause and effect that we perceive as the basic error inherent in this work. The intention was to write a history of things that did not happen and to record a process of development, when in fact no such process had taken place. No wonder, then, that the author had to close his eyes to obvious truths, distort facts, invent motives and, led by delusion, give a cavalier, superficial and
untruthful treatment to the documentary sources. The results are truly puzzling to any genuine scholarly student of history.\textsuperscript{18}

Another essay in this genre was penned by the German Orthodox rabbi of Halberstadt, Zvi Benjamin Auerbach\textsuperscript{19} in his book \textit{Hatzofeh 'al Darkhei Hamishnah}, in response to Zechariah Frankel's \textit{Darkhei Hamishnah}.\textsuperscript{20} Rabbi Auerbach begins by questioning Frankel's silence on the subject of "Torah from Heaven" (the Divine origin of the Torah). He also objects to Frankel's position on the Men of the Great Assembly and the Tannaim, who, according to Frankel, altered many commandments. This is in direct contradiction to the Sages and the Rishonim rabbis of the Middle Ages, who maintained that these commandments were given directly to Moses from the Almighty at Sinai:

Can such a thing be understood, that the Men of the Great Assembly interpreted the commandments and added their explanations to the Torah, or that the Mishna contains ancient laws whose source is unknown, perhaps from the pairs or even earlier? Does not he who studies the foundations of his belief learn that many laws emerged from Moshe who heard them from the Almighty? On the contrary, every scholar must understand that they came from a source that preceded the pairs, from Hashem who preceded all of Creation, who understands this? \textsuperscript{21}

After presenting the Orthodox view that the laws contained in the Torah were imparted to Moses at Sinai, and quoting the Talmud and the great Rishonim in support of his argument, he refuted Frankel's specific claims, such as that rabbinical decrees originated in the time of Ezra the Scribe, and backs his argument with various Talmudic texts that deal with rabbinical decrees ordained by Moses, Joshua, David, and Solomon. "On what grounds did the writer decide that the decrees originated with Ezra, if he has no proof of it in the Talmud." \textsuperscript{22}

In addition to his claim that Frankel does not believe the historic-halachic information contained in the Talmud, he questions Frankel's credibility, since he feels that he has denigrated the Babylonian Talmud as a reliable source free of irrelevant motives.\textsuperscript{23} He ends his essay by questioning the author's knowledge, maintaining that he "has not sufficiently studied the Mishna and the Poskim, which is why his book contains many errors."\textsuperscript{24}

As we have seen, in Lithuania, too, rabbis opposed \textit{Wissenschaft des Judentums}. Jacob Lifschits' brother—Rabbi Yehuda HaLevy Lifschits of Meretch, published his \textit{Dor Yesharim} in 1907, more than ten years after it was written. Rabbi Lifschits' work contains "responsa and intellectual and Torah proofs" that were intended "to destroy and utterly demolish the claims refuting the Oral Law and the Divine origin of the Torah that appear in the book \textit{Dor Dor VeDorshav} by Eisik Hirsch Weiss." The most notable rabbis of Lithuania urged him to write his
that was problematic from the traditional perspective, the Hildsheimer School postulated an Orthodox alternative that interpreted the principles of scientific research according to their understanding. The Orthodox characteristics were recognized by the Rabbinical Seminary throughout all the years of its existence, and were present from its inception.  

In the course of time and in various places, more researchers, both individuals and consolidated groups, joined the Hildsheimer school, intending to establish an Orthodox alternative to *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The most prominent among them, apart from Rabbi Eisik HaLevy, were: the historian Zeev Yavetz; Rabbi Chaim Heller, researcher of Torah translations; and Benjamin Menashe Levin, researcher of the period of the *Gaonim*, who also attracted a group of Orthodox scholars.

The orthodox scholars attributed the origins of their research to renowned rabbinical figures such as Rabbi Saadia Gaon and the Gaon of Vilna rather than the “Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden” of the nineteenth Century. They saw themselves as the successors of the ancient and authentic “Wissenschaft des Judentums,” as opposed to the new and false, in their eyes, *Wissenschaft des Judentums*.  

While Orthodox researchers could easily overcome the anti-rabbinical tone and the tendency to justify religious reform prevailing among the pioneers of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* without deviating from the rules of scientific research, the basic methods of research, which challenged traditional concepts of the past on more than one occasion, were harder for them to ignore. Therefore, the proponents of the Orthodox *Wissenschaft des Judentums* developed research strategies that allowed them to hold on to their two objectives at the same time, both the scientific research methods and the traditional values.

Although they adopted the principles of objectivity, they objected to its accepted approach, which demanded in principle that research must be free of assumptions. They themselves postulated traditional assumptions on which they based their researches. For example, Rabbi David Zevi Hoffmann declared in his introduction to the Book of Leviticus:

*I willingly agree that, in consequence of the foundation of my belief, I am unable to arrive at the conclusion that the Pentateuch was written by anyone other than Moses; and in order to avoid raising doubts on this score, I have clearly outlined the principles on which my commentary is based in my General Introduction.*

In this field of research, they could not ask the editing questions of the “higher” criticism; rather, they could only deal with the “lower” criticism, or with trying to prove their religious conclusion using
Orthodox Reactions to “Wissenschaft des Judentums”

scientific methods. This apologetic approach was, for example, dominant in Hoffmann’s book *Die Wichtigsten Instanzen gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese* (Berlin 1904).

However, in contrast to Ellenson’s thesis, traditional premises were applied not only to Torah research, but also to research of the Oral Law and the history of the Jewish people. Thus, for example, Isaac Unna (1872–1948), Rabbi of Manheim and a graduate of the Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin, defined what he believed to be the necessary qualities for a historian of the Jewish people, in a programmatic essay:

> Whoever comes to describe the history of Judaism has to fulfill some specific pre-conditions, in addition to the general requirements required of every history researcher. Along with his scientific training, the historian has to command the specific methodology of historical research. Observation today includes a genetic characteristic, meaning that it examines how every historical event became what it is, how it developed within the entirety of events. Therefore, we are required to have, besides the knowledge of the sources and their critical examination, a non-biased and objective description approach, since “the goal is to place in front of our eyes the complete truth” (Ranke). It is obvious that, as in every scientific study, it is the duty of the researcher to be imbued with love for his subject of study. In the description of Jewish history all these conditions must exist. Furthermore, from the Jewish historian we require, in our view, that he be conscious of the unique status of the Jewish nation as a special nation and its Torah as a Divine Torah. This view, together with the objective aspiration to the truth, brings a certain degree of guidance in describing the events, which affixes its seal on all phases.

According to Rabbi Unna, the historian’s recognition of the principle that the Torah is Divine must be applied, for example, to research of the Oral Law’s development. Thus, “the methodology of history is almost entirely absent.” Accordingly, to a historian who regards the Oral Law as a tradition rendered from Sinai:

> The matters dealt with by the Oral Law are explanations of G-d’s words, whose only purpose is to protect and to fulfill the Torah in its original purity or to re-establish it anew. Those who possess lofty attributes, who of course also have their personal weaknesses, are nevertheless above all criticism with regard to their aspiration to the truth and to their absolute credibility, if only for the reason that the entire nation recognized them as being trustworthy to explain G-d’s laws.

This, in contrast to the position of non-Orthodox researchers such as Graetz and Weiss who view the Oral Law as a human creation, and for this reason the bearers of the Oral Law are not “different in any way from the legislators and interpreters of other nations, whose
concern himself with *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, focusing rather on religious philosophy. Although he identified with the work of Rabbi Eisik HaLevy and Zeev Yavetz, he maintained, in one of his letters, that their criticism of those who preceded them was not always justified and that Jewish scholarship should not be negated out of hand, since “we cannot deny that there is much that is worthwhile even in books that have many flaws. At the same time, their [Rabbi Eisik HaLevy and Yavetz] tendentious criticism was not always justified. The truth is loved above all else and it alone is worthy of glory...”

Regarding those studies of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* that conflicted with tradition, Rabbi Kook viewed them as a symptom of the spiritual problem rather than their root cause. He therefore claimed that in order to contend with it we must approach the root of the matter, in which case the symptoms will vanish by themselves. This goes against Rabbi Eisik HaLevy, who regarded *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as the root of the problem and believed that the solution lay in Orthodox Jewish scholarship. In an unpublished letter that he wrote to Rabbi Kook in the summer of 1908 he described *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as the ‘malady of the generation,’ and maintained that Yeshiva students must be taught how to contend with it intellectually:

The study of the Talmud, the Mishna, the Holy Writings and the Torah itself are the malady of our generation. Not only gentle scholars but Jews like Graetz, Frankel, Weiss and Geiger... are fostering Jewish skeptics... by means of the new research... It is the malady of the generation to say that Israel has no tradition of transmittance, that the Talmud is a compilation of baseless, warped interpretations, for this cannot be. The Talmud was not compiled by a group of sages and sealed in the days of Rav Ashi but during the time of the Gaonim themselves. The Mishna emerged in later times, originating in the time of Yossi ben Yoezer, rabbinical takkanot are the basis of the Torah, the Members of the Great Assembly never existed, there never was a High Court, the Holy Scriptures were completed during the time of the Hasmoneans, before which time they were continually added to; and finally the Bible critic goes so far as to attribute the Torah itself to the Second Temple period. All these things circulate among young people in a most alarming fashion. We must therefore teach our youngsters to speak out against them. This is truly an urgent matter.

In Rabbi Kook’s reply he clarifies his position regarding the root of the spiritual problems of the current generation, bringing an example of the relationship between the root of the problem and its symptoms, expressed, among other things, by *Wissenschaft des*
Judentums, which he first mentioned two years previously, in his book Eder Hayakar:

Many have thought that the principle of the foundation of the existence of the Oral Torah was only what was accepted by the nation of the greatness of the Sages and their holiness. Therefore, according to a well-known desire, [there were those who] began to take on airs to criticize (with a critique that was, of course, insolent and full of radical leanings) those heads of [all coming] generations, patriarchs of the world – thinking that in this way they would weaken the force of obligation of the practical foundation [halacha]. And these [critics] didn’t know that the great value of the Sages, and their elevated sanctified [lit. ‘Divine’] status, is a truth unto itself, and [though] it can also add something [lit. ‘spice’] to make more pleasant and to improve the tendency to follow in their [the Sages] ways; but the [true] eternal foundation [of the Oral Torah] is simply the [fact of] the acceptance of the [Oral Torah] by the [Jewish] nation, in its ways of life. And indeed we see, for example, that the decree of Rabbanu Gershom Meor haGolah – in the places in which it took hold – is just as strong and secure in the heart of the nation as any other Torah prohibitions, even though he was not a Sage of the Mishnah, nor a Sage of the Gemarah, because the approval of the whole nation attached [itself to] the decree [at least in the course of future generations], and whoever does not include himself in the community is hating and withdraws himself from the body of Judaism.

Rabbi Kook did not challenge the conclusions of Graetz and Weiss regarding the development of the Oral Law and the sayings of the Sages. He felt that Orthodoxy could absorb them without its own values being harmed. He did not, however, take the same view about the Written Law, since he believed that one cannot question the nature of its revelation, nor can one agree with Bible critics. He assumed that the key, from a religious point of view, for dealing with Wissenschaft des Judentums was to study the sources, since the basis for the preservation of halacha lies in maintaining Jewish tradition throughout the generations.

Rabbi Kook believed that this principle, which combined a national-patriotic outlook with a religious-legal approach, would appeal to the majority of those who supported the national movement. Those who had internalized criticism of the tradition and exchanged their religious lifestyle for a nationalist ideology could thus be brought back to observance of the mitzvot.

In this he differed from Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, who had contended with these questions fifty years earlier. He believed that the nation’s acceptance is a historic development even more than a one-time event like the Revelation at Sinai, and all the more so since it does not have the legitimacy of the laws of nature that are