ABSTRACT

# THE RELIGIOUS KIBBUTZ:
## BETWEEN MYSTICISM AND HALAKHA

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Discussion of the roots of neo-Orthodox thought and fundamental principles mainly tends to define Halakha as a dynamic, national framework. The ideas that swept over German Jewish youth were pressed into Halakhic molds by neo-Orthodox thinkers.They conceived the unification of sacred and secular, and the desire for the heavenly kingdom as applying to a Jewish society that implemented the principles of Halakha. This desire, which accorded with neo-Orthodox philosophy of Halakha, became realistic following the Balfour Declaration, and thereby prompted the subjects of this study to follow the path of Zionism.

The immigration of neo-Orthodox figures like Mose Una to Eretz Israel during the 1930s marked a new phase in the development of neo-Orthodox thought, to a great extent; its adherents were now required to put the validity of their vision of all-inclusive Halakha to the test. This attempt, discussed in the third section of my paper, is symbolized by their participation in the religious kibbutz movement. This settlement movement did not comprise only German immigrants to Eretz Israel; these were joined by groups of Hasidim from Eastern Europe. However, the uniqueness of the figures discussed here is reflected in the Halakhic motivation for their endeavors to establish religious settlements. Contrary to the Eastern European groups, who regarded physical labor and communing with nature as a means for achieving individual transcendence, the adherents of neo-Orthodoxy regarded religious settlement as an important experiment for determining whether Halakha could serve as the basis of a modern Jewish community in Eretz Israel, as an initial phase toward applying this vision to society at large. However, since rabbinical authorities ignored the call for modifications in Halakha needed by religious farmers, and the movement lacked political influence, the religious kibbutz movement, after years of struggle, reconciled itself to maintaining only the communal structure. This process reflected the gradual decline of neo-Orthodoxy in Israel.