

If, however, man is in his essence a spiritual personality, a bearer of a transcendental charisma, be it a universal logos, a free will or a heroic *modus existentiae*, our value judgments revolve about this mysterious ultimate self-reality? Our task now is to investigate the cogency of the almost dogmatic assertion that the Bible proclaimed the separateness of man from nature and his otherness.

It is certain that the fathers of the Church and also the Jewish medieval scholars believed that the Bible preached this doctrine. Medieval and even modern Jewish moralists have almost canonized this viewpoint and attributed to it apodictic validity. Yet the consensus of many, however great and distinguished, does not prove the truth or falseness of a particular belief. I have always felt that due to some erroneous conception, we have actually misunderstood the Judaic anthropology and read into the Biblical texts ideas which stem from an alien source. This feeling becomes more pronounced when we try to read the Bible not as an isolated literary text but as a manifestation of a grand tradition rooted in the very essence of our God-consciousness that transcends the bounds of the standardized and fixed text and fans out into every aspect of our existential experience. The sooner Biblical texts are placed in their proper setting – namely, the Oral Tradition with its almost endless religious awareness – the clearer and more certain I am that Judaism does not accent unreservedly the theory of man's isolationism and separatism within the natural order of things.

The Jewish and Christian Views of Man

Surveying the history of the problem of man's autonomy or heteronomy (which came to the fore long before Darwin, when people were ignorant of evolution),³ we notice that this problem troubled Christian theologians more than Jewish scholars. The

2. Both the classical Greek and the Biblical philosophy of man have branched out into an ascetic practical morality. The Stoa on the one hand and Christian monasticism on the other are characteristic traits of the moral outlook that emerges from the act of spiritualization of man.

3. The psalmist already came across the miracle called man and defined in

naturalistic formula of man was to a certain extent common knowledge among *Hazal*, who did not resent it, while Christian theologians, beginning with Augustine of Hippo and ending with the neo-scholastics, are still struggling with the secularization of human existence by scientific research. The reason lies in the discrepancy between the Jewish Bible and the Christian gospels, the "Old" and "New" Testaments. The Hebrew Bible is cognizant of man as a natural being found on the same plane as the animal and the plant. Indeed, such an idea is a motivating force in Jewish ethics and metaphysics. The nihility, instability, helplessness and vulnerability of man – human life and death – are popular themes of prophets who contrast him with the eternity, unchangeability, everlasting life and omnipotence of the Creator. All those negative traits suggest the naturalness and immanence of man rather than his spirituality and transcendence. Such phrases as

Man is like a breath (Ps. 144:4)

All flesh is grass, and all its grace is as the flower of the field... the grass withers, the flower fades but the word of our God shall stand forever... (Isa. 40:6-7)

so that man has no pre-eminence over a beast: for all is vanity (Eccl. 3:19)

are not epithets of human-divine character. They denote the

no uncertain: terms his paradoxality and the discrepancy. Sometimes we wonder whether the psalmist did have an insight into man's affinity with nature. "What is man, that You art mindful of him? and the son of man, that You visitest him" (Ps. 8:5). *Ben adam* should be interpreted in the sense of "the son of the earth" and in the very moment he deprecates man to a low degree in the natural frame of things, he exclaims in rapture, "Yet You have made him a little lower than the angels, and you dost crown him with glory and honor" (Ps. 8:6). Man's autonomy and uniqueness find glorious expression in other psalms: "You turn man back to dust; and say, return, you children of men" (90:3); "You engulf them, they are like sleepers, they

common fate of man, animal and plant, the cycle of birth, growth, deterioration and death. As a matter of fact, the terms *shokhmei batei chomer*, "those who dwell in houses of clay" (Job 4:19), *benei temutah*, "those who are appointed to die" (Ps. 79:11), *ben adam*, *adam*, and *basar* (flesh)⁴ all involve the basic concept of man as a natural being. "Death," in Hebrew, *mavet*, applies equally to man and animal – "and if any beast . . . die" (Lev. 11:39) – and bespeaks the end of the organic process. Man is presented by the prophet under the aspect of temporality which he tries to convert to eternity, of weakness that in his pride man disguised as glory and magnificence. In all this the intimacy and immediacy of man with the physis comes to expression.

The New Testament, drawing on the idea of individual *het* ("sin") which found its full formulation in Ezekiel, shifted man to a different plane and portrayed him in a different light. Man is not any longer the pendulum, that swings between birth and decay, but the being who is torn by satanic revolt, sin and obedience, between living and falling from his God-Father. Both sin and submission are traits related to man as a spiritual-transcendental being. Man-animal can never sin nor humble himself. It is the spirit that revolts, the spirit that submits itself. Man as a biological being is incapable of either. The spirit is in an eternal quest for self-transcendence, to exceed its own relativity and conditionality, and reaches out beyond itself toward regions of absoluteness and indeterminacy.

are like the short-lived grass in the morning. In the morning it flourishes, and fades; by evening it is withered and dried" (90:5-6). There is no naturalist who could describe [the] nature of man in more effective and beautiful words. In the metaphor "You engulf them," man is carried by a forceful stream of existence, constituting just a particle of an all-powerful process; the human individual being likened to a flower of the field that blossoms and withers is a most striking presentation.

4. "For all flesh is grass" (Isa. 40:6); "and He remembered that they were but flesh" (Ps. 78:39).

Man's haughtiness becomes for Christianity the metaphysical pride of an allegedly unconditioned existence. Jewish Biblical pride signifies only overemphasis upon man's abilities and power. In view of all that, the New Testament stresses man's alien status in the world of nature and his radical uniqueness. To be sure, all these ideas are not only Christian but Jewish as well. Christianity did not add much to the Biblical-philosophical anthropology. We come across a dual concept of man in the Bible. His element of transcendence was well-known to the Biblical Jew. Yet transcendence was always seen against the background of naturalness. The canvas was man's immanence; transcendence was just projected on it as a display of colors. It was more a modifying than a basic attribute of man.

At any rate, both ideas were considered inseparable by the Bible; Christianity succeeded in isolating them and reducing the element of naturalness to a state of corruption and encountering the transcendent being with an alternative: death or life, while death means transcendental forms of existence and non-existence.

The Christian theologians never tried to reconstruct the story of the creation of man out of the wholeness of creation. Whenever they read the story, they instinctually clung to the verse "Let us make mankind in our image" (Gen. 1:26), and by doing so, they established his supernatural character, his interaction with a transcendental world. They did not dare to tell the story of man in the aboriginal terms of Genesis. Let us analyze this.

The Story in Genesis 1

The story of creation is the biography of nature. The story is not related to any transcendental world or any supernatural phenomena. On the contrary, the Creator is depicted not as transcendent God, who creates a world with which He will never come in contact (what would be a *contradictio in adjecto*), but as *E-lokim*, as the powerful being who dominates all, and who is not at an infinite distance from His creatures. There is no doubt that *E-lokim*

SECTION I

24 : 1 : 24

God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild

beasts of every kind." And it was so.

25

God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was good.

26

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea,

and the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth."

27

And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created

28

them. God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule

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the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth." And it was so.

30

And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is

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the breath of life, [I give] all the green plants for food." And it was so. And God saw all that He had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was

32

morning, the sixth day. The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array.

2

On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done.

3

(3) : 1 : 24

SECTION II

4

Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made earth and heaven—

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when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil,

6

but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth—

7

the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

8

The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed.

9

And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

10

A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and it then divides and becomes four branches:

11

the first is Pishon, the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. (

12

The gold of that land is good; bdellium is there, and lapis lazuli.)

13

The second river is Gihon, the one that winds through the whole land of Cush:

14

The third river is Tigris, the one that flows east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it.

16

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat;

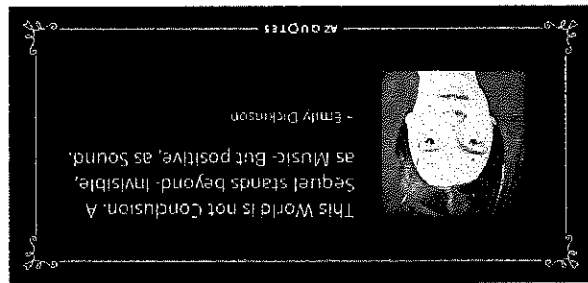
17

but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die."

18

The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him."

The integral relationship between prayer and shofar suggests that the highly subjective and emotional prayer experience (described as *mitzv'at shofar*, *worship of the hear*) must be paralleled by a similar sensitivity regarding shofar. Verbally formulated prayer must be synthesized with a second type of prayer, that which emerges from the sound of the shofar. As a result, there are a number of close parallels between the mitzvah of shofar and the mitzvah of prayer. For example, at the conclusion of the *Shofaros*



א. וְעַתָּה יְהוָה

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