

The Importance of the Rav's Teachings in Modern Society

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Yeshiva University



ישיבת רבנו יצחק אלחנן

Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary

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CENTER FOR THE JEWISH FUTURE

**THE ENDURING LEGACY OF RABBI JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK:
REFLECTIONS ON HIS TWENTIETH YAHRZEIT**

Jacob J. Schacter

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Prof. E. E. Urbach's version:

Lord our God, with abundant compassion and enduring kindness, take pity upon us, upon Your people Israel, and upon Your city Jerusalem which is being rebuilt upon its ruins, restored upon its ravage and resettled upon its desolation. For her most saintly martyrs who were wantonly slaughtered, for those of Your people who were murdered and for her sons who gave their lives and spilled their blood for her sake, Zion moans and wails, "My heart, my heart cries for the dead, my recesses weep for the dead." Over the city which You liberated from the hands of villainous legions and gave to Your people in perpetuity, spread Your shelter of peace as a peaceful river in fulfillment of that which is stated, "And I shall be unto her a wall of fire round about, saith the Lord, and I will be for a glory in the midst of her." Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Comforter of Zion and Rebuilder of Jerusalem!

חנם ה' אלהים מחמך ורבים
ובחסדיך האמינים עליש ועל
עמך ישראל ועל ירושלים עירך
הנבחרת מחייבה דמקומה
מרוסוה ודמיונה. על חסדיך עליון
שעצט כדיון ועל עמך ישראל
שדאסל לחיב ועל בניה אשר
מסרו נפשם ושפכו דמם עליה.
ציון כשר תבנה וירושלים רמתן
קולה. לבי לבי על חלליהם מעי
מע על חלליהם. ודעיר אשר
פודים מיר עריצים ודליונות
ולשראל עמך נטתה נחלה ולרע
ישודן ירושה הורשתה נטה עליה
סוכת שלוםך כשר שלום לקיים
מה שנאמר, "ואני אהיה ליה נאם
ה' חומת אש סביב ולכבוד אהיה
בתוכה." ברוך אתה ה' מעתה ציון
ובתה ירושלים.

יוסף א
אביון נחמ
כ"א' כ"ב

ולכו, אין ספק שיש משום דובר שקרים לפני ה', לומר על ירושלים
זאת, "העיר החריבה הבויה והשוממה מבלי בניה", וביתר לפי
נוסחת אשכנז, "האבלה מבלי בניה, והחריבה ממעונותיה, והבויה
מכבודה, והשוממה מאין יושב", שבודאי הוא דובר שקרים.
מסבה זאת נהגתי אנכי לחסוף מלה אחת בלבד, ולשנות מלה
אחת בנוסח "נחם", כדי לחמלט מדברי שקר, וכך אני אומר:
"נחם ה' אלקינו את אבלי ציון ואת אבלי ירושלים (כי כל זמן
שלא נבנה בית המקדש עדיין אנו שריים באבל) ואת העיר
שהיתה חרבה ובויה ושוממה מבלי בניה. היא יושבה וראשה
חפוי וכר וכר. ולפיז התפלה היא שינחם ה' את אבלי ציון
וירושלים, ואת העיר שדיתה עד כה חרבה ושוממה מבלי בניה,
אך עדיין זקוקה היא לנחמה, עד שיתקיים בה מקרא שכתוב:
ואני אהיה לה נאום חומת אש סביב ולכבוד אהיה בתוכה.

ה' חיוך 3/3
צגה 2/2
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י"ד / כ"ג
 י"ח / כ"ד
 י"ט / כ"ה

בניה, על שם כי רבים בני שוממה, ונאמר כל שעריה שוממים. וראשי תיבות
 של „אבלה חרבה בזויה שוממה“, „אחכש“, לרמוז כיום הכוש ה' את שכר עמו.
 ע"ש. ולכן מי הוא זה ואיזהו כדורות אלו שיכול להרחיב עוז „לתקן“, ולשנות
 מנוסח התפלה שנתקן ע"י רבותינו הקדושים אשר רוח ה' דבר בם ומלתו על
 לשונם. ובכל תיבה ותיבה ובכל אות ואות שתיקנו במפני הברכות והתפלות,
 נגזרים בהן סודות נשגבים וסופלאים, ודברי קדשם מיוסדים על אדני פז ברזין
 עילאין סמירין. וכמ"ש מרן החיד"א בשו"ת חיים שאל (סוף סימן יא): „כי
 נודע שכל עניני התפלות בנויים ומיוסדים על אדני רזי עולם כמו שנראה
 מהוהר הקדוש וכתבי רבינו האר"י זצ"ל, שהכל מתוקן ומסודר בכוננות
 עליונות, ובוה נבין מ"ש (בברכות כח): „אמר להם רבן גמליאל הזקן לחכמים,
 כלום יש בכם אדם שיודע לתקן ברכת המינים, עמד שמואל הקטן ותיקנה“,
 ולכאורה יפלא על גדולי ישראל רבן גמליאל וחכמים שבדורו, כי מה חכמה
 היא זו לתקן דברות שתיים בלשון הקודש וכו', אלא שלהיות וכל אות ואות
 מנוסח הברכות סוד שחו ביהוד וזיווג מדות העליונות, לפיכך צריך חכם
 גדול שרוח הקודש טורה עליו לכונן הדברים לפי סודן, לדעת פנים המינים
 והמשכת האורות לדהות יניקת הסט"א וכיו"ב, דברים העומדים ברומו של
 עולם“. (ועמד שמואל הקטן ותיקנה, כי לו נגלו כל תעלומות חכמה, וכל רו
 לא אניס ליה, כמבואר בסנהדרין יא.). עכת"ד. וכן כתב הפני יהושע בחידושיו
 לברכות (כח:). וכ"כ הגאון יעב"ץ בספר מגדל עוז. והגר"ח מאלוז'ין בספר
 נפש החיים (שער ב פרק יג). ע"ש. ואם כן מה כוחנו לשנות הנוסח שבתפלת
 נחם, שהוא מעין המאורע בתפלות תשעה באב, ואין אתנו יודע עד מה.

ובאמת שגם לפי פשוטו יתבאר הנוסח של תפלת נחם, שהוא „על הר ציון
 ששמים שועלים חלכו בו“. כי מקום המקדש ומכיבותיו נתונים ביד
 זרים שונאי ישראל, וירושלים העתיקה עודנה מלאה גילולים של עכור"ם, בכמה
 כנסיות טמאות, ואשר על ידי כסריהם ומנהיגיהם דם ישראל נשפך כמים בכל
 הדורות, ובמכיבות המקדש קבורים ישמעאלים, (סביב רשעים יתהלכו) ולכל
 עם ישראל אסור מן התורה להכנס להר הכית משום טומאת מת, והעריבים

בענין אמירת נחם

כשנכבשה ירושלים במלחמת ששת הימים היו אלו שרצו לשנות את נוסח
 תפלת נחם: ואח העיר האבלה והחרבה והבזויה והשוממה האכלה מכלי בניה
 והחרבה ממעונותיה והבזויה מכבודה, והשוממה מאין יושב, היא ישבת
 וראשה חפוי כאשה עקרה שלא ילדה, שטענו שהרי ירושלים עכשיו ביד
 ישראל ואינה עוד חרבה ובזויה.

ורבינו התנגד לרכריהם בכל תוקף, ראשית מפני שאין לנו לשנות את נוסח
 התפלה שנתקן על ידי חז"ל. ועוד אמר שכל זמן שהמקדש חרוב. אף
 שירושלים בניה וביד ישראל, מ"מ נחשבת ירושלים גם לעיר חרבה, שהרי
 להרמב"ם קדושת ירושלים היא קדושת מקדש, וכרמבואר כרמב"ם בפ"י
 המשניות על המשנה ב"ה (דף כט:): נתקן יר"ט של ר"ה שחל להיות בשבת
 במקדש היו תוקעין אבל לא במדינה, והרמב"ם פירש דמקדש היינו כל
 ירושלים. וכן הוא כרמב"ם פ"ב משופר ה"י ח'. ולכן פסק הרמב"ם (רפ"ו
 מה"י בית הבחירה ה' ט"ז) דקדושת המקדש ירושלים אינה בטלה, דהוי מפני
 השכינה. וכוננו, דירושלים הוא חלק מהמקדש, ולכן כל זמן שהמקדש חרב,
 אף ירושלים נחשבת כחרבה.

הג"ח
 סוף / כ"ג י"ד
 סוף / כ"ד י"ח
 סוף / כ"ה י"ט
 (י"ט)

R. Joseph B. Solovitchik,
The Halakic Mind
(New York + London, 1966),
101-02

When we apply typological standards to a philosophy, two important factors must be borne in mind: first, the central problem typifies the form-whole. It lends uniqueness to the philosophical thought. The question charts the course of the philosopher. Descartes was intrigued by the problem of cogency and reality, Spinoza by that of substance and infinity, Kant by that of a priori knowledge, Hume by that of experience, etc. Second, the structural patterns of the system: Single thoughts do not determine the singularity of a philosophy. The organic whole, with its morphological designs and Gestalt qualities, is decisive. To this end there is only a single source from which a Jewish philosophical Weltanschauung could emerge; the objective order—the Halakha. In passing onward from the Halakha and other objective constructs to a limitless subjective flux, we might possibly penetrate the basic structure of our religious consciousness. We might also evolve cognitive tendencies and aspects of our world interpretation and gradually grasp the mysteries of the religious halakic act. Problems of freedom, causality, God-man relationship, creation, and nihilism would be illuminated by halakic principles. A new light could be shed on our apprehension of reality. The halakic compass would also guide us through the lanes of medieval philosophy and reveal structural standards by which to judge and evaluate the philosophical thought of that golden age. It would help us discriminate between the living and the dead in Jewish philosophy. What, for instance, is of halakic nature in the Guide and the Kuzari, and what merely an echo of Platonic-Aristotelian philosophy? The purpose of such an analysis is not to eliminate non-Jewish elements. Far from it, for the blend of Greek and Jewish thought has often been truly magnificent. However, by tracing the Jewish trends and comparing them to the non-Jewish, we shall enrich our outlook and knowledge. Modern Jewish philosophy must be nurtured on the historical religious consciousness that has been projected onto a fixed objective screen.

Out of the sources of Halakha, a new world view awaits formulation.

Isaiah Berlin (London 1953)

THE HEDGEHOG AND THE FOX
An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History
'A queer combination of the brain of an English chemist with the soul of an Indian Buddhist.' E. M. DE VOSÛS

I

THERE is a line among the fragments of the Greek poet Archilochus which says: 'The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing'.¹ Scholars have differed about the correct interpretation of these dark words, which may mean no more than that the fox, for all his cunning, is defeated by the hedgehog's one defence. But, taken figuratively, the words can be made to yield a sense in which they mark one of the deepest differences which divide writers and thinkers, and, it may be, human beings in general. For there exists a great chasm between those, on one side, who relate everything to a single central vision, one system less or more coherent or articulate, in terms of which they understand, think and feel—a single, universal, organizing principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance—and, on the other side, those who pursue many ends, often unrelated and even contradictory, connected, if at all, only in some *de facto* way, for some psychological or physiological cause, related by no single moral or aesthetic principle; these last lead lives, perform acts, and entertain ideas that are centrifugal rather than centripetal, their thought is scattered or diffused, moving on many levels, seizing upon the essence of a vast variety of experiences and objects for what they are in themselves, without, consciously or unconsciously, seeking to fit them into, or exclude them from, any one unchanging, all-embracing, sometimes self-contradictory and incom-

plete, at times fanatical, unitary inner vision. The first kind of intellectual and artistic personality belongs to the hedgehogs, the second to the foxes; and without insisting on a rigid classification, we may, without too much fear of contradiction, say that, in this sense, Dante belongs to the first category, Shakespeare to the second; Plato, Lucretius, Pascal, Spinoza, Hegel, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Kafka are, in varying degrees, hedgehogs; Herodotus, Aristotle, Horace, Erasmus, Molière, Goethe, Pushkin, Balzac, Joyce are foxes.

Of course, like all over-simple classifications of this type, the dichotomy becomes, if pressed, artificial, scholastic, and ultimately absurd. But if it is not an aid to serious criticism, neither should it be rejected as being merely superficial or frivolous; like all distinctions which embody any degree of truth, it offers a point of view from which to look and compare, a starting-point for genuine investigation. Thus we have no doubt about the violence of the contrast between Pushkin and Dostoevsky; and Dostoevsky's celebrated speech about Pushkin has, for all its eloquence and depth of feeling, seldom been considered by any perceptive reader to cast light on the genius of Pushkin, but rather on that of Dostoevsky himself, precisely because it perversely represents Pushkin—an arch-fox, the greatest in the nineteenth century—as a being similar to Dostoevsky who is nothing if not a hedgehog; and thereby transforms, indeed distorts, Pushkin into a dedicated prophet, a bearer of a single, universal message which was indeed the centre of Dostoevsky's own universe, but exceedingly remote from the many varied provinces of Pushkin's protean genius. Indeed, it would not be absurd to say that Russian literature is spanned by these gigantic figures—at one pole Pushkin, at the other Dostoevsky; and that the characteristics of other Russian writers can, by those who find it useful or enjoyable to ask that kind of question,

¹ Πόλλ' οἷδ' ἀλώπηξ ἅλλ' ἕχλωσ ἐν μύθῳ. (Diels, *Frag.* 103.)

pass on? I admit that I am not able to define precisely the messianic role of the Jewish mother. Only by circumscription I hope to be able to explain it. Permit me to draw upon my own experiences. I used to have long conversations with my mother. In fact, it was a monologue rather than a dialogue. She talked and I "happened" to overhear. What did she talk about? I must use an halakhic term in order to answer this question: she talked me-inyana de-yoma. I used to watch her arranging the house in honor of a holiday. I used to see her recite prayers; I used to watch her recite the sidra every Friday night and I still remember the nostalgic tune. I learned from her very much.

Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavor, a scent and warmth to mitzvot. I learned from her the most important thing in life -- to feel the presence of the Almighty and the gentle pressure of His hand resting upon my frail shoulders. Without her teachings, which quite often were transmitted to me in silence, I would have grown up a soulless being, dry and insensitive.

The laws of Shabbat, for instance, were passed on to me by my father; they are a part of mussar avikha. The Shabbat as a living entity, as a queen, was revealed to me by my mother; it is a part of torat Imekha. The fathers knew much about the Shabbat; the mothers lived the Shabbat, experienced her presence, and perceived her beauty and splendor.

The fathers taught generations how to observe the Shabbat; mothers taught generations how to greet the Shabbat and how to enjoy her twenty-four hour presence.

Family Redeemed

pp 114-15

Two Complementary Missions

There is a distinction between mother's and father's mission within the covenantal community, since they represent two different personalistic approaches. Father's teaching is basically of an intellectual nature. Judaism is to a great extent an intellectual discipline, a method, a system of thought, a hierarchy of values. In order to be acquainted with all these aspects, one must study, comprehend, acquire knowledge and be familiar at least with its basic principles. Let me confide: it is not too easy a task. The teaching must be strict, exact and conscientious. If the father cannot accomplish it all by himself, he must see to it that his child obtains the necessary instruction.

However, Judaism is not only an intellectual tradition but an experiential one as well. The Jew not only observed but experienced the Shabbat, the Jew experienced Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. He did not only recite prayers on those days. The seder was not just a ceremonial, but a great experiential event. There is beauty, grandeur, warmth, and tenderness to Judaism. All these qualities cannot be described in cognitive terms. One may behold them, feel them, sense them. It is impossible to provide one with a formal training in the experiential realm. Experiences are communicated not through the word but through steady contact, through association, through osmosis, through a tear or a smile, through dreamy eyes and soft melody, through the silence at twilight and the recital of Shema. All this is to be found in the maternal domain. The mother creates the mood; she is the artist who is responsible for the magnificence, solemnity and beauty. She tells the child of the great romance of Judaism, while playing, singing, laughing and crying.

Family Redeemed

pp 39-41

Objectivity and Subjectivity

At this juncture, however, let us digress and examine the problem of objectivity and subjectivity in Judaism. This examination will provide us with the proper background against which to view the institution of marriage.

We know very well that Judaism has always demanded that the religious gesture, though steeped in the deepest strata of the human personality, must be objectified and crystallized in concrete ritual deeds. There are two aspects to the religious gesture in Judaism: strict objective discipline and exalted subjective romance. Both are indispensable. For instance, the commandment of Shema requires, on the one hand, an inner act of surrender to the will of the Almighty. On the other hand, this subjective experience of submission must be translated into a physical act of reciting the Shema. The same is true of prayer. It consists of both experiencing the complete helplessness of man, his absolute dependence upon God, and the performance of the ritual of prayer, of reciting fixed texts. The Bible spoke of the commandment to love one's neighbor (Lev 19:18). However, in Talmudic literature, emphasis was placed not only upon sentiment, but upon action, which is motivated by sentiment. The Hoshen Mishpat, the Jewish code of civil law, analyzes not human emotions but actual human relations. The problem of the Hoshen Mishpat is not what one feels toward the other, but how he acts toward him.

Judaism has always believed that wherever actions are fair and relations are just, whenever man is able to discipline himself and develop dignified behavioral patterns, the latter are always accompanied by corresponding worthy emotions. Feelings not manifesting themselves in deeds are volatile and transient; deeds not linked with inner experience are soulless and ritualistic. Both the subjective as well as the objective component are indispensable for the self-realization of the religious personality. Yet Halakha lays emphasis upon actions rather than upon experiences, for it is confident that, while actions are capable of stirring the soul, exciting the imagination and firing the heart, feelings -- no matter how noble and dignified, no matter how strong and violent -- may exhaust themselves in an inner tempest without breaking through to the surface at all. Man, Halakha has been teaching us, must first of all respond to the call of duty and act in accordance with Divine discipline. Only then may he relive these acts of discipline as fascinating ideals and great experiences. The central dimension of Judaism is the volition, the will; God summons man to affirm the binding authority of the Divine norm. Only then does an inner relationship between God and man begin to bud and blossom. Judaism is first a discipline and second a romance.

In light of this thesis, we may say that the marital union is both an objective institution and a subjective experience. Of

ה"א / הזמן הישיר והאנוני - (כס) הדוק, צרתי טקס

מ"א, 15-50

a serious educational-philosophical problem, which has long troubled me. Orthodox youth have discovered the Torah through scholastic forms of thought, intellectual contact, and cold logic. However, they have not merited to discover her [the Torah] through a living, heart-pounding, invigorating sense of perception. They know the Torah as an idea, but do not directly encounter her as a "reality," perceptible to "taste, sight and touch." Because many of them lack this "Torah-perception," their world view (*hashkafah*) of Judaism becomes distorted... In one word, they are confounded on the pathways of Judaism, and this perplexity is the result of unsophisticated perspectives and experiences. *Halakhah* is two-sided... the first is intellectual, but ultimately it is experiential.

the frustration centered, primarily, on the sense that the full thrust of his total [effort] was often not sufficiently apprehended or appreciated; that by some, parts of his Torah were being digested and disseminated, but other essential ingredients were being relatively disregarded, if not distorted... [He often felt] that even among *talmidim*, some of his primary spiritual concerns were not so much rejected as ignored; indeed, that spirituality itself was being neglected... [T]he tension between the subjective and the objective, between action, thought, and experience, was a major lifelong concern. The sense that he was only partially successful in imparting this concern gnawed at him...

And therefore I affirm that I can identify one of those responsible for the present situation, and that is none other than myself. I have not fulfilled my obligation as a guide in Israel. I seem to have lacked the ability—the personal power—required of a teacher and *rav*, or perhaps I lacked some of the desire to fulfill the role completely, and I did not devote myself completely to the task. To a greater or lesser degree, as an educator and teacher on the plane of *gālat ha-mohin*, "mental greatness," my students have received much Torah learning from me, and their intellectual standing has strengthened and increased during the years they have spent with me. (but) I have not seen much growth on the experiential plane. I have not succeeded in living in common with them, cleaving to them and bestowing some of my personal warmth on them. My words, it would seem, have not kindled a divine spark in sensitive hearts. I have fallen short [in my role] as one who spreads the "Torah of the heart"—[a Torah] that is transmitted by the power of [the teacher's deliberate] diminishing [of his own towering] stature, to the point of *katnut ha-mohin* [chüdlike simplicity]. And the failing lies with me.

אולם מכיון שבאה לידי שאלת האחריות למצב זה, הגני נוטל רשות לגלות את הרהורי לבי. ההלכה לימדה אותנו לפשפש במעשינו, להתחרט על שניאוותינו ולהתורדות עליהן. אוי לו לאדם, אומרת ההלכה, שבמקום גלות עונותיו הוא מחפה עליהם וטופל את האשמה על אחרים. אויה לו ואוי לנפשו אם התמחה בחיטוט במגרעות הזולת, ותחת להתורדות בגוף ראשון, לשונו שנונה בסדר וירוי בגוף שלישי. גם הכהן הגדול ביום-הכיפורים היה מתוודה על עצמו וביתו עוכר לוודויו על אחיו הכהנים ועל קהל ישראל. לפיכך, אם תובעים ממני שאצביע על האשמים ברלות נפשית-רוחנית זו, אי אפשר לי לתלות את הקולר בצווארי מישוהו ולהודות על חטאיו. הדבר שאני חייב לעשות הוא לפשפש במעשי. פישפוש כזה סופו קיטרוג עצמי. זו היא חובתו של אדם מישראל. לפיכך אני מצהיר, כי יש בידי להצביע על אחר האחראים למצב הנוכחי, והוא אני בעצמי. אני לא יצאתי ידי חובתי כמורה דרך והוראה בישראל. חטרו לי הכוחות הנפשיים שמורה רוב זקוק להם, או נטול-רצון הייתי ולא הקדשתי את כל אשר לי למשימתי. בשעה שהצלחתי, במידה מרובה או מועטת, כמלמד ומורה במישור "גדלות המוחין" — תלמידי קיבלו ממני הרבה תורה, וקומתם האינטלקטואלית התחסנה והלכה וגדלה במשך השנים שבילו בסביבתי — לא ראיתי כרכה מרובה במעשי ידי במישור החווייתי. לא עלה בידי לחיות עמהם חיים משוחפים, להתדבק בהם ולהעניק להם מחום נפשי. דברי לא הציתו כנראה את שלהבת ייה בלבנות רגישים. חטאתי כמרבין תורה שכלב, הנמסרת ככוח המעטת הרמות ער כדי "קטנות המוחין"; אתי תלין משוגת.

מובן, שאין אני נותן חשוכה המניחה את הדעת ומחייב אני את עצמי בנוגע למספר מצעור של תלמידים שבאו ללמוד תורה ולקבל השראה ממני. אבל השאלה בעינה עומדת ככל תוקפה וחריפותה: על מי מוטלת האחריות לטימטום הלבבות הכללי שלא הוסר? לפתח מי רובצת האשמה לאי-התעלות רוחנית כזו בכלל? מימי לא נלחמתי ביציריו של הזולת ולא הרציתי וירוי דברים על טעויותיו. אם ישנם עוד אשמים, יעמדו נא ויעידו על עצמם. ממאן אני להופיע כקטיגור המלמד חובה על אחרים. כל אחד יקיים בעצמו את דברי הברייתא (עירובין יג ע"ב): "נוח לו לאדם שלא נברא משנברא ועכשיו שנברא יפשפש במעשיו".

כדבר אחר יש להודות ללא כל פיקפוק היסטוטי, והוא שההכרעה הגדולה שנפלה אחרי מחלוקת ארוכה של שתי שנים ומחצה, כי "נוח לו לאדם שלא נברא משנברא" נאמרה לא רק עלינו, יהודים פשוטים, נאמני ה"שולחן ערוך" בארץ ובגולה, אלא גם על כלת-ידיים, בני העולם הגדול ורחבי-הידיים, בין אלה שאין להם כלום חרץ לדי' אמות של חילוניות ובין אלה החורגים אל מקורות עתיקי ימים, חרג שאינו קשור

He teaches the child how to experience and feel Yahadut. Yahadut is not only discipline. Yes, we start with that, to discipline the child on all levels, on the physical level, on the social level, on the emotional level, and on the intellectual level. Above all, he teaches the child how to experience Yahadut, how to feel Yahadut. That is what my melamed taught me.

A Jew is not only supposed to know what Yahadut stands for and to have knowledge of Yahadut; he is also called upon to experience Yahadut, to live it, and to somehow engage in a romance with the Almighty. Knowing about Yahadut is not enough; it is a norm to be implemented and experienced. It is to be lived and enjoyed. It is a great drama which the yeled zekunim must act out after observing the av zaken.

Studying the Torah she-ba'al peh, the Oral Tradition, and complying with its precepts are the greatest pleasures a person can have. It is an exciting and romantic adventure. It is the most cleansing and purging experience a human being can experience. The av zaken teaches the yeled zekunim how to live and to feel Yahadut.

Let me make an admission here; I will confide in you. This is the toughest of all jobs, the most difficult of all tasks. I know from my own experience how difficult it is. I am not modest; I am far from being modest. I know that I am a good teacher. I can teach halakhah. I can explain the most abstract concepts. I can popularize the most complex talmudic debate and break it down into its component parts. I can explain and elucidate abstract ideas.

For instance, before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur I used to study with my students (your rabbi [Rabbi Stephen Riskin] can confirm this) the halakhah pertaining to the Yomim Noraim [Days of Awe]. From time to time I would reach out for the aggadah or for philosophical ideas with which to elucidate the philosophy of those solemn festivals. If necessary I would also introduce a modern idiom in order to explain certain aspects of the sanctity of these holy days [Kedushat ha-Yom]. All these tricks I know.

But one trick I have not mastered. One thing I cannot do to perfection is to tell my students how I felt on Rosh Hashanah and Yom ha-Kippurim when I was their age. The emotions I experienced, and not what I knew about it. I knew a lot, and they know a lot. But what I felt on these days! How I lived if I am unable to share with them what I experienced, for instance, when the shaliach tzibbur [cantor] used to chant and sing: Veba-kohanim veba-am haomdim ba-azarah ["When the priests and the people who were standing in the Temple court"; from the Avodah, the procedure of the Temple service, which is recited as part of the Musaf of Yom Kippur; *High Holiday Prayer Book*, trans. Phillip Birnbaum, p. 816]. If you know the melody, you will agree that there is so much nostalgia, so much longing and melancholy in this tune, in the melody of Veba-kohanim veba-am haomdim ba-azarah. I felt as if I had been transferred in time and space into a different world. I felt that I was in the Bet Hamikdash [Holy Temple]. How can I explain this to my students? I can tell them about it but I cannot pass on my experiences to them!

Or how can I pass on the emotion I felt on Kol Nidrei night, when the congregation responded amen to the chanting of the Shehechyanu blessing. It is difficult to transfer experiences and not just concepts; to give over themes and not just numbers. To pass on feelings, to tell the story of both inner restlessness and serenity, to relate the narrative of joy and awe, of trepidation and at the same time equanimity in one's heart, one must not use words. Words cannot explain it. Instead an unusual medium must be utilized: silence. That melamed of old in my heder knew how to pass on his emotional acquisitions, his ecstatic experiences, and his mystical outlook on life. He knew how to pass this on to his pupils without saying a single word.

Of course these experiences can only be passed on in the fashion that one passes on a contagious illness. How do you communicate a disease? Through contact! And contact is the secret of passing on the experiences of Yahadut. The skill of somehow communicating with the soul of the person is not through the spoken word but through the art of silence.

However, it is very difficult. I have not entirely succeeded in passing on this part of Yahadut. But your teachers in your high school will. They will be more successful. They will arrange the rendezvous between the av zaken and the yeled zekunim.

Rakeffet Rothkoff 1, 247-50

Let me stress the idea of the mesorah by telling you a personal story.

I remember that when I was growing up I was a frightened and lonely boy. I was afraid of the world. For me, the world was a cold and strange place. I imagined that everyone was mocking me. But I had one friend; do not laugh at me, it was the Rambam [Maimonides]. How did we become friends? Simply, we met.

Maimonides was a constant guest in our home. During the days when my father was a newlywed, supported by my grandfather, the pious Gaon Rabbi Elijah Feinstein of Pruzhans, father studied Torah day and night. A small group of outstanding young scholars gathered around him and eagerly absorbed his teachings.

My father studied with his disciples in the room where my bed was located. My wont was to sit on my bed and listen to my father's words. He constantly quoted Maimonides. His method was to first open the Talmud and analyze the text under discussion and the relevant commentaries. He would generally say: "These are the explanations of Rabbi Isaac of Dampierre [Ri; d. ca. 1185] and the other authors of Tosafot. Now, let us analyze the explanations of Maimonides."

My father would inevitably discover that Maimonides rejected the basic explanation of the text and differed with Tosafot. My father would declare, as if to complain, that we cannot comprehend the approach and conclusion of Maimonides toward the talmudic text. It was almost as if my father were directly saying to Maimonides: "Rabbeinu Moshe, why have you taken this approach?" My father would continue: "At first glance the Rabad [R. Abraham ben David of Posquières, ca. 1125-1198] is correct in his criticism of the *Mishnah Torah*." The students would jump forward and each would express his thoughts. My father would carefully listen but would refute their proposed interpretations.

Once again he would exclaim that the words of Maimonides were incomprehensible. Nevertheless, my father would not give up. He would place his head on his hand and soon be engrossed in deep thought. The students would not disturb his thought process. Finally, my father would gradually lift his head and begin to expound the true meaning of Maimonides. Sometimes he would be lengthy, and on other occasions brief. I would strain my ears to catch my father's every word. In my young and impressionable mind, there developed a dual impression: First, that the Rambam [Maimonides] was being attacked by enemies who wanted to hurt him, and second, that the Rambam's only defender was my father. I felt strongly that without my father, who knows what would happen to the Rambam? It was as if the Rambam himself were with us in the room, listening to my father's words. The Rambam sat next to me on my bed. What did he look like? I don't know exactly. He seemed to look like an exceedingly handsome and good father. His name was also Moshe, just like my father.

Intensely following my father, the students absorbed his every word. Slowly but surely, the tension evaporated. My father continued his discourse with strength and courage. New ideas were clarified; the halakhot under discussion were classified and carefully articulated. A new light emerged; the questions were resolved and the topic properly explained. Maimonides emerged triumphant, and my father's face was filled with happiness and delight. He had

defended his friend, Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon. The Rambam was comforted and smiled. I too was delighted and joined in the feeling of joy in the room. I would jump from my bed and run to my mother and cry out the good news: "Mother, mother, the Rambam won; he beat the Rabad. Father helped him. Look how wonderful my father is!"

But once in a great while my father did not succeed, and despite all his efforts the enemies of the Rambam defeated him. Their questions were as strong as iron. Although my father mustered all his strength, he could not save the Rambam from his detractors. Salvation did not come for the Rambam. Deep in thought, my father would lean his head on the palms of his hands on the table. The students and I, and even the Rambam, waited in great tension for my father's words. But my father would raise his head and sadly state: "There is no answer. The words of the Rambam are difficult. No one is capable of resolving these questions." The shiur ended with no explanation. The students were sad, and even my father was depressed. A sense of despair descended upon all of us. I cried. Even the eyes of the Rambam glistened with tears.

With a broken heart, I would walk slowly to my mother and cry out to her: "Mother, father cannot answer the Rambam. What will we do? He did not succeed today." And my mother would tell me: "Don't worry. Father will find an answer to the Rambam. If he does not succeed, then when you grow up perhaps you will find an answer to the Rambam. Always remember, my son, the important thing about Torah is to study it in happiness and enthusiasm."

It is true that this story is part of my youth. It is not, however, the fantasy of a young child or the creation of mystical feelings. This story is an historic and psychological reality that guides me at all times. When I sit down to learn, the giants of the mesorah are with me. Our relationship is personal. The Rambam sits to my right, Rabbeinu Tam to my left. Ra'ah sits at the head and explains. Rabbeinu Tam asks, the Rambam decides the halakhah, and the Rabad objects. All of them are with me in my small room, sitting around the table. They look at me with fondness. They work the text out with me, and like a father, they encourage and strengthen me. Learning Torah is not just a didactic, formal, and technical experience whose purpose is the creation and exchange of ideas. Learning Torah is the intense experience of uniting many generations together, the joining of spirit to spirit, and the connecting of soul to soul. Those who transmit the Torah and those who receive the Torah are invited to meet one another at the same historic juncture.

opportunity moment and confessed his sin immediately. Saul lingered just a bit, and because of this delay his kingdom was taken away from him. When Nathan the prophet came to David and exclaimed, "Thou art the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7), David started to confess immediately and did not put off his plea to God for even the slightest moment. "And David said unto Nathan: I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13). Saul squandered that precious, inestimable moment. After he heard Samuel's rebuke—"Wherefore then didst thou not hearken to the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil?" (1 Samuel 15:19)—he began to argue with Samuel prior to confessing. "And Saul said unto Samuel: Yea, I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me" (1 Samuel 15:20). It is true that in the very same encounter with Samuel, Saul confessed his sin, broken-hearted and contrite. "And Saul said unto Samuel: I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and thy words" (1 Samuel 15:24). But his confession was not forthcoming at the desired moment, and this slight delay brought about the loss of his kingdom. By the time he confessed, the decree had already been sealed and his situation was irremediable. "The Lord hath torn the kingdom of Israel from thee this day" (1 Samuel 15:28). Had Saul not missed the right moment, had he not tarried, then his kingdom would have endured.⁶

What is the gist of the Song of Songs if not the description of the tragic and paradoxical delay of the Shulammitte maiden, drunk with love and overwhelmed with yearning, when a favorable

moment, replete with awe and majesty, beckoned to her—if not her missing that great, exalted, and momentous opportunity that she had dreamed about, fought for, and sought so passionately? The tender and delicate Shulammitte maiden, impelled by longing for her bright-eyed beloved, roamed during sun-drenched days through the bypaths of vineyards and over the crests of mountains, through fields and gardens, and during pale, magical moonlit nights, during pitch-black nights, between the walls, searching for her beloved. One cold and rainy night she returned to her tent, tired and worn-out, and fell fast asleep. The sound of quick and light footsteps could be heard in the silence of the tent. On that strange and mysterious night, suddenly the beloved emerged from out of the dark and knocked on the door of his darling, who had intensely yearned for and awaited him. He knocked and pleaded with her to open the door of her tent. "It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh. 'Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night'" (Song of Songs 5:2). The great moment that she had looked forward to with such impatience and longing materialized unexpectedly. Her elusive, self-concealing beloved, tired of wandering and hardships, appeared with his curly hair, black eyes, powerful build, and radiant countenance. He stood by her door, stretched his hand in through the hole in the latch, sought refuge from the damp of night, and wished to tell her about his powerful love, about his desires and yearnings, about a life of companionship, filled with delight and joy, about the real-

ization and attainment of their aspirations and hopes. Only the slight movement of stretching out her hand and turning the latch intervened between her and her beloved, between the great dream and its complete fulfillment. With a single leap the Shulammitte maiden could have obtained her heart's longings—"Draw me, we will run after thee . . . we will be glad and rejoice in thee" (Song of Songs 1:4). But the heart is deceitful, and who can discern it? Precisely on that very night, a strange, stubborn indolence overcame her. For a brief moment the fire of longing that had burned so brightly was dimmed, the fierce passion ebbed, her emotions were stilled, her dreams, extinguished. The maiden refused to descend from her bed. She did not open the door of the tent to her handsome beloved. A cruel madness swept her into an abyss of oblivion and indifference. The maiden proved stubborn and lazy and rained down a multitude of excuses and rationalizations to account for her peculiar behavior: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I soil them?" (Song of Songs 5:3). The beloved knocked again and again, and the more insistent his knocks, the louder they grew, the more her icy, defiling madness increased in intensity. As the whispered entreaties of the beloved pierced the silence of the night, the heart of his darling became harder and harder—like stone. The beloved continued to knock, pleading patiently, and together with his knocks the clock sounded the minutes and hours. The maiden paid no heed to the voice of her beloved; the door to her tent remained shut up tight. The moment was lost; and the vision of an

exalted life faded away. It is true that after a brief delay the maiden awoke from her slumber and, confused and startled, leapt from her bed to welcome her beloved: "I rose up to open to my beloved" (Song of Songs 5:5); but she arose too late. Her beloved had stopped knocking and vanished into the darkness of the night—"My beloved had turned away and gone" (Song of Songs 5:6). Her life's joy was fled, her existence—a desolate wilderness, an empty waste. The saga of her passionate quest began anew. She is still wandering amidst the shepherds' tents—searching for her beloved.

SIX KNOCKS

Eight years ago, in the midst of a night of terror filled with the horrors of Maidanek, Treblinka, and Buchenwald, in a night of gas chambers and crematoria, in a night of absolute divine self-concealment (*hester panim muhiat*), in a night ruled by the satan of doubt and apostasy which sought to sweep the maiden from her house into the Christian church, in a night of continuous searching, of questing for the Beloved—in that very night the Beloved appeared. "God who conceals Himself in His dazzling hiddenness" suddenly manifested Himself and began to knock at the tent of His despondent and disconsolate love, twisting convulsively on her bed, suffering the pains of hell. As a result of the knocks on the door of the maiden, wrapped in mourning, the State of Israel was born!

How many times did the Beloved knock on the door of the tent of His love? It appears to me that we can count at least six knocks.

Kuzari
part 2

place of the ascent,²³ and that prophets are caused to ascend from there to heaven, and, further, that it is the place of gathering on the day of Resurrection. Everybody turns to it in prayer and visits it in pilgrimage. Thy bowing and kneeling in the direction of it is either mere appearance or thoughtless worship. Yet your first forefathers chose it as an abode in preference to their birth-places, and lived there as strangers, rather than as citizens in their own country. This they did even at a time when the Shekhinah was yet visible, but the country was full of unchastity, impurity, and idolatry. Your fathers, however, had no other desire than to remain in it. Neither did they leave it in times of dearth and famine except by God's permission. Finally, they directed their bones to be buried there.

24. The Rabbi: This is a severe reproach, O king of the Khazars. It is the sin which kept the divine promise with regard to the second Temple, viz.: Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion' (Zech. ii. 10), from being fulfilled. Divine Providence was ready to restore everything as it had been at first, if they had all willingly consented to return. But only a part was ready to do so, whilst the majority and the aristocracy remained in Babylon, preferring dependence and slavery, and unwilling to leave their houses and their affairs. An allusion to them might be found in the enigmatic words of Solomon: I sleep, but my heart waketh (Song v. 2-4). He designates the exile by *sleep*, and the continuance of prophecy among them by the wakefulness of the heart. 'It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh' means God's call to return; 'My head is filled with dew' alludes to the Shekhinah which emerged from the shadow of the Temple. The words: 'I have put off

my coat,' refer to the people's slothfulness in consenting to return. The sentence: 'My beloved stretcheth forth his hand through the opening' may be interpreted as the urgent call of Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Prophets, until a portion of the people grudgingly responded to their invitation. In accordance with their mean mind they did not receive full measure. Divine Providence only gives man as much as he is prepared to receive; if his receptive capacity be small, he obtains little, and much if it be great. Were we prepared to meet the God of our forefathers with a pure mind, we should find the same salvation as our fathers did in Egypt. If we say: 'Worship his holy hill—worship at His footstool—He who restoreth His glory to Zion' (Pa. xcix. 9, 5), and other words, this is but as the chattering of the starling and the nightingale. We do not realize what we say by this sentence, nor others, as thou rightly observest, O Prince of the Khazars.

25. Al Khazari: Enough on this subject. Now I should like an explanation of what I read about the sacrifices. Reason cannot accept such expressions as: My offering, My bread for My sacrifices made by fire, 'for a sweetsavour unto Me' (Num. xviii. 2), employed in connexion with the sacrifices, describing them as being God's offering, bread, and incense.

26. The Rabbi: The expression: *By My fires* removes all difficulty. It states that offering, bread and sweet savour, which are ascribed to Me, in reality belong to My fires, i.e. to the fire which was kindled at God's behest, and fed by the offerings. The remaining pieces were food for the priests. The deeper signification of this was to create a well arranged system, upon which the King should rest in an exalted, but not local

4

Fate & Destiny

grave and difficult questions. He tracks the intellectual foundations of suffering and evil, and seeks to find the harmony and balance between the affirmation and the negation and to blunt the sharp edge of the tension between the thesis—the good—and the antithesis—the bad—in existence. As a result of the question and answer, problem and resolution, he formulates a metaphysics of evil where-with he is able to reach an accommodation with evil, indeed to cover it up. The sufferer utilizes his capacity for intellectual abstraction, with which he was endowed by his Creator, to the point of self-deception—the denial of the existence of evil in the world.

Judaism, with its realistic approach to man and his place in the world, understood that evil cannot be blurred or camouflaged and that any attempt to downplay the extent of the contradiction and fragmentation to be found in reality will neither endow man with tranquility nor enable him to grasp the existential mystery. Evil is an undeniable fact. There is evil, there is suffering, there are hellish torments in this world. Whoever wishes to delude himself by diverting his attention from the deep fissure in reality, by romanticizing human existence, is nought but a fool and a fantasist. It is impossible to overcome the hideousness of evil through philosophico-speculative thought. Therefore, Judaism determined that man, entrapped in the depths of a frozen, fate-laden existence, will seek in vain for the solution to the problem of evil within the framework of speculative thought, for he will never find it. Certainly, the testimony of the Torah that the cosmos is very good is true.

Kol Dodi Dofek

7

For the "I" subject to fate is unable to effect any matter of consequence in the sphere of his own existence. He is nourished by his external environment, and his life bears the imprint of that environment. Therefore, he relates to evil from a nonpractical standpoint and philosophizes about it from a purely speculative perspective. He wishes to deny the existence of evil and to create a harmonistic worldview. The end of such an effort can only be complete and total disillusionment. Evil derides the captive of fate and his fantasy about a world which is wholly good and wholly beautiful.

However, in the realm of destiny man recognizes the world as it is and does not wish to use harmonistic formulas in order to gloss over and conceal evil. The man of destiny is highly realistic and does not flinch from confronting evil face to face. His approach is an ethico-halakhic one, devoid of the slightest speculative-metaphysical coloration. When the man of destiny suffers he says to himself: "Evil exists, and I will neither deny it nor camouflage it with vain intellectual gymnastics. I am concerned about evil from a halakhic standpoint, like a person who wishes to know the deed which he shall do; I ask one simple question: What must the sufferer do so that he may live through his suffering?" In this dimension the center of gravity shifts from the causal and teleological aspect of evil (the only difference between causality and teleology being a directional one) to its practical aspect. The problem is now formulated in straightforward halakhic language and revolves about one's daily, quotidian tasks. The fundamen-

QVOD FELIX FAVSTVMQVE SIT
VNIVERSITATIS LITTERARIAE
FRIDERICAE GVILELMAE
BEROLINENSIS

RECTORE MAGNIFICO.
EDUARD KOHLRAUSCH
IVRES VIVIVQVE DOCTORE IN HAC VNIVERSITATE PROFESSORE PVBLICO ORDINARIO

EX DECRETO ORDINIS AMPLISSIMI PHILOSOPHORVM
PROMOTOR LECTIVAE CONSTITVTVS

FRITZ HARTUNG

ET PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR IN HAC VNIVERSITATE PROFESSOR PVBLICVS ORDINARIVS SEMINARI HISTORIAE
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POLONO

POSTQVAM EXAMEN PHILOSOPHIAE MAGNA CVM LAVDE SVSTVIT
ET DISSERTATIONEM LAVDIBILEM CIVIS TITVLVS EST

DAS REINE DENKEN UND DIE SEINSKONSTITVIERUNG BEI HERMANN COHEN

AVCTORITATE ORDINIS PROBATA EDIDIT
PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTORIS
ET ARTIVM LIBERALIVM MAGISTRI
ORNAMENTA ET HONORES

DIE X. M. DECEMBRIS A. MCMXXII
RITV CONVLIT

COLLATAQVE PVBLICO HOC DIPLOMATE
PHILOSOPHORVM ORDINIS OBSIGNATIONE COMPROBATO
DECLARAVIT



Das reine Denken
und die Seinskonstituierung
bei Hermann Cohen

Inaugural-Dissertation
zur
Erlangung der Doktorwürde
genehmigt von der
Philosophischen Fakultät
der
Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin.

Von
Josef Solowiejczyk
Pruzana (Polen).

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ד"ר יוסף סולובצ'ק
JOSEPH SOLOVITZKY
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September 5, 1939.

Dr. Leo Jung,
131-135 W. 86 St.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi Jung,

Upon my return home from Chicago I found in my mail your letter of August 14th. Please my thanks for your invitation to write an essay on a Jewish philosophical subject to be published in the fifth volume of the Jewish Library.

After consideration I arrived at the decision to avail myself of this offer and contribute a chapter to your publication, with the following reservations, however.

1. I regret to say that I don't find the topic you suggested to my interest. It is very doubtful whether the Messianic movement can be at present subjected to an exact philosophical analysis. I would rather choose as my subject the following problem:

"The Neo-Kantian conception of subjectivity and objectification and its application to the analysis of the Tzema Hamitsvoth problem".

The interpretation of this central thought of the Neo Kantian philosophy will prove to be of great value for the elucidation of the basic problems of modern Jewish philosophy. Few dissertations were written on Hermann Cohen's philosophy of religion, based upon his book "Die Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums". But as yet no attempt has been made to evaluate Cohen's theoretical philosophy as a source of modern Jewish thought. My intention is to exploit this latter field for the purpose of enriching our philosophical-religious aspect.

2. I can not accept any limitation for my essay as to the amount of words. This is not a magazine article which can be shortened or expanded according to wish. I will write as much as the full covering of the topic will require. It may be less and it may be more than eight thousand words.

If these conditions are in line with your tentative plan for the publication, please inform me at your earliest convenience.

With greetings for a happy new year,
PKW / יום טוב מ'אנן מ'אנן מ'אנן
Sincerely yours,

Joseph Solovitch

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Itzhak Twersky

which he communicates to his readers, by the scope, style and subtlety of his writing, tell the entire story. The ready, abundant references and forceful disquisitions buttress his reputation as an enthusiastic propagator of philosophy and a creative religious philosopher.

Similarly, if you knew nothing about the Rav's biography and merely studied the *Lib Ha-Halakah* (published in 1944) you would confront a massive, strategic reliance on the history of philosophy and science. The first two pages introduce you to Hegel, Kierkegaard, Rudolph Otto and Karl Barth, Eduard Spangier and Ferdinand Lassalle, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Bergson, Spengler and Heidegger—a breathtaking list. A page later you meet Plato and Aristotle, Galileo and Newton and soon thereafter Husserl, Scheler, Berkeley and Hermann Cohen. If you persisted and made your way to the end of this remarkable philosophical spiritual meditation, the very last note rebucses your attention on a cast of influential figures: Kant and Hermann Cohen, Kierkegaard, Ibsen, Scheler and Heidegger together with the Rambam and the Gabelsol and then once again, after a passing reference to Dante Scoto, on to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. These references reflect not only great erudition and precision in the history of philosophy but also a philosophic stamp and a philosophic mode of thinking, a subtle, analytical mind.

In addition, we may note certain propositions, affirmations or generalizations which stand out. For example, the following sentence summarizing the views of many thinkers concerning "religious consciousness" (*tseda'ub la'ait*), (perhaps the major motif in the Rav's work) in the opening paragraph of the *Lib Ha-Halakah*, is enlightening:

The basic dialectic of man and his morality was beautifully captured in two midrashic homilies quoted by Rashi. In his comment to the verse "וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֱמָנוּל מִדֹּפְרֵי אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם" — "And God created man dust of the earth," Rashi says:

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֱמָנוּל מִדֹּפְרֵי אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

God gathered the dust [from which man was fashioned] from the entire earth — from its four corners.

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֱמָנוּל מִדֹּפְרֵי אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם

He took the dust [from which man was made] from that spot which was designated by the Almighty, at the very dawn of creation, as the future site of the altar. As it is written: "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me."

Man was created of cosmic dust. God gathered the dust, of which man was fashioned, from all parts of the earth, indeed, from all the uncharted lanes of creation. Man belongs everywhere. He is no stranger to any part of the universe. The native son of the sleepy little town is, at the same time, a son of parts distant and unknown. In short, man is a cosmic being.

He is cosmic in a threefold manner:

First, man is cosmic through his intellectual involvement. His intellectual curiosity is of cosmic, universal dimension. He wants to know not only about the things that are close to him as, for example, the flowering bush in his backyard, but also about things far removed from him, things and events millions of light years away. Human cosmic inquisitiveness borders almost on the arrogant. Man is restless because he has not yet resolved the *mysterium magnum* of the cosmic drama. Restlessness magnetizes, rather than diminishes, man's curiosity. The farther the

In short, cosmic man is mesmerized by the infinite number of opportunities with which his fantasy presents him. He forgets the simple tragic fact that he is finite and mortal, and that to reach out for infinity and eternity is a foolhardy undertaking.

II

Let us examine the other interpretation of the verse in Genesis: man was created from the dust of a single spot. Man is committed to one focus. The Creator assigned him a single spot he calls home. Man is not cosmic; he is home-centered. He is a rooted being, not cosmopolitan but provincial, a villager who belongs to the soil that fed him as a child and to the little world into which he was born.

At this juncture we encounter the old Biblical idea of inheritance or homeland. We recall the solemn words, spoken with trepidation, by Naboth, in response to Ahab's request that he exchange his vineyard for another one:

וְהָאֵלֹהִים אִתִּי וְהָאֵרֶץ אֲרֻסָּה

"The Lord forbid me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." Man is rooted in his land. When torn away he becomes a rootless being, a rootless vagabond, a dislocated being. Homelessness, uprootedness is a curse. Man quests for home, for the origin. Because of this origin-consciousness, he is curious to know everything about his roots, about the type which sustains his selfhood.

Yes, man may roam along the charted and uncharted lanes of the universe, he may reach for the stars. Yet the traveler, the adventurer out to conquer infinity, will surely return home. If this homecoming did not occur during his lifetime, because he was too preoccupied with motion and exploration, it will certainly take place posthumously when his body will be brought back to the spot which sustains his selfhood. 6. It is obvious that the term cosmic man should not be taken literally, as referring exclusively to those who have penetrated interplanetary space or those who are committed to this objective. The term is much wider in scope and it characterizes man as a quester and searcher for values and boundaries in any area of endeavor, be it the sciences, be it commerce and industry, be it political community or religion. 7. I King 21:9.

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home, to the quiet, lonely graveyard which had long been expecting him.

What is the meaning of death in the Biblical tradition? Return! What kind of return? Return to whom, to what? Return to the origin, to the source.

"... till thou return unto the ground for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The Bible also identified dying with return to the ancestors:

וְיָשָׁב אֶל אֲבוֹתָיו

Did not Jacob request of Joseph:

וְעָבַדְתִּי עִם אֲבוֹתַי וְקָבַרְתִּי עִמָּם

"Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their [his ancestors'] burying place." The old man wanted to rest with his ancestors, the originators of the covenant.

The dust of which man was fashioned was not taken from all parts of the universe, according to the Midrash, but from a single spot on a mountain where an altar was many, many years later constructed. As we said before, each man is created from and attached to a single spot, the origin, from which he cannot escape. The home for which man yearns attracts him like a powerful magnet; it brings him back, no matter how far he has traveled. "Home is the sailor, home from the sea, and the hunter home from the hills"; these beautiful lines by Robert Louis Stevenson contain more than a nostalgic note.

Occasionally, when I am at the airport, I happen to observe the loading of a double coffin, containing the body of a Jew who has lived, worked, raised children, prospered or failed, in the United States; it is being shipped for burial in the land of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The mystery of the origin apparently casts a spell even upon people who have few religious commitments. The modern secular Jew wants to rest in eternal peace, in proximity to the site where the patriarchs found their rest.

וְיָשָׁב אֶל אֲבוֹתָיו

The man is indeed like the tree in the field. In this context, the

6. Genesis 3:9.
7. Ibid., 15:15.
8. Ibid., 47:30.