Joseph D. Soloveitchik, 90, Orthodox Rabbi, Dies

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, a major Jewish philosopher who shaped Orthodox Judaism in America through his writing and lectures and his ordination of more than 2,000 rabbis, died on Thursday at his home in Brookline, Mass. He was 90.

Sam Harstein, a spokesman for Yeshiva University, where Rabbi Soloveitchik taught for more than four decades, said the cause was heart failure.

Rabbi Soloveitchik, known popularly as "the Rav," an affectionate Hebrew name for teacher, was widely accepted as the unchallenged leader of mainstream Orthodoxy. He also redefined the role of the rabbi, attracting thousands of listeners and were regarded as the major academic event for American Orthodoxy.

Opposed Theological Dialogue

Although much of his work involved reconciling traditional Judaism with the modern world, Rabbi Soloveitchik opposed Jewish-Christian dialogue on a theological level. He argued that such conversations would be restricted to issues of social policy like the needs of the poor and race relations.

For years, Rabbi Soloveitchik addressed his fellow rabbis at the annual meeting of the Rabbinical Council of America, the largest of the country's Orthodox rabbinical organizations. Sometimes sitting with his feet crossed in front of a table bearing an open volume of the Talmud, a few bulky reference works and a glass of milk, he spoke in a relaxed, rather informal manner, waving his hand in the air to make a point and asking frequent questions of his audience.

A genial man with a gray hair and a squared-off beard that fell about three inches below his chin, Rabbi Soloveitchik came from a long line of distinguished Talmudic scholars on both sides of his family. His grandfather, Hayyim Soloveitchik, was the rabbi of Brest-Litovsk and brought about a revolution in the methods of Torah scholarship. His father, Moses, was also a great scholar in Europe and later at Yeshiva University in New York.

Despite his accomplishments, Rabbi Soloveitchik, "Halakhic Man," first published in the side Orthodox Jewish circles, and even within them he remained a somewhat cryptic figure. The main reason was his reluctance to publish during his lifetime, a practice that was something of a family tradition, and which admirers attributed to a quest for perfection.

In the 1970s, his published bibliography listed fewer than half a dozen major articles.

But for years he gave major lectures, which lasted two to five hours. His audiences overflowed and were described as an American version of the classical rabbinic legal lesson taught by the master of a European academy.

He described himself as a shy person and denied that he was an authority in the usual sense of the word, "I have many pupils," he said, "I have many disciples, but I never impose my views on anyone."

Rabbi Soloveitchik outlined his basic theological position in a lengthy essay, "Halakhic Man," published in the Hebrew journal Talpiot in 1944. The essay was published in English in 1983 by the Jewish Publication Society.

God and Man Together

As summarized by the Encyclopedia Judaica, the rabbi argued in the essay that man becomes master of himself when he lives in accordance with Jewish law, known as halakha. Then he no longer a creature of habit, his life becomes sanctified and God and man are drawn into a community of existence that Rabbi Soloveitchik termed "a covenantal community." This commonality, he argued, brings God and man together into an intimate relationship. It is only through the observance of the halakha that man attains this goal of "nearness to God."

Among the rabbi's other major essays were "The Lonely Man of Faith," first published in the journal Traditio in 1965 and republished as a book by Doubleday in 1982. In addition, many of his students, some of them frustrated by his reluctance to publish, compiled some of Rabbi Soloveitchik's Talmudic and philosophical lectures, giving full credit to the ideas to "the Rav."

Rabbi Soloveitchik was born in 1903 in Pruzhany, in what is now Belarus, where his father, Moses, served as rabbi. Until his early 20s, he devoted himself almost exclusively to the study of the Talmud, the library of Jewish law, lore and wisdom. At 22, he entered the University of Berlin, where he majored in philosophy and was attracted to the neo-Kantian school.

Founded Jewish Day School

In 1931, he received his doctorate for a dissertation on epistemology and metaphysics. The same year he married Tonya Lewitt, who died in 1967.

In 1932 the couple immigrated to the United States, where he became rabbi of the Orthodox Jewish community of Boston and founded the Monimades School, the first Jewish day school in New England.

In 1941, he came to Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, where he remained the pre-eminent teacher in the country until the mid-1980s. He held the title of Leib Merkin professor of Talmud and Jewish philosophy.

In his years at the seminary Rabbi Soloveitchik ordained over 2,600 rabbis, leading Yeshiva to claim that he had conducted more instruction than any other American seminary teacher. Rabbi Soloveitchik ordained an entire generation of Orthodox leadership, including Rabbi Norman Lamm and Rabbi Israel Miller, the president and senior vice president of Yeshiva University, respectively; Rabbi Rackman, the chancellor University in Israel, and Soloveitchik's two sons-in-law: Howard Twersky, a professor and Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein.

He is survived by the Atarah Twersky of Brookline, Rabbi Haym Soloveitchik of Chicago, two sisters, Shulamit and Anne Gerber, a brother, Rabbi Aharon Chayuk of Chicago, and seven dren and great grandchildren.

A funeral is scheduled for Sunday at the Monimades School.

Deaths

ANDERSON—Marian, ICM Artists portrait painter, muralist and American artist. She will be remembered not only for her historic accomplishments as a painter but also for her vibrant personality, exceptional courage and warm heart. She felt sympathy to her entire family, Leo Lamm, President and Laurits W. Wold, Exec. V.P.

ANDERSON—Marian, The Trustees, staff and artists of Young Audiences salute the life and legacy of our great friend and honorary board member, Marian Anderson's artistry and humanity were elements in the success of our work with all those who care deeply about music and the human condition.


DALTON—John G., on April 6, 1993, Beloved husband of Edna. Loving father of Roger and Lindsey. He was a practicing attorney in Port Washington for 46 years. Predeceased by his first wife, Elizabeth, an attorney, U.S. Attorney, and former De­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­…

GOLST-Dorothy, Beloved husband of, and father of, Allan, David, and Alice. Dearly beloved grandmother to Susan and David.

Joseph D. Soloveitchik, 90, Orthodox Rabbi, Dies

By ARTHUR L. GOLDMAN

Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, a former Jewish philosopher who shaped modern Orthodox Judaism in America through his writing and lectures and his ordination of more than 2,000 rabbis, died on April 1 at his home in Brookline, Mass. He was 90.

His father, Moses, was also a practicing and lectures and his ordination of many rabbis around the world, with whom he kept in contact. He was regarded as America's preeminent Orthodox philosopher. His father, Moses, was also a

A shy man who was often called the ultimate authority.

In Doubleday in 1992. In addition, many of his students, some of them frustrated by their reluctance to publish, compiled a book of his Talmudic and philosophical lectures, giving full credit for the ideas to "The Rav." In 1965, he was elected to the study of the Talmud, the library of Jewish law, lore and wisdom. At 22, he entered the University of Berlin, where he majored in philosophy and was attracted to the neo-Kantian school.

Founded Jewish Day School

In 1931, he received his doctorate for a dissertation on epistemology and metaphysics. The same year he married Tonya Lewin, a student. In 1970, the couple immigrated to the United States, where he became the rabbi of the Orthodox Jewish community of Boston and founded the Maimonides Jewish Day School in New England.

In 1941, he came to Yeshiva University's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, where he remained for many years. Rabbi Soloveitchik was ordained in 1920, leading to the ordination of his father, Moses, as a rabbi. In 1922, he graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary with a doctorate in Talmudic studies.

He was known for his scholarly approach to the Talmud and his ability to make it accessible to a broad audience. He was also known for his writings on Jewish law, philosophy and ethics.

Obituary

Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik

By SUSAN ANGER

Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, a former Jewish philosopher who shaped modern Orthodox Judaism in America through his writing and lectures and his ordination of more than 2,000 rabbis, died on April 1 at his home in Brookline, Mass. He was 90.

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Obituary

Richard Schmiechen, Producer of ‘Harvey Milk’ Film, Dies at 45

By JOHN FELDMAN

A shy man who was often called the ultimate authority.

Richard Schmiechen, the producer of “Harvey Milk,” died on April 8 in Los Angeles. He was 45.

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Obituary

Richard Schmiechen, Producer of ‘Harvey Milk’ Film, Dies at 45
LUBITZ—Burton, The Officers, 84, Apr. 9, 1993, beloved mother of Susan Losne, Mat, and Jonathan, and member of Beth Elohim Congregation. Survived by his wife, Janet, and seven grandchildren. Services Sunday, 12:00 noon, at Beth Elohim Congregation, 310 4th Ave., West New York, NJ, 5 p.m.

LUDWIG—Gert, on April 4, 1993, beloved mother of Daniel K. Ludwig. Services held Friday afternoon, April 9, 1993, at Mt. Sinai Cemetery, 310 4th Ave., West New York, NJ. 5 p.m.

LUTZ—Bruce, on April 9, 1993, beloved father of Robert A., Ronald L., David P., and Jonathan K. Services held Sunday, April 11, 1993, at 5:00 p.m., at Fred H. McGrath & Sons Funeral Home, 173 River St., Jersey City, NJ.

LUTZ—Joan, 84, on April 9, 1993, beloved mother of David, Joel, and sachar. Services held Sunday, April 11, 1993, at 5:00 p.m., at Fred H. McGrath & Sons Funeral Home, 173 River St., Jersey City, NJ.