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THE VALIDATION OF REVELATION
IN MODERN JEWISH THEOLOGY

by

Rabbi Joshua O. Hoberman

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Hebrew
Letters

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

1965/66

Referee: Professor Jakob J. Petuchowski

To Maxine

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	Page
a. Subject and Scope	1
b. A Glance at Biblical and Medieval Thought.....	5
1. Moses Mendelssohn	18
2. Solomon Formstecher	25
3. Samuel Hirsch	34
4. Salomon Ludwig Steinheim	40
5. Nachman Krochmal	70
6. Abraham Geiger	80
7. Moritz Lazarus	92
8. Hermann Cohen	110
9. Leo Baeck	138
10. Martin Buber	154
11. Franz Rosenzweig	176
CONCLUSION	203
Bibliography	217
Notes	233

INTRODUCTION

(a) Subject and Scope

The concept of revelation has always been part of the theological core of Judaism. Its pivotal role may be traced from the Bible on through every great theological debate down to the present day.

Some of Judaism's most characteristic beliefs, indeed whole areas of Jewish life, hinge on the concept of revelation; the authority of Scriptures, the meaning of "Aitzvah", the election of Israel. Any change in the concept of revelation is bound to affect deeply the faith and practice of Judaism. There can be no resurgence of religious discipline, no fervor for ceremonies, no spiritual revival whatever without confronting sooner or later the question of revelation. Committees and conferences will not reconstruct Judaism. Judaism cannot recapture its full power as a religious faith unless a concept of revelation, meaningful to our generation, reopens the channels of authority and motivation that nourish the roots of religious practice.¹

The renaissance or disintegration of Judaism depends on the meaning we attach to such portentous words as "thus saith the Lord."

concept of revelation if not a complete break with it. Mendelssohn himself did not make that complete break, as will be shown,³ but he became the point of departure for other Jewish thinkers who fully realized the grave theological crisis which Mendelssohn's concept of revelation had been unable to resolve.

"Theology": The focus of our thesis is theological. This is the third major limitation of our field of inquiry. The thinkers we shall consider interest us as interpreters of Judaism only in so far as they contribute to our specifically theological problem of validating revelation. An analysis of the philosophic systems of these men, or of their stature within the history of philosophy in general, is outside the scope of this thesis except for such references as are necessary for an understanding of their theological position. As we turn to these thinkers with our inquiry into the methods for validating revelation we shall seek answers to certain specific questions which will further define their position. The specific issues of faith on which we shall sound them out are the theophany at Sinai, prophecy and the uniqueness of Moses.

With reference to the contents of this thesis it would not be amiss to make two comments. First, our material could of course be enlarged by presenting additional thinkers, but it seems to us that the significant movements and approaches of modern Jewish theology are adequately represented by the eleven philosophers and theologians

we have chosen. Second, biographical information has been used rather sparingly. Such data might add a great deal of interest to a more popular treatment of our subject, but here we shall confine ourselves to only such biographical references as may be required for the fuller understanding of the ideas of the thinkers under consideration.

(b) A Glance at Biblical and Medieval Jewish Thought

An inquiry into material on revelation in the Bible is comparable to a search for water in the ocean. The references are everywhere. Without attempting a complete classification and critical analysis of sources which would be irrelevant to our purpose, we shall merely summarize the basic elements of the Biblical view of revelation. The following represents the creedal core of revelation in the Bible:

1. Belief in the possibility of divine communication, in the form of speech, documents, visions, dreams, signs, miracles, and historical events, addressed to man, i.e. to specific persons and groups.
2. The uniqueness of the revelation at Sinai, a whole people being addressed by God,⁴ a distinction confirming the election of Israel.
3. The uniqueness and superiority of Moses among the prophets.⁵

But not all aspects of revelation were maintained with the same dogmatic certainty as those stated above. For example, though all sources agree on the divine authorship of the decalogue, some attribute the actual writing to God, others to Moses.⁶ The latter viewpoint appears to us as an anti-anthropomorphism which gradually became one of the dominant theological tendencies. It resulted in a concept of God who no longer communicated visibly and audibly in the world of His creation, but rather through it as the Power behind it. In the context of revelation it meant that every case of God speaking to man would be understood as God speaking through man.⁷

But the more the problem of anthropomorphism was eliminated from the area of revelation, the greater became the problem of identifying the voice of God. For, when divine revelation is no longer experienced directly and immediately as at Mt. Sinai, but conveyed to us by inspired seers and prophets, the problem of validation is unavoidable. What are the prophet's credentials? How do we know God speaks through him? By what criteria can we distinguish between true and false prophets?

Increasingly, the Bible wrestles with the problem, developing several criteria which we shall now briefly consider. The locus classicus among our texts is Deut. 13.2-5

"If there arise in the midst of thee a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams -- and he give thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee -- saying: 'Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them'; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or unto that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God putteth you to proof, to know whether ye do love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. After the Lord your God shall ye walk, and Him shall ye fear, and His commandments shall ye keep, and unto His voice shall ye hearken, and Him shall ye serve, and unto Him shall ye cleave..."

The text clearly addresses itself to the problem of validating a prophetic utterance. What is offered is by no means a general criterion for all forms of revelations but rather one that applies to a specific and narrowly limited situation. It is the case of a

"prophet" preaching idolatry in flagrant contradiction of divine laws previously made known to us ("His commandments"). Signs and miracles are unacceptable as criterion. The message itself, its content, is what counts. The inconsistency of the contents of the prophecy with the well known earlier commandments is the criterion by which the false prophet may be identified.⁸ The criterion is strictly limited in its usefulness to the case of a false prophet contradicting the known commandments of God.

The criterion would be of no value in the case of a false prophet making an utterance which in itself does not contradict a Torah commandment, as did for example the four hundred false prophets who advised Ahab to go to battle against Ramoth-gilead (I Ki. 22.5-6). Nor would the criterion be of value in distinguishing true from false prophet if the prophecy deals with a new matter never before covered by God's commandments. Furthermore, the criterion is wholly negative, dealing only with the identification of a false prophet in the above mentioned situation, but it offers no clue as to how a true prophet may be positively identified. If a man speaks to us in the name of God, his utterance being either compatible with previously given commandments or altogether new in content, how are we to know whether he is giving us divine revelation, or speaking "from his own mind"?

A companion passage in Deuteronomy (18.18-22) offers two additional negative criteria for the validation of revelation. In the first part, Moses is quoting a divine message:

"I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, that shall speak a word presumptuously in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die."

Dt.18.18-20

In the second part, Moses himself raises the question of validation:

"And if thou say in thy heart: 'How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?'

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him."

ibid. v.21-22

The false prophet will be exposed by God Himself, "that same prophet shall die". Moreover, Moses adds, the failure of fulfillment "if the thing follow not" may be taken as evidence of false prophecy.⁹

The criterion of "non-fulfillment" (see also I Ki 22.28) has its positive counterpart in the criterion of "fulfillment":

"The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him."

Jer. 28.9

Jeremiah stands out among the prophets by his special concern with the problem of validating revelation. We owe him at least four more criteria.

Jeremiah considers the false prophet identified and disqualified by his moral defects:

"But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing:
They commit adultery, and walk in lies,
And they strengthen the hands of evil-doers,
That none doth return from his wickedness;
They are all of them become unto Me as Sodom,
And the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets.

Behold, I will feed them with wormwood,
And make them drink the water of gall;
For from the prophets of Jerusalem

Is ungodliness gone forth into all the land." Jer. 23.14-15

Jer. 23.16-17 finds further proof of false prophecy in its contradiction of fundamental justice and retribution. It is inconceivable that those who despise God would be rewarded with peace and that "everyone that walketh in the stubbornness of his own heart" should escape evil. Prophets reassuring the evil-doer with optimistic predictions must be false.

Jer. 23.22 and 32 calls attention to the moral effect of the revealed word upon the people. The true prophet will "turn them from their evil way". The false prophet "can not profit this people at all."

Most characteristic of Jeremiah is the criterion by which he validates so movingly his own call to prophecy, the inner compulsion that allows no alternative:

"There is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones." Jer. 20.9 (cf Amos 3.8)

These examples should convince us at least in regard to one fact: The Bible's keen awareness of the problem of validating revelation. A number of criteria were formulated in the Bible. We shall now briefly recapitulate them in the order in which they were dealt with above and shall point out serious difficulties with each of these criteria:

1. The criterion of inconsistency. (Dt. 13.2-5)

We already mentioned that it was of no value in validating prophecy of new content not dealt with in previously given revelation. A more profound shortcoming of this criterion is that previously given revelation itself needs validation. Moreover, the criterion is rendered altogether irrelevant if we accept the evolutionary principle in law and morals which would not only justify deviation from previously revealed commandments but make it a virtue. Inconsistency with a "primitive" standard of the past would indeed be a mark of spiritual progress.

2. The criterion of fulfillment or non-fulfillment. (Dt. 18.18-22)

Fulfillment may be accidental. Surely not everyone who guesses right bears the mantle of prophecy. If, on the other hand, we try to single out the false prophet by

the criterion of non-fulfillment, we are in a number of difficulties: We must make an assumption of inerrancy, a mark of perfection. But which human being is perfect? Furthermore, we must then take the narrow view of prophets as soothsayers and foretellers. What if prophets refrain from predictions? By what criterion are we to judge them? Finally, assuming that prophets are to make predictions, non-fulfillment need not reflect on the prophet if new factors altered the situation on which the prediction was based, such as the sudden repentance of the people or its leaders, --- or the infinite mercy of God reversing the judgment (the case of Jonah!)

3. The test of character. (Jer. 23.14-15)

God would not use unworthy, morally inferior persons as channels of revelation. This criterion might invalidate the prophetic pretensions of a "scoundrel", but would not validate revelations by good, decent people. Is every person of good character to be accepted as prophet on his own say-so? Besides, who is to judge character?

4. The criterion of compatibility between the prophetic message and God's justice. (Jer. 23.16-17)

Do we have a perfect understanding of God's justice?
(see Job!)

5. The criterion of the moral effect -- the pragmatic test of prophecy. (Jer. 23.22 & 32; Ezek. 13.4, 9-16)

Improvements in the people's condition may be accidental

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5. The criterion of the moral effect -- the pragmatic test of prophecy. (Jer. 23.22 & 32; Ezek. 13.4, 9-16)

Improvements in the people's condition may be accidental

or coincidental, due to factors other than the prophecy.

Moreover, is every person, who has a "wholesome" influence on others, a prophet?

6. The criterion of the inner compulsion. (Jer. 20.9)

Is the ardor of the self-deluded pretender any less passionate than that of the genuine prophet?

Turning now, in this "introductory glance", to medieval Jewish thought, we confine ourselves to but one question: What major departure from the Biblical approach do we find in it with reference to the validation of revelation?

The Bible's characteristic criterion, by which revelation is validated, is that of consistency with previously revealed "Torah". The prophetic "burden" is always to recall the people to a standard from which they had fallen, a standard which had been revealed to them long before as "His commandments". No prophet after Moses considered himself a cultic or ethical innovator. Each spoke in confirmation of earlier revelations:

"It hath been told thee, O man, what is good,

And what the Lord doth require of thee..."

The previously given Sinaitic revelation (whether that meant only certain codes or the whole Torah of Moses) was believed to be absolutely assured revelation. It never occurred to any Biblical thinker to seek fresh validation for the event at Sinai. It was an indisputable fact. The only thing in question was whether any new prophecy was inspired by the same divine Source which spoke out at Sinai. Revelation as such was taken for granted. ¹⁰

In medieval Jewish philosophy, on the other hand, the very principle of revelation is, for the first time, laid open to question. "The essential problem of Jewish theology consisted, ...at that time, in proving the possibility of prophecy."¹¹

A broad summary view of medieval Jewish philosophy would reveal two major lines of thought on the problem of validating revelation:

1. The substantial consistency of revelation with reason.

Some of our medieval philosophers - the rationalists - though themselves firmly rooted in the ground of faith, felt constrained to strengthen belief in revelation by demonstrating its harmony with reason.

The philosopher may begin to argue for the validation of reason as a source of knowledge, seeking for it a modest second place next to revelation, but soon enough it becomes clear that it is the validation of revelation that really concerns him most. Saadia is a particularly instructive example. Revelation, he assures us to begin with, is a more dependable guide to religious truth than our own rational speculation. Reason may or may not find the way, but until it does, the seeker is without the benefit of the truths of religion.¹² Speculation, however, remains valuable for the purpose of confirming the truth of revelation and as the means by which to refute the unbeliever.¹³ If reason now holds second place to revelation, it is only because we generally do not fully develop our rational potential. For, if we employed our rational faculties to the fullest and engaged in diligent research,

rational inquiry would produce for us in every case the complete truth tallying with that of prophecy.¹⁴ In other words, reason is not inherently inferior to revelation.

This leads Saadia to the crucial question: "If we may gain all necessary truth by means of rational speculation, what do we need revelation for? With this question Saadia's main concern becomes the validation of revelation. His answer is that revelation has the advantage of being a shortcut to truth and certainty. God saves us, by means of revelation, from the perils of error and doubt."¹⁵

The important conclusion is that there are two valid sources of knowledge, revealed faith and rational speculation, which, if correctly understood, do not contradict one another: "Now any interpretation that agrees with reason is the truth, while all that contradicts reason is fallacious."¹⁶ This means in effect that revelation may be validated by the standards of rational inquiry.

While Saadia rationalized only the results of revelation, leaving the mystery of the revelatory event itself untouched, Maimonides went further by rationalizing the phenomenon of revelation itself.¹⁷ His aim was to lift the subject of revelation out of the realm of the altogether incomprehensible mystery and "explain" it in every possible detail.¹⁸ He still recognizes the metaphysical element in it; revelation remains an act of God,¹⁹ but the metaphysical side of revelation is not unrelated to psychic realities, moral and intellectual qualities within the prophet's

own personality. These may be developed by training.

The Biblical criterion of the "character-test" which, as we have shown, (p. 9, 11), was used only in the negative sense by Jeremiah -- bad men cannot be prophets -- is now turned positively by Maimonides: men of intellectual and moral perfection would in all probability rise to the level of prophecy. The argument in Book II, chapter 32, of Moreh Nevuchim²⁰ may be summarized as follows: There are three views on prophecy: the common popular opinion by which God might send any man as prophet regardless of his qualities; the philosophic opinion which attributes prophecy to a certain perfection in the nature of man (potentially given to all, but actually realized only by the special training and effort of a few); and finally there is the Jewish view which expects perfection of the prophet with the possibility that God, for his own mysterious reason, may still not choose every man qualified by such perfection. The prophet, we might say, is a philosopher plus the grace of God. The normal thing would be for such a man to receive revelation. His failure to receive it is the irregularity, due to the divine suspension of law, something like a negative miracle!²¹

Saadia and Maimonides supplement one another in rationalizing the concept of revelation. Saadia rationalized its contents to the point of claiming the identity of the truths of revelation with those of rational speculation. Maimonides rationalized the phenomenon of revelatory experience itself to the utmost, finding rational "explanations" for all its aspects.²²

2. The second major line of thought that can be traced through medieval Jewish philosophy with reference to the validation of revelation is the historical argument. We referred to it earlier (p. 5) as "the uniqueness of the revelation at Sinai", validated by the witness of the entire people. The philosophers of the rationalist school could not refrain from citing the historical proof of revelation, but characteristically chose not to lean on it too much. Saadia mentions in one breath the theophany at Sinai, the miracles of the ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea and Manna, whose truth is confirmed by the eyewitness of "the masses of Israel who are in agreement on this matter".²³

Maimonides takes great pains to explain the theophany at Sinai, reducing its anthropomorphic features to the minimum -- the voice of God, that is, a specially created voice, is heard by the people. But they heard only a voice, not its articulation in speech, and whatever they heard, it was not all of the ten commandments, only the first and the second.²⁴ In the end, Maimonides concedes that the true reality of the revelation at Sinai remains a mystery, an incomparable event.²⁵

For the anti-rationalist philosophers, notably Judah Halevi, the historical argument was the supreme and incontrovertible validation of revelation. From their point of view, it was the height of absurdity to assume that a report, contrary to the facts, could have gained currency among a people who themselves experienced the event, saw it with their own eyes and heard it with their own ears. Other criteria for the truth of revelation might be debatable, but not this one. Thus Sinai remained the immovable rock of faith in revelation, the

ultimate shelter against every storm of skepticism from the Biblical age through medieval times:

"Out of heaven He made thee to hear His voice,
that He might instruct thee;"

Deut. 4.36

יון כנס / נן, revelation validated by so many witnesses, remained the common theological ground which integrated the many currents of Biblical and medieval Judaism into a single spiritual universe — until the modern age.

I. MOSES MENDELSSOHN

(1729 - 1786)

Moses Mendelssohn, son of the Ghetto and adopted son of Enlightenment, devotee of orthodox practice and champion of intellectual freedom, was a unique combination of contrasts. Thought-patterns, as unlike as the wolf and the lamb and as different as the leopard from the kid, somehow peaceably dwelt together in his mind.

It is paradoxical that one who himself suffered abuse and degradation in the foul air of the Ghetto and saw so much evidence of human stupidity and irrational hate, nevertheless made the universal reasonableness of man the supreme article of his faith:

"By far the greatest number of peoples, the wildest and most primitive not excepted, as soon as they have somewhat become acquainted with the life of society, form concepts and moral convictions regarding the truths of natural Religion which are essential to human happiness."¹

Another paradox was Mendelssohn's adherence to orthodoxy while at the same time declaring Judaism devoid of all religious beliefs. "Judaism", he said, "knows of no revealed Religion and has no doctrines, redemptive truths, and general teachings of Reason."²

The explanation for Mendelssohn's paradoxical position lies in two unrelated and unreconciled concepts of revelation. Fundamental in his theological framework was the conviction that there was no need for specific prophecies and revelations. All the truth required for human happiness and fulfillment ("Glückseligkeit") is available to man through the employment of his reason. God does not need to

speaking or writing to us; He instructs humanity through His works of creation and their inner relationships which are intelligible to every man.³ Man has been fully equipped for the discovery of the eternal verities. The various problems experienced in life prompt man to think about his condition and such thoughts naturally lead him into difficulties. The only solution for these difficulties is faith in a higher benevolent power, providence, future reward and immortality of the soul.⁴ Thus, without revelation, natural religion develops.

Revelation is also unnecessary for the redemption of man from sin. Mendelssohn follows the straight line of eudaemonism by arguing that the discomfort and misery we bring upon ourselves by transgression tends to lead us back to the path of moral goodness. We are attracted to morality by the greater happiness it bestows upon us.

Finally, revelation of religious truth would be unfair. Every religion has so far reached only a minority of mankind. If any of them really possessed divine revelation, is it conceivable that God would want the majority of His creatures to live without such saving truths? God could not be partial. Therefore, the truths of religion must be equally available to all human beings in every place and at every time.⁵

Yet, there is one exception: the revelation at Mt. Sinai. This is not a matter of theology, according to Mendelssohn, but plain historic fact. The exodus from Egypt, the leadership of Moses, the appearance of the divine Majesty to proclaim His law at a certain

place, are events confirmed by the eyewitness of many thousands.⁶

To what purpose would God stage this unique revelation, and why only for the people of Israel?

Mendelssohn expounds his views on the Sinaitic revelation --- the only revelation to which he would give credence --- in his "Jerusalem" which appeared three years before his death. Sinai revealed to Israel not a single belief or dogma, only specific rules of conduct and regulations of cult and ritual.⁷ The voice heard on Sinai did not reveal a word about God and His attributes, for

"This belongs to the universal religion of mankind, not Judaism; the universal religion of mankind, without which men would not attain to virtue nor achieve happiness, was not to be revealed here.... Only laws were to be revealed; commandments and ordinances, not the eternal verities of religion."⁸

Of course, the Torah received by us through Moses includes, besides law and regulation of conduct, an inexhaustible wealth of rational truths and religious doctrines. But these had been made known long beforehand to Israel together with the rest of mankind. Upon these eternal verities the Sinaitic revelation grafted all of its laws and regulations so that in observing them we might be reminded and stimulated to think about the underlying universal truths.⁹

But why should Israel and no other people receive this pedagogic device of a revealed legislation?

Providence chose the people of Israel, as an act of special grace. The ceremonial law was given to Israel to make of it a nation

which would preserve faith in God in its purity. Other peoples originally had the same faith but because of their symbols and images it was corrupted and distorted into idolatry.¹⁰ Elsewhere, Mendelssohn elaborates the point that the Israelites were given this special revelation not because they needed it as human beings for their happiness, but because God's wise purpose required it to show special favor to this particular people. Having received it, Israel "must not depart from it a single step".¹¹ He again stresses the value of the ceremonial law revealed to Israel in a letter to Herz Homburg. It is necessary, he explains, as a bond of unity for Israel "as long as polytheism, anthropomorphism and religious usurpation rule the globe".¹²

"As long as these spiritual plagues are united against reason, genuine theists must likewise maintain a sort of connection among themselves. And what kind of connection? If it consisted of a doctrine or creed --- dogma would soon put reason in chains. Therefore, practices, i.e. ceremonies!"¹³

We may now raise the questions with which this thesis is primarily concerned: Did Mendelssohn have a concept of revelation? How did he validate it?

Mendelssohn's denial of revelation was not absolute. He denied specific verbal or documentary revelation in history (with the sole exception of the event at Sinai), but still believed in a sort of universal revelation in the sense of a discovery of eternal truths by mankind with the aid of God. God enables man to discover the truths out of which he may construct his religion of reason.

Mendelssohn sees revelation "pre-set" in the mind of man as a potentiality bestowed upon man at his creation. It requires only "an awakening" in order to realize itself in the consciousness of rational mankind. All men possess the God-given sensitivity to the order visible in the work of creation itself. Instead of conveying messages or documents of revelation to man,

"God awakens the spirit created by Him (in man) and gives him the opportunity for introspection as well as observation of the interrelationship of all things to be thus convinced of the truths man is destined to recognize."¹⁴

This whole concept is founded on another article of Mendelssohn's faith: the perfect correspondence of the human mind with the mind of God. He emphatically rejects any doubt whatever one might cast upon reason's capacity of gaining accurate knowledge of Justice and Goodness in the eyes of God. Justice and Goodness mean to God exactly what they mean to man.¹⁵

Unaffected by the philosophic criticism of his contemporary, Immanuel Kant, Mendelssohn clung dogmatically to his faith in the perfection of human reason and its "awakening" by God. Mendelssohn apparently postulated this "universal revelation" in view of the existence of humanity's universal religion of reason. He was obviously not aware of the fact that this "religion of reason" existed only in the deistic dogma of the Enlightenment. It was one of the assumptions of the age. We are told (but given no evidence whatever) that the earliest, primitive human beings reasoned out for themselves the elements of natural religion with all of Mendelssohn's favorite doctrines of a higher, all-benevolent Power, providence, future

reward and immortality of soul.¹⁶

The particular revelation, which Mendelssohn affirms for Israel at Mt. Sinai, cannot be derived from or harmonized with his concept of universal revelation. He accepts the Sinaitic theophany on historical grounds. The event is vouched for by the testimony of a whole people. They cannot all be liars — precisely the argument of Judah Halevi!

Mendelssohn never integrated the two concepts of revelation which he maintained side by side. Both leave many questions unanswered. We have no explanation why mankind's reason, good enough to discover the eternal verities ("ewige Vernunftwahrheiten"), could not prevent their corruption into idolatry, at a later date. The special grace of Israel's unique experience of revelation, on the other hand, seems unjustified in the light of a Universal God who, Mendelssohn insisted, showed no partiality.

A reconciliation between Mendelssohn's two concepts of revelation appears impossible. Whatever might validate one, invalidates the other. The surprising fact that Mendelssohn's theological serenity was not disturbed by it is probably due to the rare balance he maintained between intellectual satisfaction in the Enlightenment and emotional satisfaction in Jewish ritual observance.

Mendelssohn did not have a single significant theological follower. Indeed, the common element of all Jewish thinkers of the 19th and 20th century, to be treated in this thesis, is the overwhelming rejection of Mendelssohn's definition of Judaism as revealed legislation.

In his eagerness to stress the universality of all religious truth, which was indeed an effective argument against maintaining a privileged state-church, Mendelssohn had turned Judaism into a theological corpse. Unintentionally, he had delivered intellectual ammunition to the detractors of Judaism. Immanuel Kant in 1783 wrote Mendelssohn a warmly approving letter with reference to his "Jerusalem"¹⁷, but this did not stop him ten years later from treating Judaism with contempt in "Die Religion Innerhalbder Grenzen der blossen Vernunft". In Kant's judgment, Judaism was merely a statutory legislation founded on a political constitution whose moral values do not belong to Judaism which

"really is not even a religion but an association of a mass of people, a tribal community...."¹⁸

In addition to spiritual sterility and lack of ethical originality, Kant attributed to Judaism a spirit of exclusiveness (the idea of election) and a legislation whose externalism carried no moral conviction.¹⁹ Mendelssohn's own version of the faith as "revealed legislation" could not but confirm some of Kant's prejudiced impressions of Judaism²⁰ even as it hastened the flight of young Jews from the faith of their fathers.

2. SALOMON FORMSTECHE

(1808 - 1889)

The mere titles of the most important three works on Judaism which appeared in the immediate post-Mendelssohnian era indicate the total rejection of the thesis that Judaism was merely revealed legislation, not revealed religion. Salomon Ludwig Steinheim's lifetime work, "Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriff der Synagoge", whose first volume appeared in 1835,¹ focused on the concept of revelation and on revealed beliefs as the essence of Judaism; Salomon Formstecher's "Die Religion des Geistes" (1841) and Samuel Hirsch's "Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden" (1842), both treated Judaism as a system of beliefs or rather as beliefs in the process of unfolding, and entirely dismissed as irrelevant the legislative aspects of Judaism.

Though Steinheim's book chronologically appeared first, we shall consider him last not only because his subsequent volumes appeared much later, but also because he took issue with Formstecher and Hirsch as much as with Mendelssohn.

Salomon Formstecher, "the first modern to attempt a history of the Jewish religion",² chose the philosophy of Schelling as pattern for his analysis of Judaism. God "the World-soul" is the Source of two realities, Nature and Spirit. What God is in relationship to the whole world, man - on a smaller scale - is in relationship to earth; bearer of its consciousness, endowed with the attribute of freedom.³ Any definition of God would be inappropriate, indeed it would be a relapse into anthropomorphism.

Yet this much, at least, we are logically compelled to assume: "God cannot lack consciousness for otherwise He would stand lower than man".⁴

The tension between Nature and Spirit provides the underlying meaning of history. Man's predestined role is to become the agent in the ultimate harmonization of Nature and Spirit within himself. To bring both to a fusion of their identity, so that neither be submerged, is the ultimate ideal.⁵

The ideal appropriate to Nature is the beautiful. The ideal appropriate to Spirit is the good. The objects of nature are morally indifferent. Therefore, the creation of "goodness" is not in the realm of nature but that of the spirit -- through⁶ revelation.

Revelation is, "anthropomorphically speaking the knowledge of the good, deposited by God in the mind of man".⁷ We shall now follow closely Formstecher's presentation of this concept of revelation.

Why the qualification "anthropomorphically speaking" ("im anthropomorphistischen Ausdrucke")?

Formstecher immediately suggests that we should not think of revelation as an "action" similar to that of a man, revealing something to another man. God does not turn his attention upon a particular person with a message framed for that particular moment in history.

There are two parts to Revelation. First, God's part which took place in the immeasurable past and was completed with the

"Creation of the good as a position of original Being". This is brought out in the definition's past tense: "communication.... deposited by God". This deposit of the good is finished; it cannot be improved upon. No additions have been made to the original "deposit". There is no "development" of revelation from God's side. The second part of revelation is the subjective recognition of revelation's objective contents ("the deposit made by God") which may become progressively better. In other words, what God deposited remains unchanged and unchangeable. The only thing that changes is man's knowledge and appreciation of it.⁸

The essential point of this definition is that the active God who does something to communicate something to man has been "frozen". God only once, in the very act of creation, injected the "good". This "good" has been waiting ever since to be fully discovered by man.

How does reason differ from revelation? Reason is an instrument without content. It can evaluate the good which has been taken note of, but it cannot create it. Revelation supplies the content which reason then may grasp. Reason is merely man's instrument for discovery.⁹

Now, Formstecher introduces a new set of terms to bring out precisely the distinction between the deposit of the good (i.e. the contents of revelation) and man's actual comprehension of it.

"Prehistoric revelation" is the divine, objective deposit of the "good" made by God at the time of Creation. However, its discovery and comprehension are accomplished by the spirit which,

as consciousness of the earth, must have self-knowledge. This is something subjective,¹⁰ something relative to man's capacity. Since it takes place in time, it is called "historic revelation".

The gradual improvement of our subjective comprehension of the objective data of revelation makes it impossible to fix with mathematical accuracy the moment of historical revelation.¹¹

The moment of revelation may be defined as the moment of man's awakening to consciousness in which his spirit recognizes its task as one revealed by God.¹²

This historic revelation advances relative to man's outlook and experience.¹³ Its perfection would be the absolutely true historic revelation.

Thus there are three kinds of revelation: (1) The prehistoric, a one-time occurrence, the objectively given content of Spirit. (2) The historic-relative, which is the partial discovery of the contents of the prehistorically given revelation, growing with man's capacity and relative to the historical situation. (3) The historic absolute, which is the future perfection of man's comprehension of the contents of prehistoric revelation as man's capacities are perfected.¹⁴

How does man increase his capacity for revelation? "As man's spirit comes to know nature by observation, so may he achieve knowledge of revelation by contemplation of it, by introspection ("Selbstbeschaung") for revelation resides in the spirit. The moment when one gains awareness of this spiritual creation is the moment in which historical revelation begins."¹⁵ "Historic revelation

will end when the human spirit 'has raised itself up' to recognition of prehistoric revelation."¹⁶

At this point, Formstecher has accomplished a near-reversal of the concept of revelation: not God reveals to man, but man, by introspection, draws out revelation from within himself.

What is a prophet? And how does Moses differ from all other prophets? The prophet, convinced that the truth he sees is not the result of his own reflection, forgets his individuality in the moment of prophecy. His mouth is now the mouth of God and his ego is identified by him with divinity speaking.¹⁷

The uniqueness of Moses was not in his prophetic power but in his ability to create an independent theocracy.¹⁸

Pagans also have prophecy. They, like the prophets of Israel, recognize their message as inspiration from an external source. The only difference is the source from which they both draw. Though both assume that the content of the Ideal is an utterance of the deity, the pagan prophets speak out as servants of Nature. The prophets of Israel draw their uplifting orations only out of the spirit.¹⁹

Why did prophecy cease? Formstecher's answer is that the sophistication of rational speculations put an end to prophecy: "The Source of true prophecy ceases the moment the ecstatic feeling is replaced by the reflection of reason"²⁰. The prophet turns philosopher when he no longer considers his religious outlook as God's gift of grace, but recognizes it as the creation of his own mind,²¹ validating it not by divine utterance but his own reason.

As for Sinai, Formstecher has not a word of explanation of the theophany. The significance of Sinai, according to Formstecher, is the establishment of the covenant between God and Israel -- not revelation.²² Moses stands out as national leader and statesman, founder of Israel's theocracy, rather than the greatest of all prophets. God does not reveal from the outside anything essential to man's bliss as though it were a secret which man could not have found by his own inherent divine powers.²³

Formstecher, for all intents and purposes, makes revelation a euphemism for man's own discovery of the ethical ideal. There is no room, in his system, for divine acts of revelation in time and place. All that man would ever be capable of discovering has been "deposited" into the human mind by God in the form of "prehistoric revelation" at the time of creation.

Now, how can "prehistoric revelation" be validated? Historical evidence for prehistoric events is, ipso facto, ruled out. This leaves only arguments on grounds of logic, whose soundness we shall now examine.

Assuming that a "prehistoric revelation"^{was} given in absolute completeness to all mankind, it would logically lead us to three assumptions:

1. An equality of "prophetic" potential in all men i.e. no uniqueness of Biblical prophecy.
2. Universality of the contents of "revelation".
3. No need for additional revelations in past or future since all was given by God in the original "prehistoric revelation" to which God adds nothing. Only, man discovers it more and more in time and place.²⁴

Formstecher indeed argues for these three assumptions.

Prophecy is not a uniquely Jewish phenomenon. There is no difference between Jewish and pagan prophets in their form of expression or in their "attribution of the Ideal to Divinity". The only difference is in the source on which Jewish and pagan prophets draw. While the prophets of Israel "as servants of the Spirit drew their elevating orations only from the Spirit, the latter as servants of Nature looked only to Nature for their divinations".²⁵

But, why there should be this difference is not explained. Why did Jewish prophets consistently draw on Spirit and pagans on Nature, if all men have access to the same prehistoric revelation by God at the time of creation?

The contents of revelation are universal knowledge.

Aside from prophecy and long before its Biblical occurrence, mankind gained knowledge of the divine will: Judaism itself teaches that its revelation is as old as mankind.²⁶ "Judaism credits mankind with full recognition of the divine will even before Moses"²⁷ and "the legislation at Sinai does not contain a single doctrine which had not been earlier known and observed by at least some."²⁸

One should expect such universality in the light of Formstecher's claim of a prehistoric revelation granted to all mankind, but one searches in vain for the evidence. The doctrines of the Sinaitic legislation are not specified, nor does Formstecher demonstrate, with reference to any of them, how and where they were known to others before Sinai. The overpowering impression of the moral and spiritual life of mankind is its diversity not uniformity. The

diversity goes beyond Formstecher's basic and very general dichotomy between pagan prophets drawing revelation from Nature and Jewish prophets drawing it from the Spirit.

The undeniable fact of contradiction between the innumerable prophets, codes of ethics and religious systems, which are all supposedly "discovering" the identical "prehistoric revelation", is explained by Formstecher's very vague statement of men moving each at a different pace of understanding according to their unequal "conditions".²⁹ Unequal in what?

The denial of specific revelation in time and place is Formstecher's most characteristic concession to rationalism. By transposing revelation to "prehistory" Formstecher escaped the scandal of "specificity" and "particularity".

Formstecher's universalism, with its tendency of a pantheistic immanence,³⁰ conceives of revelation as something imbedded in man from the time of creation. What is imbedded in all men can only be of a general nature. The contents of revelation, therefore, can not be specific, nor be addressed to a particular people. We should then expect revelation to consist of general principles for all mankind at all times. Yet, this expectation, based on Formstecher's view of revelation, is not born out by the utterances of our prophets. These are throughout detailed references to historical situations, particular peoples and particular codes. None of the prophets spoke in generalities; they did not pronounce principles but dealt with specific issues from which we may, to be sure, derive principles but these were not stated by the prophets themselves at the time of prophecy.

Now, as to Formstecher's claim of a universal "prehistoric revelation", it taxes our credulity quite as much as the idea of a specific revelation addressed by God to particular people in time and place. What was "prehistorically" given remains after all in the realm of metaphysics. Finally, and this is the most vulnerable point in Formstecher's concept, what criterion do we have for identifying anything given "prehistorically"? How can anything "discovered" by man be attributed to that "prehistoric revelation"? How can we distinguish between a man's discovery of his own wishful thinking and the divine will?

Formstecher's view of "prehistoric revelation" being progressively "discovered" by man comes close to a humanistic transformation of divine revelation into a product of the human mind. The divine initiative is eliminated. There are no revelatory acts of God in history. There is only a growing awareness of the human mind of --- what? Formstecher claims it is an awareness of the "prehistoric revelation" -- but how do we know? The most glaring shortcoming in this concept of revelation is the total absence of criteria which would make validation possible.

3. SAMUEL HIRSCH

(1815 - 1889)

Significant both as thinker and pioneer of the Reform movement was Samuel Hirsch. He not only took part in the Rabbinical Conferences of the 1840s in Germany, but moved to America in 1866 where, as Rabbi of Keneseth Israel congregation in Philadelphia, he was recognized as an outstanding leader of the Reform movement.

Philipson calls him "the philosopher of the movement".¹ His reputation as thinker is based on his major philosophic work "Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden" which appeared in 1842, one year after Formstecher's "Die Religion des Geistes" and two years before the historic Brunswick Conference.

His philosophic foundations are those of German philosophic idealism whose representatives, despite all differences, are alike in so far as they see the pivot of reality in the mind of man, in man's consciousness or in thought itself. Hirsch accepts Hegelianism² as his philosophic framework to which we shall refer no more than is necessary for our presentation of Hirsch's concept of revelation.

His object is "to treat the whole content of the religious consciousness philosophically".³ Hirsch follows Hegel's view of reality under the aspect of the Absolute Spirit to which all life ascends in ever greater consciousness of self. Man's distinction from nature, that which truly marks him off as man, is his capacity of gaining self-consciousness, his ability to say "I". In the recognition of the "I" as against the whole world outside, man gains his freedom, indeed his humanity.⁴ Man fulfills himself when he shapes the material of nature according to the decisions

of his free will. The religious life is nothing else but the realization of my "I" in its eternal freedom.⁵ The author and very principle of self-determining freedom is God.⁶ God enabled man to lift himself up to divine freedom and, by realizing his freedom, to live, so to speak, "a portion of God's own life". Thus, "man's will and the will of God become utterly one and the same. Man may thus live in true union with God, with himself and with all of nature held subject under his control."⁷

Man's moral struggle consists in finding a worthy purpose for the empty freedom gained at the birth of his self-consciousness. If he surrenders his freedom to Nature about and within himself, he absolutizes Nature --- the basis of paganism. On the other hand, if man transcends his empty freedom, giving it content by choices which subordinate Nature to his freedom, he fulfills his destiny the more he makes his will identical with the will of God.⁸ This has been the path of Judaism.

The revelation to Israel must be understood in relationship to the conquest of Nature and the quest for moral freedom. Miracles and prophecy are both aspects of God's revelation to Israel at various stages of development. An evolutionary purpose is enacted in history. Its goal is the achievement of full moral freedom⁹ and identification with the will of God. With this goal of history in mind, Hirsch can now validate miracles, the theophany at Sinai, the phenomenon of prophecy. In each case the validation takes the form of a historical need or purpose being served.

Miracles, for example, had the function of demonstrating God's

power over nature and of encouraging man's emancipation from the supremacy of nature. By suspending the natural laws at certain times, and with special effect at times of great national need, God proved to the people

"that nature was not sovereign, but obedient to a higher Master and that therefore man need not be in nature's bondage, but was free and should preserve his freedom..."¹⁰

The ten plagues are validated in Hirsch's view by the specific purpose they served of

"compelling the Egyptians to recognize the true God while elevating Him in the eyes of the Israelites as Master over all, over all nations and all of nature".¹¹

The miracle at the Red Sea is vouched for by the purpose it served in

"making God appear as the savior in supreme danger, thus reassuring man that no peril need rob him of his freedom".¹²

The miracles in connection with Joshua are credited by Hirsch in so far as he can see a special reason for them: to establish the authority of Joshua as successor to Moses.¹³

The same method of validation is applied to prophecy. It is part of God's wider plan. Hirsch has some sharp words for the skepticism of the shallow rationalist who "measures a phenomenon in terms of his own limitations. What he cannot understand becomes unthinkable."¹⁴ Hirsch affirms prophecy because he can see a historic need for it. Though God had equipped man fully to find for himself all the truths required for his salvation, men, by their own

volition, fell into sin, did not seek those truths and later were unable to find them. Therefore,

"God, from the very beginning, decided on prophecy alongside with miracles".¹⁵

The most effective way of guiding mankind in overcoming sin by means of prophecy was to use a whole people for demonstration purposes. The election of Israel was therefore part of God's plan. Israel was to receive the prophetic truth first, and organize their life in response to it. Then, mankind was to do likewise.¹⁶

The theophany at Sinai fits into this higher pedagogical scheme. Miracles and prophecy were insufficient. The words of the prophets might be questioned by the people. Even their interpretation of divine miracles might meet with skepticism. Therefore God revealed himself at Sinai and spoke directly to the people to give indisputable confirmation to prophetic teachings.

"Consequently, God appeared at Sinai in order to render impossible any doubt as to the principles enunciated by the prophets."¹⁷

At Sinai the essence of all religion became manifest in the first two words ד'ו'ו' ו'ו'ו'

"these words mean nothing else but God is master over nature and man should consider himself independent of it and free....

these two words contain the whole content of religion... a call meant for all mankind; God, not nature, is master; man should resemble God and not live as slave of nature."¹⁸

Moses was unique among the prophets. His uniqueness is likewise explained in terms of a particular function. His task was to teach the whole of religion. Thus, Moses spoke not only to his but to all times, while all other prophets spoke to their own age only and limited themselves to specific matters.¹⁹

Having validated revelation by the purpose it served in history, Hirsch can now easily explain the cessation of prophecy. When Israel learned its lesson, the "purpose" of prophecy was fulfilled. Thus, prophecy ceased. The prophetic voice fell silent "when no more explanation was required and the people were forever convinced that all pagan deities were of nought, that only the true God of heaven and earth should be revered, that man, made in God's image, was to rule and not serve nature and that the preservation of these truths was Jacob's mission, his one and eternal heritage."²⁰

The perfect ease with which Hirsch proceeds to validate revelation, including the theophany at Sinai with all of its attending miracles, must be understood in the light of a great faith underpinning his entire system. All miracles and prophecies are mere incidents in the greatest of all miracles: a divine plan unfolding in history. The major act of faith in Hirsch's system is belief in such a plan.

It is typical of his approach to inquire not into the objective reality or possibility of miracles and prophecies, but into their purpose within the larger plan of God in history. For Hirsch,

"validation" of a revelation is not verification of its actual occurrence but rather finding a purpose or a function for it in history. If such can be found, Hirsch does not question its occurrence in fact. For example, the important question for Hirsch is not how it was possible for humans to hear the voice of God at Sinai, but rather what purpose God might have had speaking there directly to the people.

Holding to the basic premise that history is meaningful in its totality, Hirsch quite easily finds a purpose for each historical event by itself. He can read much meaning out of history after reading so much into it.

But, what of those who do not share his faith in a divine plan unfolding in history? What is Hirsch's argument for those who cannot accept his premise of history as a logical movement towards a divinely fixed goal? How does Hirsch validate this premise? Not at all. It is an axiomatic faith with Hirsch -- the very ground of all reality.

Those who reject the premise of an over-all purpose in history, or Hirsch's interpretation of that purpose, will find his validation of revelation irrelevant. But even those who accept the premise of the divine plan in history will ask, why was revelation needed to achieve that plan, was there no other way? Besides, how do we know there was any sort of revelation at all? Hirsch's answer to the first question may or may not please them. As for the second question, he offers no answer at all.

4. Salomon Ludwig Steinheim

(1789 - 1866)

A man of abundant and varied talents, whose significance in the history of Jewish thought has only recently been recognized, was Salomon Ludwig Steinheim (1789-1866). He was able to combine the interests and activities of a natural scientist, poet, composer, novelist, art-historian and champion of emancipation. He was a successful physician, a man of considerable social position whose friendship extended into highly placed Christian circles and, most notably, he was "the first Jewish theologian of the modern age."¹ He took a position beyond Reform and Orthodoxy, for which he received little appreciation from either camp. Men quite unlike in temperament and outlook, such as Zunz and Gabriel Riesser, were his friends; antagonists such as A. Geiger and Z. Frankel, first welcomed him as associate and contributor to their journals, and then turned against him.²

Though Steinheim was the author of some 80 books and articles on theology and philosophy, in addition to some 70 medical articles and several volumes of poetry, he was shortly after his death as good as forgotten. In the opinion of Schoeps, who has done much for the recognition of Steinheim, he was either 20 years too late or 100 years too soon.³ Jewish interest was already turning away from theology to the historicism of "Judische Wissenschaft." The Jewish theological re-awakening was not to come again until the 20th century.

Curiously, Steinheim's theological career -- foreshadowing Rosenzweig's return to Judaism -- began with the intention of apostasy. It motivated a

serious study of Judaism, leading to a firm attachment to the faith of his birth.⁴

Steinheim remained Jewish, but he did pass through a philosophic "conversion." To begin with, he too had been a follower of the rationalist school. In his search for criteria for the validation of Revelation, a study of Kant and Fichte stimulated an intellectual fermentation. His first theological articles, criticizing the method of reconciling or identifying religion with prevailing philosophies, still appeared in Protestant journals. The publication of the first volume of his major work, "Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoge" (1835), transferred the debate to the Jewish arena which he never again abandoned.

In the year in which "Die Offenbarung" saw the light of day, Steinheim still enjoyed close association with some of the leading spirits of the Reform movement. He was a member of the "Verein" of Jewish scholars who assisted Abraham Geiger in the publication of the "Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für Jüdische Theologie." Among them were M. Creizenach, S. Formstecher, E. Grunbaum, J. M. Jost, S. Munk and Leopold Zunz.⁵ Steinheim was given the privilege of writing the review of his own book in advance of publication, stating the objectives he hoped to accomplish.⁶ This "preview" is helpful because it identifies the principal and most original argument in Steinheim's entire work on which we shall focus our attention later on.

First and foremost is his stated aim of developing generally valid criteria by which true and false Revelation might be distinguished. In

this connection, he hoped to trace the evolution of man's thought on God, soul, freedom and immortality from mythology to its more sophisticated translation into philosophic systems. He would also try to prove the essential identity of natural religion, philosophy and paganism as products of unaided human reason. He would point out the inadequacy of reason and consequently man's dependence on communication from another source on matters where reason is either unable to inform us or, if it did, would find itself hopelessly enmeshed in self-contradictions. After acknowledging his philosophic debt to Kant, "founder of critical philosophy," Steinheim singled out as the basic "Shibboleth" the comprehension of reality by means of Revelation in contradiction to the concepts of reason, forcing reason ultimately to recognize the superior truth of Revelation.

We shall now turn to the development of this argument in the four volumes Steinheim was able to publish during his lifetime. The work, originating in large part as lectures before a circle of friends, suffers from lack of organization and repetitiousness. Although 30 years passed between the publication of the first and last volume, Steinheim's theological position remained unchanged. It is therefore possible to cite material from all four volumes without regard to their chronological order.

Steinheim's first volume falls into two parts: a definition of the criteria by which Revelation is to be validated, followed by an analysis of the contents of Revelation. To start with, Steinheim argues, on grounds of common sense, Revelation could not possibly be identical with any knowledge available to man through his own unaided reason. The Supreme Spirit

would not deliver to us with solemn fanfare that which we might find out for ourselves.

It is equally evident to Steinheim that, together with the Revelation, there must be given to us the power of comprehending it and the critical faculty of distinguishing genuine, authentic Revelation from that which is false and fraudulent. What are the criteria?⁸

Revelation of an ethical character is no problem. The test is pragmatic. Soon enough personal experience bears out the validity of ethical principles revealed to us. But no such test is possible with reference to metaphysical truths.⁹ The criteria must be in the realm of reason and logic. Steinheim proceeds to list six criteria for the validation of Revelation:

1. Such Revelation must be communicable
2. It must be comprehensible
3. It must allow distinction between true and false
4. It must not rest on mere "feeling"
5. It is not validated by coincidence with our own consciousness
6. Revelation must have the character of novelty, i.e.,
contradict previously held knowledge, yet in the end,
logically compel acknowledgment of its truth.¹⁰

Another sign of Revelation is its historical character. It is an event precisely fixed in time and place. Natural religion grows out of human consciousness and develops with each passing generation. Its propositions cannot be dated. But divine Revelation bursts upon the scene. Being divine and thus perfect and complete, it needs no further develop-

ment. It is a sudden turn, without precedent, i.e., it is not subject to environmental evolution.¹¹

Revealed, historical religion knows of only one kind of development. The people's understanding and appreciation of the Revelation may develop, but not its contents.¹²

The moral effect of revealed religion upon men and nations also furnishes a measure of validation. What happens to people who live by it as compared to those who live contrary to it? Revealed religion and natural religion differ in their historical influence. In revealed religion, the religion remains unchanged, yet man changes under its influence. In natural religion, being a product of man's own mind, religion undergoes changes, while man himself remains unchanged.¹³

The historical uniqueness of the Jewish people as bearer of Revelation is also a form of validation. The origin and survival of the Jews, unparalleled in history, testifies to the presence of a supernatural element received through Revelation.¹⁴

Steinheim turns to a critical review of several methods of validating Revelation. The theory of continuous daily Revelation, maintained in certain religious circles, is supposedly validated by "the inner light." Steinheim rejects this for, in effect, it means that everything may pass for Revelation and thus the "inner light" validates nothing.¹⁵

The appearance of a divine being as a presence should not be called Revelation. It cannot be validated. It becomes Revelation only through the communication of a message regarding some truth we would not otherwise gain. Without a revealed message we might think of the vision as mere

illusion. Or, receiving no message from the divine being, we might then attribute to Him ideas of our own invention.¹⁶

Steinheim accepts some of Fichte's ideas in "Die Kritik aller Offenbarung," especially that creation itself cannot be called a Revelation; however, he rejects Fichte's own criterion of Revelation: the value of the revealed message as "a contemporary necessity for mankind." Who is to judge? What if men differ as to what message is a needed truth in our time?¹⁷

Equally unsatisfactory to Steinheim is Lessing's validation of the true religious Revelation in the famous parable of the three rings. The point of the parable is that the authentic ring would become manifest by its power of improving the bearer, i.e., the true religion is validated by having the greatest moralizing effect upon its believer. But who is to judge, and by what standard of judgment, as to what constitutes the greatest moral progress? What is to stop each of the three to consider himself "morally" best? If moral value is the criterion, we must first know what moral value is. In other words, moral value itself needs to be revealed.¹⁸

Marheineke's concept of Revelation -- God is not only what man thinks of Him but that in man which thinks -- is quickly dismissed. This concept, Steinheim points out, means that God is not revealing something to us, but we to Him! It eliminates Revelation as a real communication from God to us. Instead, there is the expression of something already within us.¹⁹

Steinheim rightly recognizes in Schleiermacher the very antithesis of his position. Seeing religion rooted in "feeling," Schleiermacher had no use for Revelation. He would not define it or explain its origin and

preferred, in fact, that the term Revelation not be used in strict dogmatics. Christians, Schleiermacher suggests, acquire religion as something evolving out of "Christian consciousness." Since the Old Testament does not harmonize with Christian consciousness, Schleiermacher argues that there is no real bond between the Old and the New Testament. With his "Christian consciousness," no other source of Revelation is needed. Indeed, one might say, that if the Biblical canon were lost, this Christian consciousness would reconstruct it.²⁰ Obviously, Steinheim could find nothing in Schleiermacher that might serve as validation for Revelation. Indeed, the whole question of validating Revelation was not even a relevant question for Schleiermacher.

We now turn to the heart of Steinheim's validation of Revelation, which is his most original contribution to modern Jewish thought. It consists of an epistemological argument that turns existential and becomes the basis for his doctrine of a freely creating God, the Source from which man receives not only Revelation, but also his dignity as a free agent.

A prerequisite for the understanding of Steinheim is to bear in mind that he is an anti-rationalist, not an irrationalist.²¹

"We do not propose to turn our reason into captivity and surrender it cheaply to authority. That would be treason against humanity! We mean to show, however, how reason 'captures' itself ... Reason shall, in accord with its divinely ordained function, retain the decisive judgment with regard to the truths in our possession." ²²

The key to his whole system (as pointed out in the preview of his own book)* is the rational demonstration of the inadequacy of reason in

*See p. 41 ff

comprehending reality. This is what he means by reason "capturing" itself. Steinheim proceeds to do so by adding to Kant's four antinomies a fifth, the antinomy of reason and experience.²³ A priori reasoning not only cannot comprehend "das Ding an sich, das Wesen der Dinge," but actually misrepresents reality.

Steinheim cites examples from the realm of science: Mathematically, i.e., rationally speaking, the atmosphere of the earth should expand infinitely, but empirically we find limits to its expansion. Of course, it is the empirical knowledge, contradicting rational presuppositions, which is universally accepted as fact. Similarly, water behaves contrary to rational expectations with reference to the physical law of expansion and contraction. It contracts steadily as it cools down to 4° but contrary to all rational expectations of a priori reason, water reverses its behavior and expands as its temperature falls below 4° .²⁴ These and other examples prove that a priori reasoning is unreliable for the comprehension of reality. What is "real" is neither predictable nor comprehensible by a priori reason.²⁵ There is a quality of wonder and surprise in all objects of reality, surpassing human understanding as expressed in a rhyme, attributed by Steinheim to the botanist Matthias Schleiden:

Wir erklären es nicht, und doch ist es wahr,
wir begreifen es nicht, und doch ist es da.²⁶

Instantly, Steinheim makes a switch from Natural Science to Theology.²⁷ Having established reason's bewilderment in the face of unpredictable and incomprehensible reality, Steinheim now argues that reason is equally

unreliable and inferior in the face of Revelation. Even as man will opt for the empirically gained knowledge against the speculations and constructions of a priori reason, so he must opt for Revelation against speculative reason.

In the area of religious and metaphysical truth, the conflict between reason and Revelation is sharpened by another fundamental defect of reason. Characteristically, reason operates with logical "necessity." Reason sees reality, God included, bound by the law of causality. God is "necessarily" existent as the first cause that initiated the chain of cause and effect. His existence, in other words, is derived from a human mode of thinking. Human reason is bound by another "necessary" principle; *ex nihilo nihil fit*. The material world cannot emerge out of nothing, i.e., it cannot have a temporal beginning. The eternity of matter must be assumed by reason. Thus, God, already subject to the law of causality is further limited in His creativity by eternally existing matter. Accordingly, the God of speculative reason cannot be a creator in the full sense of the word. Both philosophic materialism and idealism make God subject to necessities which deny Him as creator. According to idealism, the world of sensory perception is non-existent. Thus, God created nothing. On the other hand if, as materialism claims, the material world was always in existence, then again there was no divine creation. At the most, He can fashion only what is already existent into the best possible world. ²⁸

Speculative reason not only contradicts the freely creating God of Revelation -- it contradicts itself. The entire structure of speculative reason collapses under its own inherent conflicts. Reason's fundamental

doctrines, the law of causality and *ex nihilo nihil fit*, are in irreconcilable conflict. On the strength of *ex nihilo nihil fit*, we are logically compelled to assume the eternity of matter, yet the law of causality, with equal force of logic, demands a beginning in time, thus denying the eternity of matter.²⁹

There is no escape from this paradox in which reason stumbles over itself except through the revealed doctrine of God as Creator who made the world out of nothing.³⁰ Free will, in the larger sense of God as Creator, and the smaller sense of man as free agent, cannot be logically substantiated by speculative reason. Therefore, our knowledge of it must come from Revelation.³¹

Moreover, and here the argument moves to an existential plane, freedom of will is confirmed by our deepest sense of existence: "The fact of freedom is incontrovertibly contained in our soul as an immediate consciousness ..."³² Even where, among pagans or under the influence of philosophic speculation, fatalism was the prevailing conviction, practical life always made its decision in favor of freedom. The theories of fate and predestination were compromised in favor of this fact of human consciousness "on which the sum of human life is based."³³ Our conviction that we are in possession of freedom is a different kind of knowledge from that of theoretical speculation. Steinheim quotes a statement to that effect by Lichtenberg:

"We know with far more clarity that our will is free than that every event must have a cause. Could we not argue in reverse and say: Our concept of causality must be quite incorrect since there could be no freedom of will if causality were correct?"³⁴

Thus, freedom of will, despite its irreconcilable conflict with speculative reason, is the truth we live by, existentially confirmed by the very consciousness of our human condition. Revelation upholds it and through Revelation we have knowledge of it. Critical reason is forced to admit that Revelation more than speculative reason has the truth which best explains reality. It is the revealed dogma of creation out of nothing which expresses the freedom of God in the physical and ethical sense. This truth is confirmed externally by the witness of our senses to the existence of the world, and internally by the reality of freedom.³⁵

By this dogma of God's creation of the world out of nothing, man's own moral freedom is guaranteed. For, if God's freedom were limited, it would be found even less in man, that "shadow of a dream."³⁶ Only one difference remains between God's freedom and man's freedom: While man can interfere in a chain of cause and effect, he must utilize the material means at hand, but God can also create His own means.³⁷

Some striking omissions in Steinheim's approach must now engage our attention. In his work of four large volumes of nearly 2,000 densely printed pages on the subject of Revelation, there is hardly a line on the phenomenology of prophecy and Revelation. How does the moment of Revelation affect the person receiving it? What are the characteristics of the prophetic personality? How does he differ from the non-prophet? Can a person prepare himself to receive Revelation? What are the emotional and intellectual processes and their interplay in the prophetic experience? How may we understand the different prophetic states such as visions, trances, ecstasies, dreams? These questions, to which Maimonides, e.g.,

gave his closest attention, did not concern Steinheim.

One is also surprised to find no comparative study of prophecy. How did prophecy in Israel differ from its occurrence among other peoples? Nor, for that matter, do we find an inquiry on why prophecy ceased or whether its recurrence in the future is possible.

Particularly baffling is the almost total lack of discussion of the documents of Revelation, i.e., the Torah, the authority of its legislation and the prophetic texts in the Bible. One searches in vain for Steinheim's interpretation of biographical data, particularly the calls to prophecy of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, not to mention the so-called minor prophets. Even Moses, as a personality and recipient of Revelation, is mentioned in but a few scattered references.

The greatest event of Revelation, the theophany at Sinai, likewise receives only scantiest consideration. What form did God's speech take? Was it speech or sound? Was it heard audibly or "spiritually?" How can the event be verified? Again, Steinheim fails to answer.

In fact, Steinheim, the theologian of Revelation par excellence, does not concern himself at all with the validation of specific instances or experiences of Revelation. The question which interests Steinheim most is: What kind of "knowing" is Revelation as compared with reason? His interest is strongly epistemological.

It may seem as a very narrow interest, but actually it is the key to the fundamental problem of faith as he sees it. Steinheim aims at nothing less than the dethronement of reason as the source of faith. His is a major assault on the rationalist school of theology. He wants to show that reason cannot give an understanding of reality, let alone supply foundations

of faith. This critical aim is related to Steinheim's positive, constructive purpose: He wants to secure the one essential dogma on which faith can be reconstructed. It happens to be the crucial question of metaphysics, the focus of philosophic interest: the reality of God as a personal Being whose attribute of personality is made manifest in His work of creation -- creation not out of necessity but perfect freedom. The God of perfect freedom is unlimited by pre-existent matter. He creates out of nothing. This idea, a scandal to reason, is affirmed by revealed faith. All his efforts at validation turn on this one point: May we trust the revealed doctrine regarding God as Creator who created out of nothing? If this doctrine could be established, many other articles of faith could then be logically derived from it. It is this supreme goal which consumed Steinheim's primary interest.

Bearing this in mind, we can now better understand the otherwise incredibly brief treatment given to such specific though very important questions as the theophany at Sinai and the place of Moses in the history of Revelation.

How can we explain a Moses? Steinheim denies the possibility of penetrating the mystery surrounding the servant of God.

"It is and remains a mystery like the origin of the sun or the first human being; we can only say: God wanted it, God created, God did it! We can only point to the real, particular and concrete existence and reject the excessive spirit of inquiry that asks, whence? Therefore we say: Moses or who else declared it (the legislation) for the first time, certainly took it from the same place whence the astronomer gets his heavenly bodies and the natural scientist his material -- the hand of God! Creation is the most impenetrable of all wonders and so is its pure expression in the mosaic doctrine of creation." 38

Note that Steinheim singles out as truly divine the doctrinal content, not the statutes of Moses.* It is futile to try to solve the riddle of the origin of the teachings of Moses. We can only consider what is before us, "explaining what it is, while how it became, remains an eternal secret. It is not for us to seek behind the reality another reality, the essence of all essences, the spirit of all spirits, the creator out of nothing!"³⁹

Steinheim is equally reluctant to explain Sinai. "Let there be light! And there was light. The same creative call of the Almighty turned into a second word of creation, the word of Revelation at Sinai. There mankind rose from an animalistic to a spiritual level; ..."⁴⁰

Revelation is to Steinheim something given by divine act. It is above all a source of knowledge in its own right for man to accept rather than to explain. An analogy might help us understand Steinheim's singular disinterest in the exploration of the "workings" of Revelation: We can see very well without knowing anything about the structure of the eye; and we can hear very well without knowing anything about the intricacies of the inner ear; even so may we utilize the channel of Revelation, to obtain knowledge otherwise not attainable, without knowing the "workings" and intricacies of Revelation itself. Steinheim was interested in the contents that came out of the channel of Revelation; he was not interested in the inside of the channel itself.

The validation of Revelation meant to Steinheim the furnishing of

*See p. 55 ff

evidence that Revelation, regardless how it happens, is a source of knowledge which corresponds more truly with reality than the constructs of speculative reason.

"It is for us to prove: that there is no other true source of knowledge ('Erkenntnisquelle'), regarding the real God besides the Revelation in the canon of the O.T. and that the philosophic systems as well as the pagan dogmas completely contradict reality." 41

Steinheim proceeds with a statement of his inductive method:

"It is the way of concluding from the certain to the uncertain, from the known to the unknown, from the revealed to the hidden, from the visible to the invisible, from the material to the spiritual ... In the end, I hope to present to you the full work of Revelation; I say, the work, what it is -- how it came about, do not ask me. I shall not be able to answer, even as the natural scientist cannot answer questions such as what came first, the chicken or the egg. I am just a simple natural historian in my field; I can define for you the genus and the species with reliable signs, but not the 'how' of its origin." 42

Steinheim's position with regard to religious law is, to say the least, perplexing. One should imagine that the theologian who tirelessly insisted on the reality of Revelation as an actual communication of clearly determined content, would consider himself bound by the cult and the entire discipline which occupies so great a part of revealed Scriptures. Yet, Steinheim was notoriously unobservant. In Frankel's opinion it was scandalous that Steinheim "under the guise of closest attachment to Revelation undermined it and surrendered it to everyone's
43
whim." Abraham Geiger, in a critical review of Steinheim's work, six years after the theologian's death, expressed his amazement that Steinheim, despite his theoretical rejection of Reform, went far beyond

Reform in his own conduct, and "without any justification." Geiger reports that in correspondence on the question of Jewish religious legislation Steinheim had briefly dismissed it as "national, local and temporary. Thus, the despiser of reason wisecracked about 'God's word perceived through the ear.' In this manner, the whole character of the man was self-contradictory."⁴⁴

Geiger's judgment, as we shall see, was not quite fair. Steinheim nowhere claimed that the *תורה* were of revealed character. By Revelation he meant throughout Revelation of beliefs not laws. This might be called an arbitrary limitation of the term "Revelation," but, having done so, Steinheim cannot be called "self-contradictory" for failure to accept the cult and the law as sacrosanct.

What, precisely, did Steinheim think of the Biblical legislation? Steinheim raises the question whether Moses was really a legislator. This depends on whether his doctrine was law. He then considers the various meanings of "law" in the context of physical nature, in social legislation and in the sense of moral duty. He concludes that it is a mistake to call the latter "law." "The ethical law, properly speaking, obligates but does not compel, wherefore it should be called not law but command,"⁴⁵ In what sense, then, is the Old Testament "law?" Not in the sense of natural law and not quite in the sense of state law. Not even ethical law is the fitting term for the Biblical canon. He then refers to "those statutes which were issued under the authority of a delegate certified by the highest divine instance." These represent "only a

portion, considerable in scope yet subordinated in value, of the Old Testament. Consequently, the Bible should not, on its account, be called "The Law." We note in the above statement that Steinheim does not consider Biblical statutes to be direct Revelation but "issued under the authority" of a divinely appointed delegate.

Steinheim now defines his understanding of the scope of Revelation as "not essentially law or legislation, wherefore the one who conveyed it to us should not be called legislator." We find in Revelation communication of "a new doctrine, instruction, unveiling of events preceding history, namely creation out of nothing." Steinheim would prefer the term "Teaching" to that of "Law" as proper designation for the Bible. "It is teaching, genuine and full of content as no other ... The O.T. was not given in order to reveal laws or statutes as Mendelssohn and others argued, but in order to reveal a God." To be sure, mankind had already become aware of God in the darkness of their consciousness "but not with a correct understanding of His relationship with the world."⁴⁶

Myth and philosophy trying to interpret our sense of God and freedom, turned these concepts into fallacies.

"Only in the theology of the O.T. do we find closer confirmation and development of the thought: the revealed God is free creator, father of natural law in the material world and of the freely active Spirit in the whole wide creation. This, I believe, is a loftier view of the essence and purpose of Revelation than the view that the canon consisted of statutes framed for the preservation of a shortlived state system and for its elevation to a freer life in God. The older title of this canon and its very contents confirm my view. All our ancestors called it 'the Torah' (*תורה*)

i.e., the teaching of Moses from Sinai. It brings out the main meaning, while 'law' suggests something less in value ... In a word; the term 'law' does not fit the O.T. at all ... Its main purpose is: Revelation of a reality, of a real Being and its relationship to nature." 47

A few pages further on, Steinheim concludes the argument with what appears to be but really is not an antinomian statement: Mosaic doctrine, far from binding man by law, "redeemed him from law." We shall now quote this statement in full because it includes the clearest expression of Steinheim's view of the doctrine of "creation out of nothing" in its ethical implications:

"That the Revelation of the O.T. in no way was law, not even constitutional law of an ancient or modern type, has been pointed out with full evidence. It is essentially teaching. It instructs us regarding a fact, an event of such extraordinary nature, that after thorough reasoning we must admit that without such revealed information we would have no knowledge of it or only incorrect and misleading knowledge. It is this doctrine: God, the perfectly free cause of all effects in the world and of all its evolutions, created all out of nothing; everything to measure, weight and scale in eternally unchangeable law; to the organic world, raising itself gradually to the level of freer activity, He gave as regulative principle the instinct and the so-called law of nature; but man, first in dignity among all His creations on earth, whom He made in His own image, i.e., as a spirit with self-determination in conduct, capable of producing action as new cause of effects. Thus, lifting him out of the fetters of the law of nature into true freedom, He redeemed him from law. 48

Steinheim is not raging against the law in the Paulinian sense. He does not characterize law as either the cause or consequence of evil. The strict context makes clear that Steinheim does not even speak here of

moral law but law in its cosmic, indeed, metaphysical sense. The redemption from law means here no more than redemption from fatalism, from the chain of causality. It makes possible human self-determination. This leads Steinheim to a statement of the ethical implications of his position:

"... now we become aware that even though the Revelation is very much and properly speaking doctrine, nevertheless its last and main purpose is not teaching. We turn from pure doctrine to applications in life, from theory to practical application as the next step up in our inner vocation; and immediately from practical application, from the ethical command, we move to fulfillment, to the factum, the last step of its (the doctrine's) tendency, and that is the reign of the spirit in freedom, the heavenly kingdom, the messianic future of our kind." 49

Steinheim then illustrates in almost lyrical language the derivation of the principle of humanequality, from Revelation's idea of freedom: the need for practical abolition of slavery, and the creation of a theocracy founded on ethical unity according to its Israelite model. 50

Now one more aspect of Steinheim's position on "the law" needs to be clarified and it is a point whose relevancy is at last beginning to be recognized by the theoreticians of contemporary Reform as well as traditionalism in Judaism. We mentioned earlier that Steinheim refused to identify himself with either Reform or orthodoxy.* We referred to Frankel's disappointment with Steinheim's irreverence toward traditional law and Geiger's peeve at his failure to participate in the Reform movement.** Steinheim's answer is clear and forthright. Current efforts to

* See p. 40

** See p. 54-55

re-assemble the lost sheep of Israel are well-meaning but ineffective. After Mendelssohn had awakened Judaism out of its rigidity and set it in motion, efforts were made to put it back on the old track.

"A talented young rabbi, (Samson Raphael) Hirsch of Oldenburg, made this attempt. He failed because he did not take issue with Mendelssohn's separation of creed from ceremonial practice. Instead of lending at least a decent dress to the obsolete, he capriciously re-fitted it in old-fashioned style, thus adding a ridiculous exterior to an inner emptiness. How could Hirsch hope to obtain voluntary obedience under the legislation before reinstatement of the legislator? What point was there in holding up the 'Pflichten Jisroels' as long as it (the people Israel) were ashamed of the name? If only he had first restored respect to the Giver of the law, the law itself would then automatically have returned to its former dignity. First, God must be recognized; only then can we follow His inexplicable commandments. Authority rests either on internal power or external compulsion, and neither could be regained by this method. ... Our task is: To present Revelation as an exact science which we are constrained, by theoretical and practical reason, to accept. Therefore, it is for us to make the declaration, the exact opposite of Mendelssohn's, and to prove it, that the O.T. was given not to reveal a law, but the living God, and that the law comes secondary in importance, as something subordinate." 51

Steinheim repeatedly pointed out the fateful consequences of Mendelssohn's dismissal of the doctrinal elements of Judaism. The concept of Judaism as "revealed legislation" was untenable in the absence of an undergirding theological structure. How long could one persist in maintaining the revealed character of the Sinaitic legislation after disclaiming Revelation in general?

"Already among his immediate disciples the consequences of this principle affected the statutes; very soon after the God of Revelation was thrown out, the statutes were sent along since they no longer seemed to suit the God of rationalism. In the end there was nothing left to preserve the statutes but the fragile shell of custom." 52

Steinheim swung to the other extreme, stressing doctrine rather than legislation; the knowledge of God was revealed, but not His statutes. The previously quoted statement of Steinheim "that the O.T. was given not to reveal a law, but the living God, and that the law comes secondary in importance" is significantly re-phrased in his article "Weder zur Rechten noch Zur Linken."

"In Holy Scriptures God revealed Himself to man according to His Being and Will. The legislation, in its narrow sense, is something subordinate, the mere consequence." (Underlining is mine.)⁵³

What did Steinheim mean by his characterization of Biblical legislation as "mere consequence?" Whose consequence? Were the statutes the product of consequent action by God or man? The inference appears to be that the legislation was secondary to Revelation in the sense of being an effect, i.e., the human response to the reality of Revelation. After coming to know God and His will through Revelation, men articulated the laws in accordance with the understanding revealed to them. This view enables Steinheim to affirm Revelation in the Bible without having to go orthodox. Steinheim, unfortunately, does not solve the inconsistency of his own position: Why should we subordinate legal utterances of Moses to his creedal statements? Steinheim's flat assertion that God reveals Himself in Scriptures "according to His Being and Will" is so general as to become meaningless. Which passages in Scriptures reveal what about the Divine Being? And as to God's will, by what is it to be gauged if not by the very statutes and ordinances contained in the Bible? If

Mendelssohn arbitrarily dismissed the doctrinal element from Revelation, Steinheim was no less arbitrary in relegating legislation to a secondary rank on the scale of Revelation. We are left with the unanswered question, how valid is the distinction between doctrinal and legislative elements in Scriptures, the former said to be revealed and the latter considered to be secondary, a mere consequence?

It is regrettable that Steinheim did not develop more specifically his thoughts on the "secondary importance" of the cultic and legal content of Revelation. How did "secondary importance" affect the validity of Jewish cult and law today? What, if anything, was mandatory? If some of it was no longer mandatory, on what basis would it be decided? We have at least two chapters in Steinheim's work which deal with specific samples of Jewish cult and law.⁵⁴ From them we might deduce Steinheim's answers to the questions we raised.

His chapter on the Sabbath begins with a principal characterization of statutes and commandments as "external signs of inner views, as creedal symbols ... " "They are partly means, partly purposes and, throughout, realizations of the doctrine in life." Steinheim sees in the Sabbath a particularly felicitous "symbol" of Revelation since it expresses our faith in a creative God. It is a valid observance not only for the chosen people, but was instituted for all men who are convinced of the truth that God created the world out of nothing. It is also "a symbol of the exemplary holy life in the image of God, the life of spiritual energy while the body is at rest."⁵⁵ The Sabbath is finally

"a visible proclamation of the principle of freedom and redemption from the laws of nature." The Sabbath calls for rest, i.e., cessation from servile work, for the purpose of encouraging "lofty contemplation." Spiritual activity replaces servitude. Celebrating the Sabbath, man should see himself as a free moral agent, "no longer the slave of his bodily being, organic nature; but he should have the feeling of the child of God, no longer mortal but immortal spirit."⁵⁶ Therefore,

"every true Israelite celebrates one day of the week, free from manual labor, and experiences in his sacred hours of rest the inner life of the spirit, in close connection with God and in contemplation of His creation. ... This has been the meaning of the Sabbath for more than three millenia and it remains it to this day for all loyal members of the covenant people conscious of their dignity and providential mission."⁵⁷

Three facts stand out in Steinheim's discussion of the Sabbath: First, he deals entirely with its meaning. It is significant not as a ritual but as a symbol of beliefs. Second, Steinheim is not concerned with the precise form of the observance, except, in the broadest and most general sense, as one day of rest from labor during the week. Third, Steinheim entirely ignores post-Biblical and rabbinic rulings regarding the Sabbath and their possible validity as an extension of Revelation.

The chapter on the dietary laws likewise begins with a statement of purpose:

"Providence saw to it that the chosen instrument, the living organ, for the reception and transmission of the highest thought of which mankind was capable, be given the most suitable and purest material for this

function. The priest-people of God and His spiritual first-born was therefore to receive a bodily quality which would facilitate the comprehension of that one thought and not render more difficult its teaching vocation by grosser material." 58

Steinheim justifies the search for reasons even with reference to such laws which are given purely as divine commandments to be obeyed without question:

"We know how little such an artificial categorical imperative can remain in force. What is to be law for us must either be native to our conscience as the moral law or be a principal axiom in our thinking; that, however, cannot be said of the law under consideration; it must therefore be justified as well as any exact scientific proposition or every other political ordinance, if it is to gain true power and validity." 59

Thus, Steinheim develops the somewhat bizarre theory that the dietary laws were motivated by the wise intention of perfecting the physical body of Israel so that the people might discharge more easily its mission as the bearer of lofty thoughts on God, creation and freedom. Steinheim claims scientific ground for the belief that the properly balanced diet affects the emotional and spiritual capacities of the human being.⁶⁰ He adds that the dietary law was

"at that time of nascent culture and paganism of the crudest, most sensual and wicked type, a complete necessity for the bearer of the divine word. ... it is dietary law in the highest style and of the purest spiritual tendency such as natural science was unable to produce in those days." 61

This chapter on the dietary law adds an important point that clears up much of Steinheim's position on cult and law as part of Revelation. All ceremonies, including those for which no reason is given, must be

considered as symbols of higher beliefs. The very titles of the two chapters on the Sabbath and Dietary Law stress their value as symbols:

"The Sabbath with its symbolism"

"The physical diet in its higher significance"

Symbols, of course, are relative to time and culture. The idea is permanent. The same idea may in the course of time be expressed by different symbols. It is well that we, in every age, find the most appropriate symbol for those eternal truths revealed to us, even as was done in those days. This is the inference we must draw from Steinheim's discussion of the Sabbath and the Dietary Law. He recognizes value in both, earlier in history, but not a word is said by Steinheim that the same law is still binding upon Jews today.

Steinheim "enjoyed" a rather isolated position in the world of theology and philosophy. He wanted no part of the co-called "harmonizers of conflicts." The reconciliation of religion with various current schools of philosophy "from the mystic interpretation of the O.T. of the Alexandrian school to the present day"⁶² moved him to fierce condemnation. He particularly attacked Formstecher and S. Hirsch for identifying Judaism with the philosophy of Schelling and Hegel respectively.⁶³ He saved his most stinging barbs for Mendelssohn whose influence he judged to have been disastrous. Not only was Mendelssohn's rationalist "proof" of God antiquated in the light of Kant's critical philosophy,⁶⁴ but he, above all, was responsible for crippling Judaism theologically⁶⁵ by declaring it "revealed legislation" and not revealed belief. Thus he paved the way

for the conversion of his own children since reason, not Judaism, was credited for the eternal truths of natural religion. "Of Judaism little more remained besides wig and beard."⁶⁶ Geiger recalls a letter from Steinheim in the 1830's in which he said "Mendelssohn was a circumcised pagan."⁶⁷

Steinheim roundly rejected all forms of philosophic idealism⁶⁸ which were alike in making God derivative of constructive or speculative reason, incompatible with Judaism's self-revealing God, the Creator out of nothing. He identified Schleiermacher as his most anti-theological Christian contemporary who had eliminated "Revelation" from his theology by basing the new religiosity in Germany on "religious feelings" which rendered superfluous rationalistic proofs of God's existence as well as Revelation."⁶⁹

The only thinker of whom Steinheim consistently speaks with deep respect is Kant. Graupe in his brilliant article⁷⁰ proves convincingly his contention that a method such as Steinheim's would have been impossible before Kant. Steinheim's strong anti-rationalist bent, if it was not derived from Kant, certainly found in his critical philosophy a rich arsenal of argumentation useful to his purpose. Steinheim's epistemology, which plays so great a part in his rejection of rationalist schools of thought, is much indebted to Kantian method and even terminology, as Graupe has shown. His distinction between "Denken & Erkennen" was borrowed from Kant and equated by Steinheim with the distinction between a priori and a posteriori knowledge, paralleling the distinction between

speculative reason and critical reason. Kant's critic of the proofs of God left Steinheim no alternative but that of a posteriori induction.⁷¹ Yet, Steinheim decisively draws the line where he must differ from Kant on major theological ground.

He recognized the great weakness in the Kantian God concept. After Kant's destruction of the proofs of God

"there was but little consolation in the postulate of practical reason. ... The God of ethics, this postulate of practical reason, occupied the throne. ... God exists because an unmediated and unmotivated moral law exists. There would be no virtue, if there were no God!"⁷²

The postulated God idea would have true value only if it had the dignity of preceding the categorical imperative instead of being derived therefrom.⁷³

Steinheim never lost sight of his deepest conviction that religious faith, based on Revelation, was incompatible with philosophy: "Either philosophy is swallowed up by Revelation or in reverse."⁷⁴ He conceived of himself as a theologian first and foremost.

Steinheim did not have the satisfaction of seeing a serious development of his thoughts in any major work of his contemporaries. There was hardly a passing reference here and there.⁷⁵ Even the critical discussions and reviews of Steinheim's work in scholarly periodicals were few in number and generally not by scholars or thinkers of the first rank.

One of the first reviews very briefly took issue with Steinheim's concept of Revelation and, referring to its anti-rationalism, said: "The price is too high."⁷⁶

Eliaz Grunbaum, three years later, at least gave Steinheim the benefit of a closely reasoned critical review in which he likewise rejects Steinheim's anti-rationalism.⁷⁷ Aside from a point-by-point refutation of Steinheim's line of reasoning, from the point of view of his own rationalist position, Grunbaum offers two strong points of criticism which must indeed stand: It is not enough to argue for the possibility of Revelation, which is not seriously questioned; what we need to know is whether it actually happened. Steinheim neglected to deal with the historical factors in the problem. Still more important than proving the fact of Revelation is defining the contents of Revelation. Steinheim fails to give us adequate criteria for the validation of content.⁷⁸

Steinheim's work, wide ranging and repetitious, is not a model of organization; his style is cumbersome and at times exasperating. Yet, it is a mine of highly suggestive thought. It probes deeply the theological ground of Judaism. It focuses, as no other work of modern times, on the concept of Revelation in Judaism. Of the many approaches he made to the question of validating Revelation, the most enduring and most relevant today are:

The insistence that there is in religion a dimension which does not square with the categories of man's reason; that the sources of religion go beyond reason and beyond the ethical impulse. There is even a foreshadowing of the existential approach in his reliance on the incontrovertible assurance from the depths of man's consciousness that

he is a free agent. His sense of freedom derives from a deeper source than the constructions of speculative reasons which argue for predestination or fatalism or whatever form of determinism based on the law of causality. Since Revelation confirms the "freedom" of the sovereign Creator and the moral freedom of man, we choose it as the superior truth. It is the truth we live by, superior because we live by it. Thus, the idea of God as the self-revealing free Creator out of nothing is not merely a logical induction or postulate of reason, but a truth we are existentially driven to embrace. Yet, this should not be mistaken as any disposition on Steinheim's part to make "the leap of faith"⁷⁹ or to draw the contents of faith out of "feeling," or to accept it on "authority." Reason may be "captured" but it is not dispensed with. Steinheim's anti-rationalism rejects reason as its own source of knowledge, but does not hesitate to employ "critical" reason as an instrument with which to probe reality. Writing of the Jew's approach to faith, he insists:

"His faith is, as it should be, based on inquiry, on induction. He will believe only those conclusions which inquiry and induction force him to accept even as the thinker must take on faith his undemonstrable principles, and the chemist his atomic weights. ... Thus, reason suffices in everything that goes by the name of truth and bliss of soul in faith, as the organ of comprehension and as the highest arbiter which speaks the final, decisive verdict."⁸⁰

Another approach to the validation of Revelation which has gained more respectful attention in recent decades, particularly among historians of religion and biblical scholarship, is Steinheim's argument of

the "suddenness," the unprecedented arrival of Judaism's basic doctrine upon the scene of history. Against a wholly antagonistic environment, without known evolution, monotheism appeared. More recently, biblical scholars such as Albright and Yechezkiel Kaufman and theologians such as Leo Baeck have in one form or the other argued for the mystery of Jewish monotheism "bursting upon the scene."

Finally, Steinheim correctly recognized that Reform without theological dimensions would be futile. If only the leaders of Neo-orthodoxy and Reform had seen as clearly as did Steinheim that no Jewish religious renaissance could be completed without theological foundations. It has taken a full century of development in both movements to convince us of the irrelevancy of Reform's ingenious innovations and Neo-orthodoxy's romantic restorations outside the living soil of belief. Steinheim's prophetic insight has lost none of its cogency: The new will remain as empty as the old had become, without faith in a self-revealing God.

After long years of neglect and almost universal rejection by contemporaries on various grounds, even that of Jewish ignorance,⁸¹ Steinheim is rising to the prominent place in Jewish thought that is due him. The long denied recognition is at last coming to "the German Philo"⁸² perhaps because there is truth in Graetz's judgment: "No one at his time ... recognized the essence of Judaism as profoundly as did he."⁸³

5. NACHMAN KROCHMAL

(1785 - 1840)

The unbroken continuity of Judaism, as a more or less unified ethnic-religious community, has been treated by some as one of history's self-evident miracles. Jewry's power to resist fragmentation into separate denominations seems like one of history's great mysteries. There were times when the conflict of parties pointed to the imminent disintegration of Jewish unity. Somehow, reintegration took place. This "somehow" calls for an explanation. One answer, perhaps the most valid, is the fact that always, in times of cultural transition, personalities appeared on the scene who towered above their generation in learning; who, by their full grasp of classic Jewish sources and contemporary thought, were able to command the respect of traditionalists and modernists alike. They synthesized the faith of Judaism with current science and philosophy, thus creating the intellectual bridge over which Judaism could pass into the new age.

Nachman Krochmal was one of those great intellectual synthesists. He was at home in all branches of Jewish learning: Bible, Talmud and the whole range of rabbinic literature; he was also thoroughly familiar with the other great intellectual streams of Judaism, the Kabbala and Jewish medieval philosophy. In addition, he mastered German, French, Latin, and acquired a broad enough range of Western science and philosophy to become one of the founding fathers of Haskala. A man of personal piety, modest in his bearing and adored by many disciples,¹ he was nearly

invulnerable to vilification which so often is the lot of path-breaking thinkers.²

The new path he opened was the historical approach. It added a new dimension to the understanding of Judaism.

Perhaps the shift from theology to history was providential. A further sharpening of theological issues might have led to a permanent split in Judaism. The historical approach created a new common frame of reference, a wider perspective in which antagonistic movements could be seen and studied together in their relationship and mutual contribution. Moreover, men who were deeply divided in their religious ideology could continue a scholarly dialogue whose focus had shifted from Jewish beliefs to the Jewish people.

Krochmal's major work *אור החיים* appeared posthumously in 1851,³ fully eleven years after the author's untimely death at the age of 55. The work was already under preparation in 1836, as is evident from a letter to Luzzatto referring to his hopes of publishing the first part of it in the following year.⁴ Some of its ideas, however, began to spread perhaps decades earlier through his disciples⁵ and correspondents.

Krochmal's adaptation of the title of Maimonides' great work suggests the general objective he had set himself. As Maimonides had attempted the harmonization of Judaism with the then dominant Aristotelian philosophy, so he would seek a reconciliation between the Jewish heritage and the secular science and philosophy of the modern age. But here all comparison ends. For, Krochmal's work differs radically from that of his medieval model. Maimonides' "Moreh" limits itself to the

philosophical, and especially the metaphysical aspects of Judaism. It is unmistakably doctrinal in character, a work of systematic theology or philosophy. Krochmal's "Moreh," on the other hand, takes in the full spectrum of Jewish existence. He presents the Jewish people in its origin and development and analyses its characteristic spiritual tendencies at various stages of history. Far from abstracting a system of Jewish ideas, he aims at a multi-dimensional portrayal of the Jewish people as an organic historic phenomenon, acting and reacting within mankind; he sees political events, social institutions, law, ethics, creed and literature developing in historic periodicity.

It is beyond the scope of our study to examine the question if and to what extent Krochmal was an Hegelian.⁶ The indisputable fact is that Krochmal's mind was steeped in German philosophic idealism -- Schelling, Fichte and Hegel.⁷ Without delimiting the extent of Krochmal's philosophic borrowing, we may say that his basic philosophic assumptions correspond to those of Hegel in his fusion of philosophy and history, in his view of history as metaphysics and of metaphysics as history, in his overall view of the spirit of humanity evolving historically as an aspect of the eternally evolving absolute Spirit. But, in his concept of God as absolute Spirit manifesting itself in the world, Krochmal seems to lean as much upon Schelling as on the Kabbalah with its emanationist aspects. Finally, maintaining the transcendence of God along with His immanence, Krochmal preserves the essentially Jewish characteristic of the God concept.

Religion, according to Krochmal, is a universal phenomenon rooted in the consciousness of the spiritual in the human mind. This is the common element in all religions despite their doctrinal differences. From the highest to the lowest, every religion represents a turning toward the spiritual reality underlying the world of finite and transitory things.⁸

Man can perceive spiritual substances only in connection with physical beings. These spiritual substances -- all of them -- have their common ground of existence in God.⁹ There is no true reality beside God. This principal truth that God alone is the Source of all reality is further emphasized by monotheists when they attribute to divine Revelation all commandments, even those which may be rationally determined by man's own reason.¹⁰

Philosophic inquiry and religious faith deal with the identical truth,¹¹ the difference being that philosophy employs conceptual forms of expression which are intelligible to trained thinkers only, while religion expresses itself in representation, symbolic forms, which are better understood and appreciated by the mass of mankind.¹²

The conditions for Revelation were created by God in the very nature of man. For the religious person perceives God not speculatively but directly, through "divine knowledge implanted in his heart and bound up within his soul."¹³ This consciousness of God as the only true source of reality, though imbedded in the human mind and implanted in the heart as a divine endowment, nevertheless needs to be developed and

activated by education, study and training in the performance of mitzvot from childhood on.¹⁴

Thus Krochmal reaches his definition of "revealed religion," ג'//מכ-ג)
ה"ג"ג"ג. It is "knowledge of the absolute truth -- God -- knowledge of everything that derives its existence and maintenance from Him -- the Spiritual -- as it is implanted in the consciousness and in the heart of every man ..."¹⁵

Krochmal offers a metaphysical explanation for Revelation as an event or process. The explanation is based on the connection between the divine Spirit and the human mind, a connection which, at its deepest level, consists of the actual identity between the Spirit, its consciousness and its manifestation of self-revelation. The Spirit that thinks and comprehends is identical with the content of thought and comprehension:

"From these general considerations we arrive at the realization that, with reference to the Spirit, its essence, (למנצח) its cognition (למחשבה) and its self-manifestation (למראה) are not three separate entities. Rather, it is fundamental to the Spirit's essence and spiritual illumination that it becomes manifest to itself and simultaneously reveals itself to others by one and the same action."¹⁶

Krochmal illustrates the idea with an analogy: "It is comparable to physical light, revealing itself and simultaneously illuminating its environment all at once."¹⁷

Krochmal sees no conflict between his general philosophic concept of divine Spirit, reflecting itself in the human mind, and Israel's specific, historic experience of Revelation. Thus, Krochmal refers to

the theophany at Sinai as a marvellous fact¹⁸ and affirms the possibility of prophetic foresight. However, he rationalizes prophecy somewhat in so far as he distinguishes between short-range predictions, in which prophecy can be rather specific and detailed, and predictions of the distant future of which the prophets speak only in terms of broad principles.¹⁹

Closely related to any consideration of Revelation is the question of Israel's uniqueness as a people. Krochmal recognizes in every nation the endowment of a spiritual substance, rooted in the absolute Spirit, a distinctive national genius which expresses itself in all aspects of its life and history. According to the quality of this spirit, a nation is preserved.²⁰

The fundamental difference between Israel and other nations lies in their relationship with the absolute Spirit. Whereas other nations are related to various spiritual substances which are but derivative, partial aspects of the absolute Spirit, Israel alone is directly connected with the absolute Spirit itself. Israel's spirit of nationhood is not derivative from created spiritual substances as is true of other nations. But, the Spirit flows into the people from the "in-dwelling Presence" itself.²¹ This accounts for the eternity of Israel, a unique historical phenomenon among the nations. Though the laws of rise and decline, which govern the history of all nations, likewise operate in Jewish history, Israel alone has the power of renewal because of their grasp of the absolute Spirit in its purity and their faithful attachment to it. This, also, is the metaphysical explanation for Israel's unique monotheism as distinguished from the polytheism of all other nations.²²

All other nations, in view of their direction toward a particular spiritual substance, deified partial aspects of reality and thus remained spiritually limited. Israel alone, grounded in the absolute Spirit, recognized the One and only God in Whom all reality is unified, the totality of the Spirit of which other nations could see only a fragmentary image.²³

Krochmal's stress on the indispensability of Israel spoke to the heart of a generation (especially in Eastern Europe) which combined intense loyalty to Judaism with the cosmopolitanism^{an} of the new age of science and philosophy. "What they sought was a warrant in reason itself justifying the permanence of Judaism and its future."²⁴ Perhaps it is incorrect to call Krochmal "the originator of the idea of the mission of the Jewish people,"²⁵ but if not the originator, he certainly was the most original and profound theoretician of that idea.

If the truth with which a man tries to validate his faith may be considered the truth of which he is most deeply convinced, then, for Krochmal, the cardinal truth is the uniqueness of Israel as an eternal people. Historical continuity and a special spiritual endowment are the twin aspects of Israel's uniqueness.²⁶ Israel's unique powers of survival derive from that people's unique grasp of the absolute Spirit. This knowledge was not derived from speculation, but directly received from the Absolute in an immediacy of relationship for which there is no parallel. On the basis of both aspects of Israel's uniqueness -- its eternity and God-centered spirit -- one may postulate an act of God, a

unique relationship with the Absolute which accounts for the metaphysical origin of whatever Revelation Israel received.

Thus, Krochmal points from history to the God of history. His enduring contribution to modern Jewish theology is the reminder that Judaism is more than a religion in the creedal sense. With Krochmal we see again the Jewish people as the creative source of its religion, a people whose history points beyond history to the realm of metaphysics.

At a time when men like Zung despaired of the continuity of Jewish life, Krochmal set himself the task of finding a rationale for the survival of Judaism in the modern age. His spiritual anchor is the classic theological position of Judaism: The one God of the universe Who revealed Himself in a special relationship with Israel. Krochmal "modernizes" this fundamental doctrine by recasting it in the idiom of philosophic idealism and constructing a theory of history whose pattern compels the assumption of higher guidance -- divine direction. To the extent that history has a higher purpose, God may be postulated as the guiding power behind history. Likewise, if the uniqueness of Israel is accepted as an established fact, divine acts may be postulated as the only possible explanation of Israel's uniqueness. In other words, Israel is validated as "God's chosen people" and we might even go so far and say as the "recipient of Revelation."²⁷

But new difficulties arise: If Israel is the people of Revelation, who is the authentic voice of Israel? Assuming that Israel has unique

association with the absolute Spirit, what does that Spirit say? In a theological or ethical debate between various Jewish prophets or sages, who among them has the genuine Revelation? On what basis may we decide that one Jewish document is revealed and the other not? By what standards or criteria can we choose between conflicting products of the Jewish spirit? How, for example, would Krochmal decide between Jeremiah and the "false" prophets?

Krochmal would not deny *קול מן השמים*, but the concept of Revelation for which he reasons philosophically is not a Revelation to but within the human spirit. If Revelation is seen as "divine knowledge implanted in man's heart and bound up in his soul" it can no longer be treated as an objective event but only as a subjective phenomenon. On what basis shall we recognize the claim of some individuals that they are voicing God's spirit "implanted within" while rejecting similar claims of others? Krochmal would point to the Jewish people's consciousness as the equivalent of the authentic Spirit, the criterion by which the individual may determine whether his own "voice within" is truly God's.

Thus, Krochmal points to the national spirit or genius of Israel²⁸ evolving in history as the primary channel of Revelation. We might say that Krochmal's historical approach validates the people rather than the documents of Revelation. To put it plainly: Krochmal would uphold the belief that God spoke to and through Israel, but we are no more certain than before as to what He said and by what criteria we may identify

the authentic utterances of God out of the vast chorus of Jewish voices claiming to speak for Him. Though Krochmal does not explicitly say so, the inference would be, *vox populi Iudaeci vox dei*, the views that have prevailed within Jewry represent the divine Spirit immanent within the people.

6. ABRAHAM GEIGER
(1810-1874)

The 19th century produced a number of great Jewish personalities. Of few, however, can it be said that Jewish life or Judaism would have been significantly different without their contribution. Abraham Geiger must be counted among those few. A brilliant and productive scholar, he was also a powerful figure in the arena of public affairs and controversy. The history of Reform Judaism is unthinkable without the rabbinic conferences in mid-century of which he was the spearhead and leading spokesman. His editorship of scientific journals and authorship of numerous articles and books spread his reputation far and wide. While Samuel Hirsch gained the epithet of "philosopher" and David Phillipson that of "historian" of the Reform movement, Geiger stands out as its theologian. His influence may be considered decisive upon the development of liberal Jewish thought for nearly a century and, even now, has by no means vanished from the Jewish scene.

The work which best conveys his theological position is characteristically entitled "Judaism and its History."¹ His primary consideration is not the Jewish people, but its spiritual product, "Judaism," and he sees it in the perspective of history as something evolving.

Some of the principal ideas of "Judaism and its History" were stated by Geiger nearly two decades earlier. In a series of lectures, delivered in Breslau "for students of Jewish theology" and published under the title "Introduction into the Study of Jewish Theology (1849),"² he develops two

basic themes: Judaism is the work of genius and its history is that of an evolution from a given core ("Kern").³

An outlook which has dominated the minds for milleniaⁿ₁ without coercion, Geiger argues, must be based upon some unshakable truth. It is characteristic of genius to grasp the truth not logically, step by step, but by way of a sudden exaltation, intellectual insight, which is Revelation. "Finally, historical religion is not something that remains stationary at whatever level it was once given, but develops from the given core."⁴

Geiger points to the Bible as evidence for his theory of a spiritual core developing and expanding within Judaism. Although composed over a period of 600-1,000 years and the variety of its literature notwithstanding, the Bible is "in its totality permeated by one spirit."⁵ Geiger concludes his lectures of 1849 with an outline of Jewish history in four major periods:

1. Period of Revelation, marked by internal creativity, until end of biblical time.
2. Period of Tradition, in which biblical doctrine is applied to life, until the close of the Talmud.
3. Period of rigid Legalism, bent upon preservation without change of the Jewish heritage, until middle of the 18th century.
4. Period of Criticism, intellectual liberation through rational inquiry and scientific research, coupled with attempts at renewal.⁶

Geiger's "Judaism and its History" further develops these ideas

and revises the scheme of historical cycles to bring out more sharply his mature, theological views.*

His theological springboard -- and one of the dominant themes of the book -- is the manifestation of a universalist mentality of which Geiger sees evidence from the very beginning in Jewish history. As far back as the reign of Salomon, the King's dedication prayer (I Kings 8.14 ff) with its reference to the stranger who might come to worship at the new Temple, shows Judaism's

"grand view beyond itself, beyond its own limitation, a striving which manifests the fact that the idea in Judaism is mightier than its vessel which originally contained it; it is as though everywhere the word of the ancient sages rang out: 'Break the vessel and keep its precious content.'" 7

Nationalism, according to Geiger, is a limitation, a form of narrowness. Judaism's rise above the narrow confines of particularism is a spiritual break-through, signal evidence of a unique power at work in Jewish history: "Thus Judaism confronts us ... how totally different in form is this religion as it comes into the world, how unique in antiquity."⁸ We note a characteristic difference of accent between Krochmal and Geiger despite close theological affinity. The uniqueness of Israel, its distinctive spirit, is also Krochmal's point of departure, but while the Galician sage invariably speaks of the people of Israel (דניאל) in its rise, fall and renewal, Geiger points to the destiny of Judaism in its progressive unfolding.

*See p.87-88

With Krochmal we see the people evolving, not the Spirit. The full truth has already been revealed in biblical religion and does not change. It is the source of all truth for all time. The progress is in the capacity of the Jewish people to grasp the contents of scriptural truth in ever purer conceptual form from one historical cycle to the next.⁹ In other words, the evolution of which Krochmal speaks is an increasing sophistication of the people, a refinement of their perception of scriptural truth which was religiously conveyed to Israel, at its very beginning, in the form of images and representation. The change that takes place in the course of time, according to Krochmal, is in the form in which the Jewish people understands the truth, i.e., an ever growing realization of the identity of religious truth with that of philosophy.

With Geiger, on the other hand, we see Judaism itself undergoing an evolution. There is a spiritual growth and development from "a given core." The change which Geiger notes is in the quality and scope of the truth of Judaism, a rise from particularism to universalism. For Geiger the passage of time manifests an advance of Judaism. Except for the unparalleled flashes of prophetic insight, which attained heights that "even at a later time we must look up to,"¹⁰ Geiger makes a presumption in favor of modernity. We are rising to higher spiritual levels from age to age.

Considering Israel's spiritual eminence, in contrast with its lack of distinction in science, art or political organization, Geiger is driven to suspect the presence of "some inner power impelling it to the creation

of such an outlook.¹¹ We face "a riddle in world history."¹² What is its explanation?

Geiger's answer follows in the very next chapter entitled "Revelation." Judaism's "favored bearers, the organs of its idea of religion," are the prophets. The prophets "impress us, allow us to recognize in them* the movement of a higher spirit."¹³ "Not two prophets utter the prophetic word in the same form, yet all of them are upheld by one general character, one great idea."¹⁴

The prophets are manifestation of "a higher power which stimulated them, which would not allow them to remain silent ... a moral, spiritual exaltation, which raised them to a height which even at a later time, we must look up to."¹⁵

In the absence of any other adequate explanation of the sudden emergence of prophecy in an environment which anything but encouraged it, Geiger postulates a metaphysical core of spontaneous creativity immanent in the human soul: "We approach here, at the deepest level of the human soul, beyond which we cannot penetrate, an original power creatively acting of its own accord without the stimulus of external impulse."¹⁶

Geiger then restates his theory of a national genius, comparable in its inexplicability to the individual genius of great discoverers, scientists, or poets. Genius is a sort of higher vision, not acquired by practice but an innate endowment. The Greeks had such a genius in the

*cf. 1st edition "through them"

field of art. Now, asks Geiger:

"Does not the Jewish people likewise possess such a genius, a genius of religion? Is it not also an original power which enlightened its eyes so that it gained more insight in the higher life of the spirit, more vividly realized the close relationship between the human spirit and the universal Spirit ('Allgeist') ... more clearly recognized the deeper moral nature in man ... ?"

At this point, Geiger comes close to a humanism which would locate the source of spirituality and moral values in man himself, but he shrinks from this conclusion and reasserts a breakthrough of supernatural Spirit:

"If it is so (i.e., if the above holds true), then its explanation is the intimate contact of the individual spirit with the universal Spirit, the illumination of individual spirits by the power which permeates everything so that they (i.e., the individual spirits) broke through their finite limitations. It is, let us not shrink from the word, REVELATION (sic), namely such as manifested itself within the whole people." 17

Not all Greeks turned into artists, yet only the Greek people was enabled to produce men such as Phydias or Praxiteles. Similarly, in Judaism, not all Jews turn into prophets, yet they are the people of prophecy from which favored organs emerged. Geiger uses a felicitous simile: "It is as though the sparks of light had been scattered which were then gathered up in a single flame by those favored with superiority." He adds: "No grape will grow on a thorn-bush nor prophets emerge from a forsaken people." 18

The theory of an inspired people Geiger finds substantiated in the very nature and historical origin of Judaism. Judaism is not the product of a few individuals, but of the whole people. God is not the God of Moses or the prophets, but of the patriarchs, i.e., the God of the whole tribe. The gift of deeper spiritual insight is "the Revelation

that lived hidden in the totality until it was concentrated in individuals as focal points.

"Judaism originated in the people of Revelation ... Here we locate the fundamental ground, an illumination emanating from a higher Spirit, unexplainable, not the outgrowth of an evolution to begin with, though afterwards being further developed. Yet from the very start it exists as something complete like any new creation proceeding from the universal Spirit." ¹⁹

Geiger would not render a "dogmatic definition" of Revelation, but considers it "essentially identical in meaning with contact between man's reason and the deep, ultimate ground (or primary cause, 'Urgrund') of everything." ²⁰

The human factor, Geiger points out, was not overlooked in the traditional view of Revelation: "High, as the old sages exalted Revelation, they never denied its connection with a human endowment." ²¹ The prophets qualified for their task by their high moral character and sensitivity to the divine in them: The prophet is "not a mere megaphone through which passes the word without himself being conscious of it, but a man ... touching divinity and thus himself sensitive to it." ²²

In conclusion, Geiger expresses agreement with Judah Halevi and Maimonides. Both asserted a special human aptitude corresponding to the divine light reaching them in the moment of Revelation.

He defines Judaism as a religion of Revelation which consists of the sum total of individually experienced Revelations, a religion which "originated in such divine insights and integrated the visions, that were seen, into something whole." ²³

Geiger's theological task, more pressing upon him than on Krochmal, was to formulate a rationale for Jewish continuity in the fact of a tidal wave of assimilation that swept over German Jewry. The challenge was two-fold: the rising skepticism of the scientific age (though in this respect the congregations generally remained less disturbed than their university trained rabbis) and, for the time being, the more serious threat of the pull of Christianity.

Geiger tried to meet the challenge with three ideas:

1. Judaism is a religion that grows with the age. It is a development from a "given core," not a static system of dogmas. There is theological flexibility, a progressive "elan" in Judaism.

2. The distinctiveness of the Jewish people is the endowment with a national genius for religion. It is the people destined to play the pioneer role in the history of religion.

3. The wave of the future is religious universalism. No religion is better qualified for it than the Jewish people. Theologically, Judaism has moved in that direction from the very beginning. Historically, the Jewish people have been uniquely prepared to carry out their mission as mankind's teacher of a universalist monotheism.

Part III of his "Judaism and its History" (published in 1871, only three years before his death) ends on this note of the Jewish people's mission in spreading Judaism's universalism. He summarizes all of Jewish history as the gradual escape from enforced or self-imposed isolation. From this point of view, Geiger reorganizes Jewish history in three major periods:

"At first, Judaism was identical with national life. Then, it became a Judaism within mankind, but isolated, oppressed, -- and thus preserved its treasures. Now, a free Judaism is called upon to become effective within humanity and in closest contact with it to unfold its spirit, receiving and contributing." 24

The key to Geiger's theological system is the concept of a unique religious endowment granted unto the Jewish people. This endowment is spoken of both as "a given core" from which Judaism grew and developed and a national "genius" for religion which distinguished the people as a whole and is personified in the prophets. Geiger frequently calls the Jewish people the people of Revelation, inasmuch as "the given core" and the "genius" for prophecy are both aspects of Revelation.

How does he validate this claim?

The evidence is in history. Geiger claims for the Jewish heritage an extraordinary continuity and essential identity of spirit. A certain unitary character is preserved by Judaism even as it grows and develops. His example is the Bible. In spite of all differences and a time span of a millenium between the earliest and latest portions of Biblical literature, one Spirit permeates it all.²⁵ Likewise, the prophets, however they might differ, are devoted to one great idea.²⁶ Now the important, the crucial, question is what is that one Spirit that runs through the Bible, and what is that one great idea uniting all prophets? Even more to the point is the further question: Who determines what it is? On what basis is this or that idea identified as the one?

Geiger identifies the one idea with the Biblical God-concept as he sees it -- and it contains more than one idea:

The absolute unity of God "which echoes through all writings of Judaism" (p. 20).²⁷ His Holiness, "the consciousness of which surpasses all else" (p. 22). The God Who is almighty, gracious, compassionate, long-suffering, great in mercy and faithfulness, "which is the basic theme that runs through all of the doctrines of Judaism" (p. 22). Thus, Geiger lists a number of other doctrines (such as God's justice and love, His relationship with mortal man, the creaturehood of man in the image of God, etc., etc.). All of these ideas, he claims, belong to the permanent core of Judaism.

What validation is there for this claim except Geiger's say-so? Geiger makes one point: the continuity of these ideas. They all "permeate all of Judaism" or "run through it." Assuming for the moment that the above stated doctrines actually have enjoyed the continuity Geiger claims for them, are these the only ideas of which that could be said? Could not considerable continuity be claimed also for "Kashrut" and the idea of animal sacrifice from the Bible right through the traditional prayers of today? On what basis, other than his own arbitrary judgment, does Geiger select these and not other doctrines from among all those that might boast of continuity in Judaism?

Besides, it is difficult to see how the mere "continuity" of one or the other idea in Judaism validates it as Revelation. By the same token, why should a new ethical or spiritual truth, by inference, be excluded from Revelation? Does lack of continuity or lack of consistency with the past disqualify a truth from consideration as Revelation? Insistence on continuity is a logical contradiction of the concept of spiritual

evolution and progress. Indeed, the most authentic element of prophecy is its novelty and revolutionary character -- precisely its unprecedented nature.

Moreover, can the Bible, or even the prophets, really be reduced to one core idea? Are the books of Ezra and Jonah of one spirit? Is it one great idea which inspired in Isaiah the vision of beating swords into plowshares and in Joel the exact opposite?

It is obviously Geiger's premise that Revelation should somehow be all of one spirit, but why should Revelation have such a unitary character? Why cannot Revelation conform to a variety of needs, relative to time, place and situation? In any event, Geiger's selection of several doctrines as representing the one idea of the Bible is arbitrary and wide open to question.

Geiger withholds confirmation of specific documents as Revelation but he speaks of "the people of Revelation" endowed with a special genius for religion. Now with reference to Israel's "genius," Geiger can point to the unique phenomenon of men known as prophets. The implied validation of their divine genius is the fact that there is no historic parallel for this phenomenon. But is the uniqueness of an endowment ipso facto proof of its divine origin?

Finally, Geiger's enthusiasm over the people of Revelation, and the uniqueness of prophecy becomes irrelevant as long as the contents of Revelation are not identified. This leads us to the fatal weakness of Geiger's approach, a weakness which the Reform movement inherited. It is

the refusal or inability of identifying the specific contents of Revelation. It is not enough to select arbitrarily this or that idea as a sample of religious genius. If Revelation is to be taken seriously, its content must be specified. If certain portions of documents, hitherto believed to be revealed, are suddenly declared "not revealed" while others remain "revealed," we are entitled to ask on what basis do you make your selection, what are your criteria for validating some and invalidating others? It cannot be said that Geiger succeeded in developing such criteria. He arouses our pride in belonging to "the people of Revelation," but does not help us determine the contents of Revelation.

Geiger cites Judah Halevi in support of the doctrine of Israel as "a people of Revelation, or, "the religious heart of mankind." Yet, Geiger's agreement with Halevi regarding the religious genius of Israel should not obscure the vast difference between the German rabbi and the Castilian poet. Judah Halevi not only affirmed Israel as the people of Revelation, but specifically identified the Revelation as *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* in its traditional sense. Geiger, on the other hand, takes pride in belonging to the people of Revelation, but leaves undetermined the contents of that Revelation.

7. MORITZ LAZARUS

(1824 - 1903)

It would be difficult to find a pair of thinkers less likely, at first glance, to justify comparison than Krochmal and Lazarus. Yet, there is a connection. Despite all differences in personality, career and milieu, they are unmistakably related in their response to the same historic challenge. Both reflect modern Judaism's groping for adjustment to German philosophy in the 19th century. Both respond philosophically to the rise of nationalism.

Lazarus was one of the most admired leaders of German Jewry. Years after Kaufmann Kohler had settled in America, he still spoke with reverence of the unforgettable impression Lazarus had made on him:

"Never, as long as I live, will I forget the deep impression made on me when, on that memorable 4th of July, 1869, he, as president of the Jewish Synod at Leipzig, at the concluding session, addressed a large and distinguished assembly of rabbis and laymen ... in language as classical in form as it was prophetic in spirit."¹

Lazarus was the fulfillment of German Jewry's dream. He embodied the fusion of Jewish and German culture, a Jew in religion, a German by nationality.

Krochmal, on the other hand, living in an all-Jewish environment, was undivided in his Jewish folk feeling. Shunning official position and devoting his entire life to the pursuit of study within a circle of beloved disciples, he approximated, according to all appearances, the

image of the traditional Jewish scholar-saint. Yet he, too, had blended modern science and philosophy with traditional Jewish learning. He was far from insensitive to the challenge of emancipation and the lure of assimilation. The mere title of his life-time work *אורח חיים* suggests awareness of the spiritual crisis through which Jewry was passing in Eastern Europe no less than in Germany.

Krochmal and Lazarus faced up to the same basic questions: What was the meaning of Jewish existence in this modern age? Why should Jews persist as a separate and distinguishable entity? They differed in their answers. Krochmal envisaged the continuity of the Jewish people with its own language, culture and way of life, an organic community, a people among peoples, persisting as a separate identifiable historical force.

Traditional teachers of Judaism base their confidence in the Jewish future on God's covenant with Israel as revealed in Scriptures. Krochmal apparently felt the need to "strengthen" the traditional answer with a theory of history which he derived from the philosophy of German idealism. He chose the idiom of this philosophic movement with which to re-formulate the traditional faith of Judaism. It was essentially a job of recasting fundamental Jewish doctrine in new philosophic terms. Israel was endowed with special genius for the apprehension of the Absolute as demonstrated in history by Israel's fidelity to pure religion -- pure insofar as it was conceived in terms of an ethical monotheism, free of images and material representations. The preservation of the Jewish people was

essential to the spiritual elevation of mankind. Krochmal wrote in Hebrew, enriching it with a new philosophic vocabulary. Succeeding generations, not unreasonably, could claim Krochmal as a philosophic patron of Jewish nationalism, a precursor of cultural zionism.

Lazarus arrived at a different formula for Jewish survival. Unlike Krochmal he capitulated to the forces of national and cultural assimilation, though not to the extent of favoring the disappearance of the Jew. On the contrary he, too, strove for a new statement of the meaning of Jewish existence. He sought within the framework of liberal Judaism a rationale for Jewish continuity not as a people, but as a religious community. Israel's uniqueness, he found, was its ethical universalism, the peak of mankind's spiritual evolution.

The Kantian idea of the good represented, in Lazarus' view, the highest ethical concept in the world of philosophy. He proceeded to show how easily Jewish ethical principles could be recast in Kantian terms. ("Kantish zu reden").² For all intents and purposes, Lazarus equated the ethics of Judaism with the ethics of Kant.³ The preservation of Judaism thus appeared justified chiefly because it was a superior ethical system, identical with the ethics of Kant.

One could easily point to many differences between Lazarus, the German university professor, and Krochmal, the Galician maskil; but these should not obscure the common ground between them. Both sought and found new meaning for Jewish continuity. Both found it necessary to resort to German philosophy for that purpose. For both the pivotal issue was not

the existence of God or Revelation but Jewish peoplehood. At this point, we might include Geiger as well in our considerations. Few indeed were the 19th century thinkers of Judaism who were not impelled to redefine the terms of Jewish continuity in view of the historic coincidence of the rise of European nationalism with the emergence of the Jew from the Ghetto. Steinheim was among those few who seemed to be able to ignore the problem of Jewish peoplehood. Krochmal, Geiger, Lazarus recognized it as the central issue.

If French Jews became Frenchmen, Italian Jews Italians, and German Jews Germans -- what remained of the Jewish people? Would Jews be a nation or a denomination? Whether people or denomination, how did Jews differ from others? What was unique about the Jews?

Krochmal was most emphatic in his stress upon Jewish peoplehood as an enduring reality in the flux of history. He explained the unique survival power of the Jewish people in metaphysical terms. Jews were an eternal people because they alone were spiritually attached to the Absolute.

Geiger went far in reducing Judaism to a religion only. But he did not go all the way. Basic to his view of history was the metaphysical core, Israel's genius, a divine endowment that made the Jewish people the priest-people among the nations.

Lazarus' anti-nationalism was not without its inner contradictions. He, more than any of the thinkers under discussion, devoted a major portion of his life to a scientific exploration of national consciousness as a cultural and psychological phenomenon.⁴ Surely he saw no wrong

in nationalism per se. He proudly identified himself with German nationalism,⁵ yet objected to nationalism in its Jewish form. His rejection of Jewish nationalism, it seems, was largely inspired by political considerations, by his commitment to the cause of emancipation which required the integration of the Jew into the national life of the non-Jewish environment.⁶ Yet, philosophically, Lazarus was surprisingly accommodating to Jewish nationalism. He recognized in the development of Judaism a permanent tension and interplay of "national-particularistic and humane-universal" tendencies.⁷ These opposite tendencies, however, should not be regarded as absolutely antithetical. On the contrary, argued Lazarus, in Judaism these tendencies are complementary since Jewish particularism serves universal ideals.

"It was part of Jewish particularism that the soul of the people was filled with the universal idea, with the promise, the hope, the requirement that mankind be a unit in its highest goal."⁸

To Lazarus belongs the merit of exploding the narrow view of Judaism as being merely "religion" or theology or literature. He sees it as a full-bodied civilization animated in all of its parts by a certain spirit. His avowed object is to abstract this national spirit from the totality of Jewish life. He therefore includes among his sources for the ethics of Judaism not only literature and religious practices, but also Israel's historical experience⁹ and the whole network of the Jewish community with its organizations and institutions.¹⁰

As founder of the Völkerpsychologie, a new branch of social psychology, Lazarus propounded the theory that nations, like individuals, each

bore the stamp of a peculiar character and spirituality more or less transparent in all aspects of its life and culture. Again and again Lazarus refers to the national spirit of the Jewish people. Judaism is to be understood not merely out of literary sources but out of the "Gesamtgeist des Volksstammes," the "Volksseele," even the "Volksgemüt."¹¹ The student of Jewish ethics must not approach his subject like a logician examining ideas but rather like a sensitive artist conveying the insight gained into the inner world of the people:

"The task is to watch the faintest stirrings of the public consciousness, to apprehend with delicately trained senses the imponderable elements of the ethical spirit, to give word and tangible shape to whatever shadowy thought or ideal longing moves the heart of the people."¹²

The presentation of Jewish ethics requires personal involvement far more than scientific objectivity, attachment rather than detachment, the sort of inside-knowledge only intimacy and solidarity with the people can furnish: "The systematizer of Jewish ethics must merge himself, in love and devotion, into the spirit of his people."¹³ Lazarus leaves no doubt that he brings such a personal commitment to his subject. There is a glow of national pride in his assertion that, by developing ethical ideals valid for all humanity, the Jews achieved ethical superiority over their neighbors:

"Ethically this was the point of sharpest contrast between Jews and their neighbors, the radical, distinctive quality which constituted their superiority over the others. To cultivate this quality, to make it effective, Israel had to segregate itself. In a word, Israel had to be particularistic in order to formulate and hold up the universal ideal."¹⁴

Without suggesting any conscious dependence of Lazarus on Krochmal, we note a series of parallels. Both reckon with the reality of the "Jewish spirit." For both this national spirit is the essence of Jewish peoplehood. Both see in it a form of excellence, a unique quality which enables the Jewish people to play a role of universal significance within mankind. In stressing the universal meaning of Jewish existence, both thinkers respond to the quest for Jewish purpose in the new age of emancipation. For both obviously the central problem is to reformulate the *raison d'être* of the Jew. Krochmal and Lazarus share also the dominant tendency of our 19th century thinkers to equate major elements of Judaism with aspects of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel. Thus, Krochmal equates Jewish monotheism with the philosophic apprehension of the Absolute in the sense of German philosophic idealism, while Lazarus identifies the ethics of Judaism with those of Kant.

Born a generation earlier and contemporaneous with the full flowering of early 19th century philosophic idealism, Krochmal grafted the metaphysics of philosophic idealism upon Judaism. Lazarus, no less diligent in recasting Judaism in the philosophic image of his time, responded to the general shift of interest from metaphysics to moralism. The genius of the Jew, in Krochmal's view, was a genius for religious metaphysics in its purest form. According to Lazarus it was a genius for ethical universalism, ethics in its highest and purest form.

True to his conviction that Judaism was primarily an ethical system,

Lazarus entitled his major work on Judaism "Die Ethik des Judentums."¹⁶ It is difficult to characterize this work precisely. Philosophic method, historical considerations, Talmudic interpretations and the insights of social psychology are thoroughly co-mingled in this work. Hermann Cohen immediately damned it for its lack of philosophic depth and precision.¹⁷ In his extraordinarily sharp criticism, sharp to the point of being derisive and contemptuous,¹⁸ Cohen expressed the hope that "the book which so enticingly meets the educational level and instincts of the crowd" should exert its "unwholesome effect upon ever diminishing circles of the larger mass within a rapidly vanishing period of time."¹⁹

Hermann Cohen's devastating criticism must be weighed against fairer opinion. As Julius Guttman pointed out, Lazarus at least rose above the merely apologetic purposes, so prevalent at that time, to a clarification of Jewish consciousness.²⁰

There is merit in Lazarus' attempt to illustrate the continuity of Judaism's ethical consciousness in ways other than literary evolution from Bible to Talmud and Rabbis. His approach to Judaism as a multi-dimensional phenomenon is valid. Applying the viewpoint of social psychology to the study of his subject, Lazarus drew from a variety of sources conclusions regarding the "spirit of Judaism." He saw Judaism not as a philosophy or theology but as a way of life. Consequently his sources were not merely books, but the various forms in which the people's life found expression: Literature,²¹ ceremonial law and liturgy,²² historical memories,²³ institutions,²⁴ popular customs and folklore,²⁵ doctrinal utterances by individuals and,²⁶ above all, the spirit of the people, their collective ethical consciousness.²⁷

Lazarus' original aim was to formulate "a complete system of moral doctrines,"²⁸ but he soon realized that no such system was ever constructed in Judaism's major sources, Bible and Talmud. Sayings of ethical import abound, but not in systematic form. Consequently, Lazarus set himself the task of "demonstrating the inner connection of all scattered sayings," showing "that a system is present in the manifold ethical activities of Judaism."²⁹

An outline of Lazarus' findings would be irrelevant to our purpose. The question which interests us primarily is the part of Revelation in Judaism's ethical development according to Lazarus. Are the ethics of Judaism revealed? In what sense?

We have already alluded to Lazarus' view that the Jewish national spirit be considered the deepest source of the ethics of Judaism.*

What is this "national spirit?" Can it be described objectively? Lazarus draws a distinction between Israel and other nations. Generally speaking, the intellectual development characteristic of other nations is dominated and shaped by great individuals. But in the evolution of Judaism "the individual has but small share in the power and dignity of the pregnant development that obeys the deepest impulses of the national soul, and issues from its primordial manifestations. Individual contributions are products of the national spirit,"** to which the author merely gives tangible expression."³⁰ Lazarus proceeds to speak of this national

* See this thesis, p. 97.

** My underline.

spirit in almost biological terms. Despite all differences among Jewish thinkers, "their life-blood flows from a common source, one heartbeat throbs in their pulses."³¹ No more than a metabolic change within some molecules can alter the life and reproduction of a plant, can this or that individual, however prominent, direct the course of Judaism. "So the individual and his prominence in his generation disappear before the impelling force of national ideas and before the laws determining their development."³² To delineate this national spirit is the task the author sets himself. He solemnly vows: "I declare, before God and man, that I will not advance a thought in this work which I do not conscientiously believe was born of the spirit of Judaism."³³

To this promise Lazarus adds the footnote: "Foreign ideas, agreeing with or differing from Jewish ideas, I shall always designate as such and trace to their origin."³⁴ Hermann Cohen was infuriated by this glib distinction between "Jewish" and "foreign" ideas.³⁵ What objective criterion was there for such a distinction? What critical method other than Lazarus' own arbitrary opinion? No less disturbing to the philosophically precise mind of Cohen were references to other indefinable sources on which Lazarus hoped to draw for his presentation of the ethics of Judaism: "der Gesamtgeist des Volksstammes ... Volksseele ... Volksgemüt."³⁶ To Hermann Cohen these sources promised nothing but an unscientific muddle of categories.³⁷ It is difficult not to sympathize with his exasperation at the wholly subjective approach of Lazarus for we are indeed left in the dark as to the method by which one is to determine the national "soul"

and "mood" (Volksseele and Volksgemüt) of the people.

It would be in place now to point out how differently Krochmal and Lazarus view the spirit of the nation. In Krochmal's view the peculiar spirit of the nation was a metaphysical reality, an aspect of the Absolute which determined the nation's history. Lazarus, on the other hand, treated the "Volksgeist" as a psychological fact, a state of mind; it was the collective mood of the people with which it responded to its historical experience. To contrast the two views more sharply, we might say that with Krochmal a particular spirit shapes each nation, while with Lazarus each nation produces a particular spirit. Krochmal's "spirit" has ontological reality. Lazarus' "spirit" is a psychological concept, a state of consciousness.

What is the connection, if any, between God and the "spirit" of the nation as Lazarus understands it? How are ethics related to the divine will? Lazarus acknowledges that the "whole Jewish conception of life is as little thinkable without God as our physical world without the sun. Within Judaism the essence of morality has never been considered other than a divine emanation, the expression of a divine law, the fulfillment of a divine command."³⁸ Lazarus states bluntly: "God is the lawgiver."³⁹ In Judaism, he points out, moral law and divine regulation are "inseparable concepts."⁴⁰

But this clearcut assertion of divine authorship of the moral law receives little support from his concept of Revelation.

How is God's will conveyed to man? The moral^{law}, for example, is divine in origin. But, he argues, its Revelation does not take the form

of a historic event in specific time and place. Rather, it is an out-flow, an emanation of God's essence. "Aus dem ureigenen Wesen Gottes ... fließt es."⁴¹

Lazarus quickly shifts ground to a concept of imitatio dei. He sees a persistent theme throughout the whole range of rabbinic literature. It is the idea that the divine Being Himself serves as "Norm und Grund des Sittlichen zugleich,"⁴² i.e., God is both the norm (standard) and ground (causal source) of morality. Soon enough Lazarus shifts emphasis from the God who reveals His will, to man who discovers God's nature; it is a shift from divine to human initiative. God remains both the model and motivation for moral action, but it is man, not God, who acts:

"In a word, the fundamental doctrine of Judaism reads: Because the moral is divine, therefore you shall be moral, and because the divine is moral, you shall become like unto God. It may be said that the highest form and ultimate purpose of human life is likeness to God, and the ethical ideals are conceived as attributes of God, in whose image man was created, and whose copy and image it is man's task to strive to become."⁴³

One should not imagine the moral law as "commanded" by divine command: "God is the lawgiver, but He did not promulgate the law as His pleasure or as an arbitrary or despotic command."⁴⁴ The moral law is not something given to man, but something discovered by man. "It is law for man, because he (i.e., man) recognizes in God the prototype of all morality ..."⁴⁵ But how is man enabled to recognize in God attributes which are to serve as model of morality? What are the criteria by which man determines the morally good? Lazarus offers us a bit of tautology.

It is the "thought" of His morality which reveals to us the moral law:

"... auf dem Gedanken seiner Sittlichkeit, das heisst also auf das Wesen der Sittlichkeit selbst, ist das Sittengesetz gegründet. Gott nicht als Gebieter, sondern als Urbild aller Sittlichkeit ist zugleich Urquell aller menschlichen Sittenlehre ... " 46

Now it is but a small step to the elimination of God or of God-consciousness from man's perception of the morally good. Lazarus' aim is to establish moral autonomy a la Kant as a pivotal idea in Judaism. The good exists in man as an idea: "It is always an objective norm, in no wise dependent upon the pleasure of man, but constraining him as he knows himself to be constrained by the laws of logic when he thinks, by the laws of mathematics when he computes." 47 The source of ethics is ethics: "In Judaism the majesty of the law produces the law." 48 Citing a mishnaic source for the contention that "Abraham observed all moral laws," 49 Lazarus argues: "Reason was the source of his ethical instruction." 50

The concept of Revelation is now rendered superfluous. "Moral laws, then, are not laws because they are written; they are written because they are laws. Therefore, free moral convictions, not founded upon the authority and the act of Revelation, are ranked above obedience to this authority." 51 Thus we are led to the conclusion that the source of morality is in man himself or in the moral force which resides autonomously within man: "Morality was not created by the Sinaitic code; it springs from its own and from man's peculiar nature." 52 What is revealed to us is not God, but man's moral nature. It is "in the perception and acknowledgment of the good" that, according to Lazarus, "his (i.e., man's) moral nature is revealed." 53

References to God, Lazarus finds, are really not necessary for the definition of the good, its meaning and content, but such references are helpful in promoting the good and making it more compelling: "The reference to God is made, not to establish, but to urge the claims of the moral."⁵⁴ Thus God is no longer the lawgiver or author of morality as previously stated* but serves, one might say, a pedagogic purpose. Association of the law with God increases respect of the law.

Consequently, the theophany at Sinai is quite unnecessary as proclamation of a moral code. The significance of the Sinaitic covenant, according to Lazarus, is not in the Revelation of a law previously unknown, but rather in the ordination of Israel as a priest people in order to advance the ethical progress of mankind.⁵⁵

Revelation per se is a subject rather avoided. The term occurs infrequently and is quickly disposed of. There is no serious consideration of the possibilities of Revelation, or its meaning, because the whole concept of Revelation, by whatever definition, cannot contribute anything to Lazarus' chief purpose. It is to show that Judaism stands for the autonomy of the moral law. In view of this purpose Revelation is irrelevant, or even an embarrassment insofar as it might suggest an "outside" source for moral knowledge. Thus, Lazarus emphatically states: "The moral law is autonomous, because it originates in the nature of the human mind alone."⁵⁶ He is determined to place the ethics of Judaism upon the Kantian principle of autonomy: "The ethical writers ... of the civilized world concur in the statement that the moral spirit is Cf. this thesis, p. 102.

autonomous, that is, must bear the source of law within itself, and be independent of legislation and every sort of outside dictation." Since, in the light of this principle, certain critics fastened "a stigma upon Jewish ethics, because it was originally based on theistic grounds," Lazarus proceeds to demonstrate that Jewish ethics is not dependent on theistic foundations but meets Kant's standard of autonomy: "It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to examine and state more in detail the relation of the ethics of Judaism to Kant's principle."

It would be a fruitless digression from our subject if we followed Lazarus' lengthy demonstration that the spirit of Jewish ethics is identical with Kant's autonomy principle nor shall we enter into his polemics with Eduard Von Hartmann on that very point. Our concern is primarily with the question of how much, if anything, Lazarus contributed to an understanding of Revelation.

No summary of "The Ethics of Judaism" can overlook the striking shift from theistic to non-theistic ground in the author's treatment of the sources of Jewish ethics. To begin with, Lazarus acknowledges that "In its origin Jewish ethics is theological." He identifies the morally good with God's will: "Judaism regards what is morally good and what is pleasing to God, moral law and divine regulation, as inseparable concepts." The point is plainly made: "God is the lawgiver." From this strongly theistic position, Lazarus somersaults to the opposite view in which Jewish ethics is divorced from Revelation: "Independently of every external force or alien influence, that is, with complete autonomy, the

human mind lays down moral laws." ⁶⁴ The autonomy principle as understood by Lazarus does not imply a denial of God or of Revelation, but it tends to render Revelation irrelevant: "Morality was not created by the Sinaitic code; it springs from its own and from man's peculiar nature." ⁶⁵ God's function in relation to the morally good is altered. His function is not to declare what is moral, but to give it divine sanction, "to urge the claims of the moral." ⁶⁶ With such a minor role for God Himself, it follows that Revelation can hardly play a role at all in "The Ethics of Judaism" by Lazarus.

In Lazarus, Jewish theology reached its low-point. Theism was not being negated, but rendered irrelevant. Judaism was seen primarily as an ethical system. It was the triumph of moralism over theology. God no longer was the indispensable source of moral power. Morality stood on its own according to the autonomy principle as understood or misunderstood ⁶⁷ by Lazarus. God was demoted from the sole originator of moral law to the embodiment of the ideal, a model for human conduct, a pedagogic device making the claims of morality more "urgent." In the broad equation of Judaism with Kantian ethics, the uniqueness of Judaism was sacrificed. The faith of Israel, one might say, merely seconded the motion of Kant's autonomy principle.

It seems that Lazarus had hoped to bring about a renewal and strengthening of the declining Jewish religious consciousness by presenting the rational, ethical contents of Judaism. Lewkowitz' point, however, is well taken that a rationally ethical universalism, presumably shared by all

religions and Kantian philosophy, hardly furnished a basis for preserving a separate Jewish community life.⁶⁸ Why should not a Jew who had embraced Kantian philosophy disengage himself altogether from Judaism?

What, then, remains of Lazarus that may indeed contribute to the preservation of Judaism in our time? Lazarus must be credited with at least two profound insights of lasting value in our quest for the meaning of Jewish existence. First, as Guttman points out, "That the ethical commandments, according to the Bible and the Talmud, have an immediate inner certainty is a most correct and informative statement, whose value is not at all lessened by unjustified consequences drawn in terms of ideas of autonomy."⁶⁹ It is an intriguing question what theological depth Lazarus might have reached had he concentrated on the exploration and analysis of that "inescapable necessity" with which man distinguishes between good and evil and why it is that the good appears preferable over evil as "indubitably" as the light over darkness. Whence comes that primary feeling of obligation which, as an irrepressible voice, becomes for every man his personal motivation for morality?

Lazarus alludes to something other than reason, something authoritative within, which gives assent to the morally good; lacking such inner confirmation, moral laws would lack their binding force: "For, though moral injunctions reach him from external sources as the behests of former generations or of present authorities, yet they become law unto him only when he feels their binding force."⁷⁰ What is the basis of that inner certainty in ethical judgment? It was clear to Lazarus that ethics cannot

be derived from nature.⁷¹ What, then, is the transcendental source of the immediate and absolute certainty of ethical judgment? What are its implications for the doctrine of Revelation?

The second insight of crucial importance for Jewish existence is Lazarus' claim of continuity in the ethical creativity of the Jewish spirit.⁷² What accounts for this unbroken development of Jewish ethical concepts from the Bible and Talmud through the ages to this day? Does it argue for a special Jewish endowment, for a unique gift of *שכינה* in the sense in which Judah Halevi asserted for the people of Israel?

Lazarus' insights into the inner certainty of ethical judgment and into the continuity of Jewish ethical creativity might have yielded profound theological answers, if only he had tried to account for either of these phenomena.

8. HERMANN COHEN

(1842 - 1918)

The life of Hermann Cohen¹ is a paradigm of German Jewry's spiritual transmutation from the middle of the 19th to the first quarter of the 20th century. His biography reflects the pendular movement, the oscillations of alienation and return, which marked the response of German Jewry to their Jewish heritage during a century's struggle for emancipation. It is a chronicle of agony and ecstasy. If, at first, Judaism was the source of their agony and German culture their ecstasy, it ended, for some at least, in reverse. Cohen was among those who came to feel more and more of the agony im Deutschtum² and unforeseen ecstasy in a rediscovered, philosophically newly understood and appreciated Judaism.

Deeply rooted in both Jewish and German culture, Hermann Cohen also possessed the sensitivity to perceive the changing spiritual climate of Germany and the mental flexibility to rethink and radically re-define his position; he lived long enough to come back full circle to his point of departure as a religiously committed Jew.

Four stages mark the life of Hermann Cohen.

The first period, his early youth and Jewish education, began in the traditionally religious household of his father Gerson Cohen, a Chazzan and Hebrew teacher in Coswig.³ This period ended at the Breslau Seminary where the young student realized that he no longer possessed sufficiently strong religious convictions to qualify for the rabbinate.⁴

The second period encompassed his brilliant academic rise as a philosopher and his call to the professorship at Marburg⁵ where he was to

found the neo-Kantian branch of philosophy known as the Marburger Schule. It was during this time of splendor in his professional career that Cohen removed himself farthest from his Jewish roots⁶ even while he came to believe most deeply in the complete integration of German Jewry in German culture and nationhood. Emancipation was to be achieved on almost any terms, not barring intermarriage and transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday. It was to be total assimilation short of conversion.

Cohen was jolted out of his confidence in the success of emancipation by the publication of Heinrich von Treitschke's "Ein Wort über unser Judentum" in 1879. The synthesis between Judaism and German culture which Cohen had taken for granted now needed re-examination and defense. In his public reply the following year, "Ein Bekenntnis in der Judenfrage"⁷ (1880), Cohen rejected Treitschke's demand that Jews divest themselves of every vestige of their Judaism as price of admission to the German nation. Though he was willing to go a long way down the road of assimilation, he took pains to point out the distinctive theological values of Judaism, the unique spirituality of the transcendent God and the messianic idea, in both of which he saw the heart of "Israelite monotheism." Whether Judaism was alien to the German spirit as Treitschke charged, or not, Cohen maintained that its message was far too important to Germany and to Christianity itself, to be surrendered under the colorless flag of religious uniformity which Treitschke demanded in the interest of national unity.

Cohen's powerful reaffirmation of the positive values of Judaism in the exchange with Treitschke was, by his own admission late in life,⁸ the hour of his rebirth as a Jew. We shall consider the year of 1880, the

exact mid-point of his life, as the beginning of the third period in his development which was to witness ever more frequent utterances on Jewish issues. In this period he grew simultaneously as philosopher and Jew until his retirement from Marburg and move to Berlin in 1912.⁹

The Berlin years, from 1912 to his death in 1918, represent the fourth and most productive period of his life as a Jewish thinker. Judaism reoccupied the center of his intellectual interests. He produced an abundance of articles on a variety of Jewish topics along with two monumental works. The first, "Der Begriff der Religion im System der Philosophie" (1915), reformulated his view of religion in general. The other, "Religion der Vernunft aus den Quellen des Judentums"¹⁰ (substantially completed at the time of his death in 1918 but published posthumously in 1919), represents his most comprehensive testament of personal faith as a Jew, saturated with the fruit of a lifetime of philosophic thought. The extraordinary abundance of Jewish writings in the last few years of his life was in no small measure stimulated by his work as lecturer at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin to which he devoted his retirement years. Thus, ironically, or rather symbolically, he who withdrew from theological studies as a young man of 19 because of his waning religious faith, spent the last years of his life as a teacher of Jewish theologians. It was his intention that his collected essays be published in memory of his mother, while his final work, "Religion der Vernunft," was to be dedicated to the memory of his father. The reaffirmation of his ancestral heritage was thus completed.

With due allowance for the exceptions and inaccuracies inherent in all generalizations, it might be said that the history of philosophy has passed through three major stages.¹¹ Greek classical philosophy located ultimate reality in the natural universe. Medieval philosophy saw reality grounded in God. It remained for the thinkers of the modern age to establish the foundations of reality in the mind of man. Beginning with Descartes, the point of departure of European philosophy has been the philosopher's own sovereign reasoning power. Hermann Cohen brought this development to its conclusion,¹² transcending his own radical rationalism only in the very last years of his life.

Hermann Cohen's neo-Kantianism is no mere duplicate of Kant's philosophy. This will become evident as we consider Kant's and then Cohen's thoughts on religion, especially his concepts of God and Revelation. For purposes of comparison, we shall now briefly sketch Kant's view of religion. The fullest formulation of Kant's religious views was published on the threshold of his 70th year of life, "Die Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft" (1793). Before we consider in some detail its most distinctive ideas, we summarize briefly significant conclusions reached by Kant in earlier works:

In his "Kritik der Reinen Vernunft" (1781), Kant characterizes religious knowledge as having not logical but moral certainty. One may not say God is, but "I am morally certain that a God is." Kant's sharp distinction between knowledge and faith (Wissen & Glauben), is carried further in his "Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft" (1788). The existence of

God is not a matter of knowledge but a postulate. We assume in the interest of man's rightful expectation of "Glückseligkeit" that God must necessarily exist as guarantor of the correspondence between morality and the achievement of happiness in the world of nature (Glückseligkeit). Religion is but another name for the moral conscience. This is suggested in his "Kritik der Urteilskraft" in which religion is defined as "Erkenntnis unserer Pflichten als Göttliche Gebote."¹³ The identification of God with the morally good is pointedly made in his essay "Über das Misslingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theodicee" (1791). With reference to the problem of Job, Kant states that: 1) our reason is incapable of determining the relationship between the Highest Wisdom and the world of our own actual experience; 2) Job's solution was not to make his morality dependent upon faith, but rather to build his faith upon morality. This leads Kant to the conclusion that "der Begriff von Gott, der für die Religion tauglich sein soll, ein Begriff von ihm als einem moralischen Wesen sein muss," thus identifying God with the morally good.

We turn now to "Die Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft"¹⁴ to consider Kant's concept of Revelation against the background of his views on God and religion. A basic distinction is made between "Kirchenglauben" (ecclesiastic or denominational faith), based upon historic acts of Revelation, and "Reiner Religionsglaube" (pure religious faith) which is the religion of reason and serves as the highest interpreter of the various denominational systems which are based upon Revelation.¹⁵ The only faith, with the potential of becoming universal religion, is a pure

religion of reason. To the extent that religion is seen as moral law it springs from man's reason which postulates God as the ground of morality.¹⁶ Thus, everyone may determine God's will by his own reason since the concept of the deity springs from consciousness of moral laws. From this correspondence of the divine will with purely ethical laws follows the concept of only one God as well as one purely moral religion. This pure religion of reason is contrasted with the historical religions, which, lacking a basis in rational speculation, can only arise from statutory law decreed by Revelation.¹⁷ The purely moral legislation, "whereby God's will is originally inscribed in our hearts,"¹⁸ is not only the indispensable basis of all true religion, but constitutes its true essence. The various statutory (historical) religions serve only as means for the advancement and promotion of this universal religion of reason. The true service of God is to perform His will not "according to revealed concepts, which would not be available to all human beings, but by one's moral conduct with reference to which God's will is known to all."¹⁹

Believing that the pure faith of religion requires only the performance, in the spirit of morality, of all duties understood as His commandments ("die in moralischer Gesinnung geschehende Beobachtung aller Pflichten als seine Gebote"),²⁰ Kant proceeds to treat all ritual and canonical legislation of non-ethical character as concessions to the common mass of humanity who incline toward the cultic forms of religion. He comments caustically on "Holy Scriptures" as making the greatest impression on those who least understand them. Their value is chiefly as

symbol of authority.²¹ Kant subscribes to the deistic doctrine of the Enlightenment that there is only one true religion although there might be a variety of creeds ("Es ist nur eine (wahre) Religion, aber es kann vielerlei Arten des Glaubens geben.")²² As dubious as he is about the creedal elements of the religions, so he considers the Revelation of ceremonial and historical information likewise of questionable validity. The purpose of Holy Scripture is to improve us as human beings; historical matter, which contributes nothing to this purpose, is of indifferent value and may be regarded as one pleases.²³

Real religion is the spirit of God which instructs us and motivates us to moral conduct.²⁴ The principle that universality is the criterion of the true religion argues in favor of the religion of reason as against revealed religion.²⁵ Religion based upon historical experience of Revelation is particularistic and limited in validity to those involved in its history. As all empirically gained knowledge, so Revelation likewise lacks the logical certainty that what is believed must be so and not otherwise. "Only pure religious faith, entirely based on reason, can be recognized as logically compelling and thus as the only faith that distinguishes the true Church."²⁶ Kant grows lyrical, reminiscent of the fervor associated with messianic visions, in his description of the religion of the future. A physical and moral endowment in man will inevitably produce the cleansing of all religions from their particularistic ordinances so that the one pure religion of reason might at last reign over all.²⁷ In the end there will be freedom without anarchy because everyone will obey a law (not statutory ordinances) which he has decreed for himself even while he must recognize this same law as the will of the Almighty revealed by reason.²⁸

It follows that a Revelation contained in man's reason must be continuous, and so Kant indeed envisages the religion of the future as based "in dem Prinzip der reinen Vernunftreligion als einer an alle Menschen beständig geschehenden göttlichen (obzwar nicht empirischen) Offenbarung."²⁹

In summation of the doctrines of the pure religion of reason, Kant reiterates its entirely moral and rational character: The existence of God cannot be proven by theoretical reason. "The idea of a moral world-ruler is a task for our practical reason,"³⁰ i.e., God is a postulate, a necessary hypothesis if we are to account for morality and feel assured of its ultimate, universal triumph. In line with the requirements of practical reason, the true and universal faith of religion is belief in God as (1) Almighty Creator of the natural universe and holy Giver of law for the moral universe; (2) Benevolent Preserver, Ruler and Provider for mankind ("Versorger"); (3) Judge who acts justly ("Verwalter seiner eigenen heiligen Gesetze").³¹ These doctrines are self-evident to reason (i.e., need no special Revelation):

"Dieser Glaube enthält eigentlich kein Geheimnis, weil er lediglich das moralische Verhalten Gottes zum Menschlichen Geschlechte ausdrückt; auch bietet er sich aller menschlichen Vernunft von selbst dar und wird daher in der Religion der meisten gesitteten Völker angetroffen."³²

If the essence of religion is morality, and if morality is a department of reason, it follows that supernatural Revelation is superfluous. It is not God but reason which reveals to us the contents of the only true religion:

"Die wahre alleinige Religion enthält nichts als Gesetze, d.i. solche praktische Prinzipien, deren unbedingter Notwendigkeit wir uns bewusst werden können, die wir also als durch reine Vernunft (Nicht empirisch) offenbart anerkennen."³³

We shall now trace Cohen's approach to religion, the extent to which he follows Kant and where he goes his own way. It will be important to keep apart three stages of his development: the young Cohen prior to his call to Marburg, the Cohen of the Marburg years and, finally, the Cohen of the Berlin period.

The young Cohen of the first period beheld in pantheism the most advanced type of religion, looking back upon monotheism as the religious expression of mankind on a less mature level. He leaves no doubt that he has no longer a personal commitment to the God of Israel.³⁴ Shortly before Marburg, studies of Kant lead Cohen to the conviction that belief in God was indispensable for any ethical system. He suggests in his correspondence with Hermann Lewandowsky that his God concept is unrelated to religious emotionalism but strictly the product of clear and rigorous thinking.³⁵

The Cohen of the Marburg years builds on Kantian foundations, but goes beyond his philosophic master. He follows Kant in the formulation of a God concept which is closely associated with ethical idealism. His approach, leaning on Kant yet passing beyond him, is already clearly stated in his essay "Das Problem der jüdischen Sittenlehre."³⁶ The identification of God with the spirit of morality calls for clarification. The line needs to be redrawn as we consider the relationship between ethics and the idea of God. The point he makes is that God is more than a principle and more than a postulate. He is the guarantee that the laws, defined in ethics, will in the long run be fulfilled in reality:

"Gott ist nicht das Prinzip der Sittlichkeit. Denn das Prinzip einer Erkenntnis kann nur ein Grundsatz sein, der als solcher schlechterdings nur ein gedachter Gedanke sein kann. In der Religion soll bekanntlich Gott mehr sein. Aber wenngleich Gott in der wissenschaftlichen Ethik kein Prinzip bedeuten kann, so braucht er doch darum nicht zu einem Postulat degradiert zu werden für Schwierigkeiten der moralisch-theologischen Kasuistik. Er ist das 'Oberhaupt im Reiche der Sitten.' Als solches aber hat er nicht bloss etwas zu sagen, sondern, was mehr bedeutet, etwas zu leisten, und nicht bloss etwas, sondern alles. Das Oberhaupt im Reiche der Sitten bedeutet die Gewähr: dass die Gesetze, welche die sittliche Vernunft in der ethischen Wissenschaft entdeckt und vorschreibt, in der Ferne der Zeiten zur vollen Wirklichkeit gelangen, und dass keine Skepsis dagegen aufkommen dürfe ... Ohne die Idee Gottes hat die Ethik keine Gewähr, dass ihre Gesetze mehr als Hirngespinnste einer methodischen Erkenntnis seien. Mit der Idee Gottes gibt sie sich die Gewissheit, dass das Sittengesetz Wirklichkeit entfalte bis ans Ende der Tage." 37

The importance of this statement cannot be exaggerated. It is programmatic for the development of Cohen's God concept in the remaining years of his life. It may be referred to in refutation of those who claim to see in Cohen's God a mere verbalization or abstraction.

Is Cohen's idea of God as guarantor for the realization of ethics in time -- a postulate? Or, is it a religious faith? If Cohen had argued: We cannot account for the existence of the moral law unless we presuppose God as its author, such a God would be a postulate. But Cohen is putting it differently. The origin of ethics is not the question at this point. There might be ethics with or without God. The question is what entitles me to believe that the universe will "cooperate" with the moral law? Says Cohen, only faith in God, as guarantor of the realization of the moral law, makes ethics compellingly meaningful. Without such guarantee all discussion of ethics reduces itself to an

exercise in futility: "Without the idea of God, ethics has no guarantee that its laws are more than a figment of the imagination. ("Ohne die Idee Gottes hat die Ethik keine Gewähr dass ihre Gesetze mehr als Hirngespinnste ... seien.")³⁸

In this context, God is not the Source of ethics but the Source of our hope that the universe is so constituted as to bring about the realization of the ethical goal, that the moral law will prosper because of a Being with power to make it prosper. Cohen's statement is an expression of faith not a postulate. The fact that Cohen had in mind something altogether different from a postulate is clearly stated by himself in the very passage we quoted. God "need not be degraded to a postulate because of difficulties in moral-theological casuistry."³⁹ Thus, Rosenzweig's contention that Cohen's God was more than "poetic expression"⁴⁰ and more than a mere "thought" or abstract idea, appears to be closer to the truth than Guttman's view that Cohen, after all, never advanced beyond a postulated God.⁴¹

The difference between Kant and Cohen grows apace. Kant, as we know, postulates God as the only possible way of harmonizing the demands of morality with the expectations of "Glückseligkeit." Basic to Kant's view of the universe is its division into two worlds, that of natural and moral law. Man, being a citizen of both, finds his highest good in the achievement of morality combined with happiness, i.e., a happiness growing out of his morality. But how can man draw happiness from morality if the two worlds remain separated? Man's moral will has of itself no influence upon nature which must provide the conditions of human happiness. On the other

hand nature proceeds independent of moral laws. Only in a divinely governed universe where nature and morality are by the Holy Creator Himself brought into harmony (which otherwise would be alien to each) may we suppose that nature will be responsive to moral values, enabling man to achieve his highest good.

The eudaemonism which moved Kant to postulate God is completely absent from Cohen's thinking. Although Cohen, too, distinguishes between two worlds, the "world that is" and the "world that ought to be,"⁴² these two realms of "Sein" and "Sollen" are unified by God, according to Cohen, not for the sake of man's "Glückseligkeit" but for the realization of moral law. To the faith that God functions as a regulative link between the world of nature and the world of morality, Cohen adds a theological reason why God performs this function -- and with this thought Cohen turns from Kant to fundamental Jewish doctrine.

The one God, whose oneness means uniqueness, is incomparable, different from all that exists. This means that His Being is the ground of all being. In Him both worlds, that of nature and that of morality, are grounded. In Him, as Creator and Source of morality, mankind's unity is established as basis of mutual ethical obligation. The One God demands the one humanity.⁴³ How can we be sure that the physical world will continue so that the moral task may be realized and history be fulfilled? The eternity of the ideal presupposes the continuity of nature in which it is to be realized. God is the guarantor of continuity of the physical world for the realization of the ethical ideal.⁴⁴ He guarantees the

correspondence of the world of nature and morality not merely for the purpose of human bliss, but to preserve the whole structure of moral law, to give it verification and permanence.

The Cohen of the Marburg period ever more staunchly maintains God's transcendence. God and morality are related, but not the same. Jewish apologetics, he points out, has far too long pushed to the foreground discussions on ethics as if to legitimize the Jews as decent people. It is time that we returned to "the cornerstone of our religion, the idea of the unique God."

"Eine anständige Moral reicht aber noch lange
nicht aus für das Lebensrecht der Religion.
Eine Religion muss den Grund ihres Daseins immerdar
in ihrem Gottesbegriffe bewahren und fortentwickeln." ⁴⁵

To be sure the "God of Judaism is the God of morality. His entire meaning lies in the Revelation and confirmation of morality. He is the originator and guarantor of the moral world." Morality springs from God but He is more than morality. He is "the ground of the moral world -- this is the sense of the key concept of the unity of God." ⁴⁶ The introduction of an intermediary between God and man blurs and compromises the aspect of God's uniqueness which connotes transcendence. "The Logos of the Jew Philo" is, in Cohen's judgment, "a profanation of the transcendence of God." ⁴⁷ Simultaneously, the idea of the intermediary is an offence against the concept of divine immanence, insofar as it suggests "a God, who moves humanity only from the outside, and not also from the inmost essence of the world." The intermediary, Cohen goes on to say, intimates that "God cannot approach man out of His own Being." ⁴⁸

The Berlin years (1912-1918) represent a period of extraordinary development and fulfillment of Cohen's work as philosopher and Jew. The Cohen of the Marburg years identified himself as a philosopher whose Judaism was closely connected with his scientific insights: "Im Zusammenhange meiner wissenschaftlichen Einsichten steht mein Judentum."⁴⁹ He explained that his enthusiasm for Judaism was rooted in the conviction of the ethical value of its God concept. But already in 1904, at the time of the publication of his "Ethik des reinen Willens," he looked forward to the time when he might come forward "with greater works on the idea of Judaism."⁵⁰ This promise he fulfilled after his retirement from Marburg. Moreover, we see a decided shift from preoccupation with ethics to the theological foundations of faith. We shall focus our attention on three significant steps in Cohen's theological development in this final period of his life:

1. The formulation of his new concept of correlation.
2. The realization of religion's distinctive role insofar as the God of religion has a function different from the God of ethics.
3. The emergence of a significant concept of Revelation in his "Religion der Vernunft," the summa theologica of Cohen.

The concept of correlation is a profound mine of theological suggestions. It can be and has been variously interpreted. We see in it a contribution to the resolution of the tension inherent in Judaism's God concept under the aspects of transcendence and immanence -- Judaism's

oldest theological paradox. What is at stake is not merely a philosophic or theological problem, how can God be "beyond everything," and yet also "within everything?" The solution of this problem has a most significant bearing on the very heart of vital religion -- the relationship between God and man.

"The One mankind is the correlate to the One God," says Cohen in an essay dated one year prior to the publication of "Der Begriff der Religion im System der Philosophie." The meaning of the correlation, he suggests in the same essay, is a spiritual relationship: "The soul in man is, as it were, the God in man. In God's image He created man. This image is not a true portrait, for God has no portrait even as He has no form. The image is the idea. In the idea of God the idea of man is implied. Such divinity is meant by the soul which resides in the body of man. Man's soul is a light of God." A closer examination of the correlation follows in the essay "The holy Spirit." The title, he says, is a mistranslation, or still worse, a misunderstanding of the term אֵלֹהִים קְדוֹשׁ , which means literally "spirit of holiness." The term, "spirit of holiness," connotes a relationship. In the context of religion, the soul is seen in relationship to morality and to everything spiritual. Thus, "spirit" is connected with various moral qualities and activities of the soul. "These qualities of the soul reach perfection in the same concept which also represents the key term for the attribute of God -- Holiness -- the ideal concept of the human soul as well as of God." Thus, both terms (Spirit and holiness) in their origin are tied together in man and God. This, then, is the correlation of God and man. "God is spirit, and

God is holy. Consequently, He it must be Who implanted spirit and holiness in man, in order to be connected by means of both with man. Thus the spirit of holiness of God is simultaneously the spirit of holiness in man." ⁵⁵

The concept of correlation is fully developed in Cohen's most comprehensive discussion of religion from the point of view of philosophy, "Der Begriff der Religion im System der Philosophie." "Correlation," he says, "is a scientific fundament of thinking." ⁵⁶ It expresses purpose.

"Wherever we have the formulation of a concept, we have the establishment of purpose. It is, then, a relationship of purpose which we set forth between God and man, as between God and nature ... Accordingly, when I want to form the concept of God, I must assume a relationship of purpose between God and man; so, also, I gain the concept of man out of its implication within the content of the God concept, and vice versa." ⁵⁷

Cohen then proceeds to illustrate the relationship of purpose between God, man and nature. In the correlation of God and nature, the idea of creation is developed and broadened to that of maintenance of the world. God creates and maintains the world. Immediately, the idea of maintenance with its implications of a future, raises the question of purpose. ⁵⁸ Why should the world be maintained? The purpose of nature is then brought into relationship with the ends of morality. What would happen to the good, if nature were destroyed? The correlation of God and nature thus implies for ethics the maintenance of nature by God as guarantee that there will always be a world of existence for endless continuation of morality. ⁵⁹

The correlation of God and man is likewise a relationship of

purpose. In man's moral strivings, God serves as the goal toward which man's own moral effort is directed. Man must act, but God, as the motivating goal, is involved in man's action, and thus the success of man's moral labor does not depend exclusively upon man himself and his work.⁶⁰

The correlation of God and man leads Cohen to an understanding of the unique function of religion as compared with ethics. "In ethics God illuminates mankind with confidence in morality on earth. In religion, it is the individual who receives the reassurance of his own personal redemption from guilt and remorse, his restoration for the task of moral freedom."⁶¹ He then points to Judaism to illustrate the contention that the satisfaction of the individual's spiritual needs is the distinctive task of religion. "In Judaism's pure monotheism, the God of mercy and forgiveness can only mean this: the goal, the success, the triumph of man's moral effort is guaranteed. Thus the correlation clearly shows its partition: Here man, the individual in his isolation, and there God in His Uniqueness."⁶²

For the purposes of ethics, it is sufficient that God guarantee to humanity the realization of the ethical task. But this would not satisfy the single individual who must have guarantee of his own personal efforts for moral rehabilitation. For that I need God as my God. My own God is the God of Religion.⁶³

The Cohen of the Marburg period gave much thought to the place of religion and the meaning of God, but very few indeed are his references

to Revelation. God is seen not as the revealer of ethical knowledge but as guarantor of ethical realization in this world. He is the "Urbild" and "Vorbild" of morality -- the prototype, the ideal and model for man's ethical strivings. Cohen did not concern himself with the question how man ever found out that God's will was ethical. Man, being what he is, is equipped with reason that distinguishes between "Sein und Sollen," between "what is" and "what ought to be" -- and Revelation presumably has nothing to do with it. In Cohen's Marburg years, God was either, in His uniqueness, the ground of all being, the epitome of transcendence, or, as guarantor of ethical realization in this world, God appeared as a universal power whose reality would be confirmed only in the messianic fulfillment at the end of time. There was no place for Revelation within such a God concept.

The Cohen of the Berlin years, however, in the development of the concept of correlation, turned to a profound consideration of the relationship between God and man. In this context, a discussion of Revelation became inescapable. And so, we find that Cohen's Jewish magnum opus, "Die Religion der Vernunft," devotes a major chapter to "Die Offenbarung." It was the last chapter of this posthumously published work which he himself had prepared for publication.

Fundamentally, the chapter on Revelation answers two questions: Why is Revelation necessary? How does Revelation happen? Cohen opens his discussion of "Revelation" with the words: "Das Werden ist durch das Sein bedingt."⁶⁴ These words are to remind us of the metaphysical basis of "correlation," the archetypal correlation of Being and Becoming,

represented in Jewish monotheism by God, the Ground of Being, in relationship to the world of existence, or putting it plainly, the relationship of Creator and creation.⁶⁵ "The most general meaning of Revelation is this: God enters into relationship with man."⁶⁶ It is an inaccuracy, leading to pantheism, to suggest that God reveals Himself also in the world. For, "God reveals Himself not in something, but only to something, in relationship to something. The corresponding member of this relationship can only be man."⁶⁷ These principal considerations lead Cohen to a statement of the need for Revelation: Revelation differs from creation insofar as creation deals only with the general metaphysical problem of Being and Becoming which borders on, but is distinct from, the special problem of ethics. This is taken up by Revelation which thus becomes a continuation of creation by making the creation of man as a rational being its problem. In other words, the purpose of Revelation is nothing less than the special creation of man endowed with ethical reason. "Thus the very concept of the creation of ethics implies that Revelation can only be addressed to man, the bearer of ethics."⁶⁸

Now, we turn to the other question: How does Revelation happen? Cohen repeats: Being is the prerequisite for Becoming. This holds eminently true of man's becoming. It is owing to Revelation that man's rationality emerges, i.e., "the original source of ethical reason, this ethical becoming, must be located in God Who is the only Being and thus the prerequisite of all ethical understanding."⁶⁹

Cohen warns against a misunderstanding of Revelation as causation. Revelation itself does not cause the origin of ethical reason; nor does Revelation cause the transfer of reason from God to man. Revelation is the very prerequisite for all such causality: "Revelation is the creation of reason."⁷⁰ This thematic statement conveys the heart of his concept of Revelation and what follows is merely a commentary on it.

Referring to the text, Dt. 4.15-16, Cohen sees an attempt to remove from the theophany at Sinai all material traits. It suggests the purely spiritual character of Revelation. "The unique God can reveal Himself only to the spirit, and so He appeared to the whole people only in spirit."⁷¹ This strictly spiritual communication necessitates a spiritual mediator. Moses is cast in the role of mediator -- but not one who stands between God and the people, but rather who stands before God as representative of the people. The theophany is resolved in an apostolate. Moses acts as the proclaimer. Such a one is required since the Revelation is entirely spiritual. Despite the special role of Moses, the Revelation is not exclusively to him, but to the whole people. It is said: "Ye saw no manner of form on the day that the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire."⁷² God addresses Himself to you, the whole people. The role of Moses is to be the catalyst of instruction. Through him the national consciousness is brought to maturity. Thus "Revelation passes through the teachings of an individual spirit."⁷³

Revelation, however, must not be understood as a single event that ended in the past. "The currency of Revelation, and with it its

spirituality, is brought out by its renewal in national continuity:

'The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.'⁷⁴ The continuity of Revelation to Israel requires a devaluation of Moses concomitant with a raising up of the people of Israel. Moses must not become a demi-God. He must die a sinner, a mere mortal whose humanity is stressed "Now the man Moses" ... (Nu. 12.3). The death of the individual, however privileged, brings out the fact that "God lives only for the whole people whose immediacy with God is a peculiar national characteristic."⁷⁵ The concept of Israel as the people of Revelation is suggested, if not fully developed. The Shema -- speaking as it does of "our" God -- is a characteristic expression of "the consolidation of monotheism in the national consciousness."⁷⁶

Cohen wants to free Revelation from its confinement within the event at Sinai. He sees a tendency in that direction in the Torah's stress upon Revelation's content of "statutes and ordinances" rather than the factum of Sinai. Cohen's object is to develop the idea of continuity in Revelation. The "nearness of God" (Dt. 4.5-7) is interpreted as suggesting the currency of Revelation. God reveals Himself in the statutes and ordinances that are taught today. Today takes on the meaning of every day.⁷⁷

What is the criterion for Revelation? With reference to Dt. 4.6 ("this is your wisdom and understanding") Cohen proposes that the reasonableness and wisdom of content, evident to all, to other peoples no less than to Israel, stamps it as Revelation. "In such statutes Revelation

is attested by their wisdom and reasonableness."⁷⁸ Revelation is within man's reason. "Man, not the people, not even Moses, man as rational being, is the correlate of the God of Revelation."⁷⁹ With reference to Dt. 30.11-14 Cohen sees a spiritualization of the concept of Revelation. Although the Revelation at Sinai is not denied in this Biblical passage, it does undeniably internalize Revelation as something very near, even in man's heart. God's word cannot be far from the spirit of man. "Revelation is here founded in the heart and in man's own power represented by speech."⁸⁰

Cohen concludes with an emphatic identification of Revelation with reason. If man "wants to persist as a creation of God and if Revelation to him is to be a possibility, it can only be through reason; consequently Revelation itself can only be one of reason ... Man's reason as God's creation, conditions his rational relationship to God. From it flows the enactment of this rational relationship in Revelation which, together with creation, establishes the correlation of God and man."⁸¹

The tendency of medieval Jewish philosophers to harmonize reason and Revelation and to suggest more or less that Revelation originates in reason, is a consistent development of monotheism. "Thus reason becomes the root of the contents of Revelation. There can be no objection since the correlation of God and man makes inevitable the correlation of divine spirit and man's spirit as a form of identity of logical reason."⁸² There is nothing mysterious in Revelation. "God gives the Torah as He gives everything, life and bread, even death. Revelation is the evidence of

reason, which is not animalistic sensuality, but comes from God and connects with God." ⁸³

Cohen ends this chapter, so full of profound and suggestive thoughts, with the observation that philosophy shares with religion a supreme aim. Although philosophy has a legitimate interest in developing its concepts and all contents of consciousness, this cannot be continued endlessly.

"A fundament must be distinguished which withstands further analysis because something eternal is demanded as the ultimate ground of all change in human consciousness with all its treasures, assuring its preservation. Religion, likewise, is overcome by this same problem, animated by the same interest: Not even a Moses, neither a Solon nor a Lycurgus, had declared the law out of his own mind; it came to us not merely from the patriarchs, but over against all historical gradations stands the immediate derivation from God as the unique Being." ⁸⁴

In other words, Revelation should be understood as ultimate derivation from the ground of all Being. Due to certain political events, this spiritual derivation was seen as an historical act so that it might have national significance, but already at the beginning of literary history the critique made correction by "relocating Sinai in the heart of man". The Eternal, who is beyond all sensory and, consequently, beyond all historical experience, is the ground and guarantee of the core of national history." ⁸⁵

Hermann Cohen, in his approach to religion, passed through several stages. From an early negation of the essentiality of religion, when he regarded religion as an interim stage in man's development of ethical perfection, ⁸⁶ he reached already in his Marburg years a deep conviction of

the intrinsic value of religion as the abiding ground of ethics. In his Berlin years, he began to see a major difference in the functions of ethics and religion. Man, as mankind, needs the guidance of ethics, but man, as an individual person, needs the God of religion. Cohen then developed the concept of correlation in which he saw the characteristic theological pattern of Judaism,⁸⁷ a religion of reason. Reason became for Cohen the channel of Revelation.

It is easy enough to see many points of contact between Cohen, the great neo-Kantian, and Immanuel Kant. Common to both is a thoroughly rational approach to religion. In the opinion of both, the true religion of reason is implanted in the heart. Its truth is universal. Its reasonableness is self-evident to all rational beings. Revelation is removed from specific time, place and persons and understood in the broadest spiritual sense as God's continuous disclosure to the mind of mankind and through the mind of mankind -- reason being the channel of Revelation.

Cohen's parallels with Kant are impressive, but all the more striking are the differences. Firstly, Kant recognized two worlds of existence, the world of nature and the world of moral law. Two kinds of reason corresponded to these two worlds of existence, the theoretical and practical reason. Cohen recognizes the same two worlds, one governed by laws of nature and the other by laws of morality. But, Cohen would recognize only one reason and one truth for both realms. Man's reason corresponds to God's reason. Another important difference between Kant and Cohen has to do with the concept of God. Kant's God is a postulate.

Cohen's God is absolute otherness (God in his attribute of uniqueness) in correlation with man. Reason is fundamental to the correlation of God and man. Correlation is a theologically far more productive concept than Kant's lifeless postulate.

This raises the question of the "reality" of God in the correlation concept. It is a highly controversial question. Rosenzweig sees in the correlation concept confirmation of God's reality "For what is mutually related is not in danger of each disputing the reality of the other. ... Thus the relationship of correlation saves the reality of both parts."⁸⁸

Lewkowitz, on the other hand, concludes that "Cohen's God concept turns God into an idea which must refrain from all intervention in the life of the soul, in the struggle for moral purification. The unreality of God, being merely an idea, leaves the individual alone with himself and denies the true connection of man and God which is predicated on the reality of God."⁸⁹ The concept of correlation does not change this at all in Lewkowitz's judgment. For Cohen does not relate man, nature and God as physical or metaphysical realities but rather as concepts. The correlation is a relationship of concepts. "Cohen knows man only as the idea of man. ... Nature is the nature of natural science and identical with it and humanity is the epitome of moral ideas. And God also is merely the idea of the connectedness of logic and ethics." It follows that the concepts of Revelation and atonement turn into symbolic concepts of human reason and man's self-sanctification. Lewkowitz sees in the "Religion

der Vernunft" a glaring contradiction between Cohen's constructive rationalism and the sense of reality of his historical consciousness. "These elements are united in the soul of Cohen, but negate one another in thought." ⁹¹

Guttman arrives at essentially the same judgment.

"God remains an idea. Although he introduces into the idea of God the living substance of the religious imagination, and no longer holds back from speaking of God as a person, the methodological bases of his thought restrain him from the possibility of interpreting God as a Reality. ... The love of God is understood as love for a moral ideal, and the concept of the love of God for man is only an archetype upon which the pure moral deed can model itself." ⁹²

On the other hand, Henry Slonimsky, who studied under Cohen, affirms a radical change in Cohen's God concept. "Cohen is led to give up, almost without awareness, the basic assumption of a lifetime of philosophizing in favor of the God of religion. The basic assumption of philosophic idealism is the sole autonomy and reality of thought; that is replaced in the end by the reality of a transcendent God." ⁹³ For Cohen in his last stage of development, "the God of religion becomes the source of all things." ⁹⁴ According to Slonimsky, Cohen's "God has the logical character of Ursprungsbegriff." ⁹⁵ As creation is not a single act, but continuous, "similarly Revelation is unceasing communication of mind to man from the same infinite wellspring of being." ⁹⁶ He concludes: "God is restored to ontological status, he resumes his character of Being ... as source and origin of all that is." ⁹⁷

Hugo Bergman follows Rosenzweig's interpretation of the correlation concept as a shift "from an anthropocentric to a theocentric orientation ... into the philosophy of dialogue. Cohen's road from idealism to the system of correlation -- in other words, from the ego to the I-Thou relationship -- anticipates the intellectual development of a whole epoch and becomes its model."⁹⁸ According to Bergman a revolutionary change took place in Cohen's old age. "Now the core of reality is God, the sole and unique being, the Creator who has fashioned man in His image. Human reason is no longer the source and origin of reality."⁹⁹

However, Alexander Altmann in his profound study of the correlation concept strongly disputes the conclusions of Rosenzweig and Bergman and holds with Lewkowitz and Guttmann that the correlation expresses merely a relationship of concepts and is therefore a concept of logic. He concludes: "God as a member of the correlation is not a personal Thou but an idea."¹⁰⁰ He fails to see in the correlation concept any advance toward a metaphysical approach to religion. "Especially in the concept of God as 'unique Being' and that of the individual as the 'absolute individual' an advance into the metaphysical has been suggested. Our analysis however indicates that both are developed as genuine correlation concepts and not as metaphysical entities. ... The limit of pure formalism is not transcended. Religion remains religion of reason. It is constructed, not received."¹⁰¹

Heinemann in a recent article¹⁰² suggests a possible solution to the controversy regarding Cohen's correlation concept. For Cohen, ideas were

the essence of reality. "His idealism was based on an existential attitude: 'I have always thought only in ideas (ich habe immer nur in Ideen gedacht)', he confessed. He lived in ideas, which determined his relations to his environment, to people and even to animals. To him dogs were 'unredeemed beings' whose gaze he could not bear, and the Germans 'bearers of the idea of humanity.'" Heinemann disputes Guttman's view that Cohen had attempted to derive religion from reason. "True, he tried to construct a philosophy of religion and to justify the latter on rational grounds, but he knew that it is impossible to construct religion and to derive it from reason."

If Heinemann is correct in suggesting that the aged Cohen no longer approached religion as a logician but as a man of faith, that faith, we might say, was not that religion is derived from reason but rather that the spirit of reason is divine, that reason is the common element in the God-man correlation.

It is difficult for an age such as ours to maintain the glowing faith of Cohen in the divinity of human reason when reason has been so soundly defeated by the demonic forces of our day. But is our day a sufficient basis for judgment? Perhaps in another day and age, the glowing faith of Cohen will seem more valid than today. The enduring appeal of Cohen's rationalism is that it spares us the conflict between reason and faith and reduces the task of validating Revelation to a matter of logically correct thinking. But let there be no mistake about it: the assumption that reason indeed represents Revelation is not a rational conclusion, but a premise of faith.

9. LEO BAECK

(1873 - 1956)

In 1873, the year that Hermann Cohen received his call to the University of Marburg, Leo Baeck was born. Descendant of generations of rabbis, Baeck harmonized within himself all elements characteristic of modern Judaism. He achieved a remarkable synthesis of religion and science, tradition and liberalism, the teachings of philosophy and the simplicity of faith. His long life, which has already become legend, is a one-man exhibit of modern Jewish history. His familiarity with Jewish life was global, having lived or travelled in Europe, America and Israel. He represented the rabbinate as Germany's most distinguished spiritual leader, spoke for the secular Jewish community as Grand President of B'nai B'rith and supported Zionism as Associate President of the Keren Hayesod. He was a founder of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and the recipient of many national and international honors. He saw the flowering of German Jewry and its destruction. He witnessed first-hand the tragic convulsions that were visited upon the 20th century, serving as army chaplain in World War I and enduring the ordeal of Theresienstadt during World War II. Perhaps the most incredible achievement of Baeck, which must humble rabbis everywhere, is the monument of his scholarship represented by books, monographs and essays on a variety of topics. A bibliography,¹ issued two years before his death, lists over 400 publications. Considering the extraordinary involvement of Baeck in community affairs, along with the conscientious performance of his duties as rabbi,

the quantity and quality of his literary work is almost without parallel.

Neither the term philosopher nor that of theologian fits Baeck. He was first and foremost a man of faith, a Jew who believed and lived by his beliefs and was able to speak and write of them beautifully and profoundly. A recently published treatment of modern Jewish theology, which takes a rather critical view of Baeck's approach to Judaism,² concedes that "Baeck, possibly more than any other thinker of the German Jewish renaissance, really believed unambiguously in his Judaism." His typical intellectual stance is not speculation but affirmation. For Baeck, God is not an object of analysis but Judaism's assured foundation of faith. Leo Baeck's work is called an example of "hortatory theology." It is said that "what is finally lacking in Baeck is argument."³ The very virtue of this fault, however, is that "adamantine stubbornness and realism on which moral courage -- never a virtue solely of the mind -- is founded."⁴

The strength of Baeck is the strength of commitment which makes him less the philosopher and more the expounder of Judaism, precisely what the rabbi should be. This is not to suggest that Baeck was not influenced by Jewish philosophers from Maimonides to Hermann Cohen. Ideas and concepts of the whole Western tradition of philosophy, in addition to the great thinkers of Judaism, are echoed in the writings of Baeck. In his stress on ethics as the main task of religion and in his assertion of the non-dogmatic character of Judaism,⁵ we see a reflection of the leitmotifs of 19th century Jewish thought. Like Lazarus, Baeck calls attention to the unconditional certainty with which Judaism makes its moral demands.⁶ He is obviously indebted to Cohen's interpretation of

Jewish monotheism. God's Oneness is not a numerical value but a statement of His uniqueness as the complete "other," the ground of all being.⁷

From Cohen also seems to come the idea of God as guarantor of the eternal validity of the good.⁸ Baeck does not ponder and analyze these ideas at length, but rather confronts us with them as established truths, fully integrated into his beliefs. Within the framework of these ideas, so familiar in 19th century Jewish thought, there is one insight or emphasis which is distinctly Baeck's.⁹ It is an argument from history: the radical novelty of the Jewish phenomenon. More than any other modern Jewish thinker, Baeck speaks of the unprecedented, underived character of Jewish monotheism, of the revolutionary quality of prophecy, an authentic mystery and, as such, its own validation as divine Revelation. Finally, Baeck reaffirms the uniqueness of the Jewish people, "Dieses Volk," God's chosen people.

Before we examine more closely Baeck's view of Revelation, we shall summarize briefly his concept of God.

The good demands an explanation and a source. Being unconditional and universal, the good is valid at all times and places. Finite and limited man can not be its source "for the good demands an unconditional, absolute foundation. Its basis can therefore be found only in the One God, the outcome of whose nature is the moral law."¹⁰ It is important to point out that for Baeck God is more than a moral postulate. Although, like other neo-Kantian rationalists, he correlates God and the ethical, the need to account for the good is only the first and perhaps most

persuasive reason for belief in God. The mystery and order of the cosmos also argue for a divine creator: "The One God is the answer to all mystery; he is the source of all that is eternal and ethical, creative and ordered, hidden and definite."¹¹

God's Oneness is not an arithmetical value; it is religious and ethical. The God of Israel is not One merely because He alone can accomplish what all the gods of polytheism can together accomplish. "He is different from them all, He acts differently from them all ... For He alone is the creating and commanding God whose nature it is that He can be served by man only by the fulfillment of moral demands."¹² In this fusion of the cosmic creator and the source of moral law, a new phenomenon emerged in the history of religion. "Hence monotheism was not a mere development from previous beliefs."¹³

We may derive important arguments from ethics and reason for the existence of God, but religious faith is rooted in something other than rational concepts. Religion is not the creation of philosophic speculation.

"The gift of religious certainty is conveyed solely by that which God means to our existence and our soul, by the inner consistency which our life thus gains, by our resultant moral power, by the satisfaction of finding answers to our questions and demands and by our discovery of the relationship between our spiritual nature and the Divine -- that feeling which realizes the call from God to us each day of our lives: 'Where art thou? Gen.3.9.'"¹⁴

There is a suggestion in this of the existential approach, an insight into the dialogical aspect of religion -- in any event a departure from rationalism that tends to create God in the image of human reason. Although

God is inseparable from the moral, He is also the essence of mystery. He absolutizes ethics. He is "the unconditioned source and meaning of all existence,"¹⁵ out of which the good grows and in which it has its guarantee in eternity. "Here arises the idea of the categorical imperative."¹⁶ Yet, God is more than the foundation of morality. He is the mystery of all mysteries, "since all religion is an attempt to express in some way the essentially inexpressible."¹⁷ God is more than ethics. "Some Jews seem to think that Judaism is completely contained in its ethical commandments and that the belief in God is a mere adornment. A grosser superficiality could not possibly be inflicted on the Jewish religion."¹⁸

No nature religion can develop into a purely ethical religion, such as Judaism, "without a sharp break, a revolution,"¹⁹ Nothing like this birth of monotheism out of Israel's moral consciousness has ever occurred elsewhere in history. It cannot be explained as an evolution, but revolution, and that, in Baeck's view, signifies Revelation. "We are entitled to call it historically -- quite apart from supernatural conceptions -- a Revelation."²⁰

The mystery of Revelation is reflected in the mystery of the prophetic personality. Prophets gave to Judaism its kernel of faith. They "do not view their knowledge of God as the outcome of intellectual speculations."²¹ They are "overwhelmed by an irresistible truth."²² The spontaneity of the prophet's voice is determined by a profound inner religious experience, beyond rational comprehension. "Genius, the divine, cannot be defined."²³

Clearly the prophet does not have the feeling of discovering a truth by his own mental powers.

Baeck underscores Revelation as something "given." "Their mind did not seek the truth; rather did truth take possession of them." The prophet is at the receiving end of the experience: "Thinking has become a listening and a vision in which the symbol provides the final answer." ²⁴

These were the thoughts of Leo Baeck in 1905 when he published the first edition of "Das Wesen des Judentums" ("The Essence of Judaism"). Twenty-two years later, he rephrased essentially the same ideas in "God and Man in Judaism" which he contributed to a collection of essays issued under the title "Religions of the World." ²⁵ It is, in the opinion of some, ²⁶ the best he ever wrote. It restates in more eloquent phrases the point already made before, that Hebrew prophecy represents a radical innovation that cannot be regarded as simply another step of historical evolution. In the history of religion prophecy stands "for a Revelation or, what is the same thing, a revolution." ²⁷

But in one respect the difference between this brilliant essay and "The Essence of Judaism" is more than stylistic. Baeck now boldly affirms a metaphysical process, a divine act, whereas previously the revolutionary change represented by the emergence of ethical monotheism was called "a discovery" by "creative personalities." In "The Essence of Judaism" Baeck says that a nature religion can turn into a purely ethical religion only by some revolutionary change. "This transition is the work of creative personalities, of founders of religion, and thus it involves a

discovery." It is a discovery which we are entitled to call "historically -- quite apart from supernatural conceptions -- a Revelation."²⁸ In what follows this passage in "The Essence of Judaism" Baeck is careful to avoid a discussion of Revelation in supernatural terms.

In "God and Man in Judaism," Baeck's views seem to have reached theological solidification, for now he expounds prophetic Revelation in the supernatural sense. "But also in a supernatural sense ... such a religion comes into the world as a Revelation ... it knows itself to be the working of the sole high power that exists, the Word that comes forth from God."²⁹ What is involved in prophecy is "a disclosure from Beyond, a Revelation."³⁰

The essay adds another important new thought: the distinction between mysticism and Revelation. Prophets did not merely pass through mysterious experiences. Consciousness of being touched by God, ecstasy, is not unknown to so-called "prophets" among other peoples. What made Hebrew prophets unique was the ethical message, the sense of a moral task, which remained with them after the ecstatic experience had passed. "The mystic too has his moments of ecstasy ... But he lacks the impelling conviction that God has laid a task upon him ... To the prophet, on the other hand, his experience is a summons, an equipment for his mission. It is only a preliminary to his activity, and it is in his work that he becomes a prophet of the Eternal."³¹ In other words, the criterion for Revelation is "the ethical character of Hebrew prophetism."³²

Leo Baeck's last work, "Dieses Volk," to which he still added some chapters near the time of his death, moves from the correlation of God and the prophets to the correlation of God and the people of Israel. The chief actors in the historic drama of Revelation are now God and His people. This is the new and final emphasis in Baeck's spiritual legacy.

More directly and specifically than in any previous work, Baeck now deals with the factors which constitute a Jewish concept of Revelation: Israel, Moses, the prophets, the Bible, and, particularly, the theophany at Sinai.

Sinai is signal confirmation of the people of Israel as the people of Revelation. At Sinai, individuals recede into the background -- the very opposite of Heinrich Heine's view that Sinai was but the pedestal for the greatness of Moses. It is, in Baeck's view, the elevation of Israel into the covenant. Quoting Ex.19.1-8, Baeck interprets the event: "The people received this Revelation here, not just chosen ones within it, but the people as a whole, as one individuality, was placed into obligation, into responsibility, into unified existence."³³

At Sinai, Israel acquired a new "national soul" (Volksseele). Baeck now voices a doctrine whose classic formulation dates back to Judah Halevi and whose philosophic reinterpretation, as we have shown, was attempted by a number of 19th century thinkers, notably Krochmal, Geiger and Lazarus. Israel is endowed with a special religious genius. It has remained Israel's national characteristic throughout history.

"That which is so rare, a people's soul, had grown up here ... So very rarely does a relationship with Revelation live within people: a common deep-rootedness

of feeling and thinking and striving, an innermost quality, a soul which is present throughout all change, and in the end still answers the call of God's command. It became the gift of this people on earth." 34

Individual encounters with Revelations have undeniably taken place, but in the perspective of the totality of Jewish history, the individual voices melt into the one collective voice of Israel. "He who hearkens to the whole hears the voice of one soul, the soul of Israel." 35

The decalogue is verily the word of God that retains its eternal validity within its graphic or material shell. "In the words of Revelation ... this people received something unchangeable, indestructible. As the old daring image says of these words, 'they are written by the finger of God.'" 36 Divine authorship is indicated by the absolute spirituality of the decalogue. It is not the voice of man that speaks here. "For the eternal 'to be' (Sein) and the eternal 'should' (Sollen) reveal themselves in these words. Men do not speak in them, but the Eternal speaks in them!" 37

The concept of Israel as the collective partner of God in Revelation leads Baeck to a re-evaluation of Moses. He is the teacher par excellence, not to be exalted above the people, but rather charged with the task of narrowing the gap between himself and the people, to make all of Israel co-equals as inheritors of Torah. "The Revelation which was granted to Moses, in particular, is to be everyone's possession. All are his students, brought to the same inheritance and the same task." 38 The point is similar to that made by Cohen, yet not the same. Cohen also saw in the stress on Moses' teaching role a denial of Moses' monopoly on Revelation, but Cohen's chief aim was to press home the continuity of Revelation by removing its

singular occurrence; Cohen's concern was to establish Revelation through human reason, a continuous process which did not fit well into the Sinaitic theophany with its "Einmaligkeit." Cohen saw in the teaching role of Moses evidence for the sharing of Revelation, a confirmation of mankind's capacity for reason which he equated with Revelation. Cohen's view of Revelation demanded stress on its continuity and universality. Baeck, on the other hand, "downgrades" Moses in order to "upgrade" the people of Israel. Baeck does not want to universalize Revelation but rather nationalize or particularize it within a single people, a uniquely endowed people, the people of the covenant.

Revelation is the survival principle of Israel. In words that strongly suggest Krochmal's leading idea of Jewish history, Baeck associates the eternity of Israel with the people's consciousness of Revelation:

"Revelation formed this people and remained alive within it; the people lived in itself, secure in what was its own. When it withdrew or extricated itself from Revelation, the people threatened to lose itself or even to degenerate. When the word was then rediscovered the morning hour dawned again; the hour of rebirth. God, as the old metaphor says, 'returned' to His people; the Shekinah was once again among this people. And it always returned, here and there, having penetrated too deeply, from Sinai's day, generation after generation, for it to disappear completely. Revelation had become the essence of this people's existence." 39

In a brilliant aside, Baeck relates the absence of a dogmatic creed in Judaism to Israel's immediate consciousness of God's presence in their midst. There was no need to "define" God when He was so vividly apprehended as present. "God is not the revealed God here, but the revealing God." 40 Israel responded to this divine Presence with the sense of being

bound by His law. "This religion, therefore, did not create a confession; ... Not a formula, but the commanding mystery would speak and ever anew demand the answer. This belief, this decision for the One God, for His concealment and His law, was to prove itself."⁴¹ The only other thinker who similarly associated mystery and mitzvah, the presence of God and man's response through submission to law, was Franz Rosenzweig to whom Baeck may well have been indebted in this instance.

Baeck, the man, has been the subject of universal veneration but Baeck, the thinker, did not escape rather severe strictures. Thus, one contemporary critic is jarred by Baeck's incurable optimism "which seems out of touch with the monstrous realities of the 20th century."⁴² In his opinion it represents "a strange unreality, a form of 19th century eloquence and intensity ... a cobweb of innocence which had been blown from the world of Kantian idealism and had come to rest -- out of place -- in this most uncongenial age."⁴³

This same critic takes umbrage at his theological anthropocentricity despite Baeck's expressed view that it is the outstanding feature of ethical monotheism "that human life is theocentric."⁴⁴ Still, Baeck's God is alleged to

"function for him somewhat as He functioned for Cohen -- the reality who validates human effort. God is the all for man: He is the reason of man, the motive of man, the argument for human enterprise. God gives man the task, sustains man in its pursuit, and encourages man to press forward to its fulfillment."⁴⁵

If Baeck is to be taken to task for placing man in the center vis a vis God, one wonders how the Bible could escape the same charge. Do not

the creation story, utterances such as the eighth psalm, and the very concepts of Revelation and covenant imply that man is supremely important to God? What about the rabbinic contention that the whole Torah was given to man and not angels, and "in the tongue of man?" The criticism leveled at Baeck on this point illustrates the danger in those tendencies of modern theology which would stress the absurdity of man and stretch the irrationality and incomprehensibility of the God-man relationship to the extreme of an unbridgeable gulf. If we deny man a place under God's sun, and view God as totally unresponsive to human need, are we not, logically, rendering prayer, Revelation and the covenant meaningless? Vital religion must be both theocentric and, in a way, anthropocentric; that is, man looking at the cosmos must suppose God at its centre -- but at the same time he must believe that in God's sight man is the object of His special concern, that "my help cometh from the Lord Who made heaven and earth." Authentic Judaism, despite all insight into the tragedy and pathos of human existence, must remain essentially optimistic about human destiny as long as God is man's savior and redeemer.

More valid is another criticism. What is the basis of Baeck's confidence in the ultimate triumph of the good? How can we be sure that what we call "ethical" corresponds to the divine will? How do we know that it is indeed man's eternal task to live up to the ethical ideal and that it is Israel's special mission to lead mankind in this endeavor? It is suggested by the critic ⁴⁷ that in the light of our historical experience more is needed than "the sermonic inculcation of virtue" to "convince the modern world that the eternal task still holds promise." What is lacking

in Baeck is argument. Baeck, it is pointed out, has failed to meet the challenge of two alternatives:

"either to convince us that the ethical obligation may be grounded in the universality of reason and good will, or to reconsider the possibility that ethics is, at best, but a precarious deduction from God's disclosure of Himself as the Holy One." 48

The question is really the relationship between ethics and human destiny. Does history bear out the expectations of the righteous? To the extent that past ages posed this question, it was turned into the problem of evil and resolved itself into the theodicy. God's many suffering servants of the past, from Job to our martyrs in the middle ages, at least knew what God demanded of them. They were certain that the law by which they lived and for which they willingly died, was revealed as the will of God. If there was an area of doubt, it was merely why God would permit evil to score a triumph, however shortlived. Today, the problem of theodicy is still relevant, but the modern believer must wrestle with still another problem. Unless he is orthodox, he is face to face with the question whether law -- any law -- is indeed God's will.

If what has been regarded as God's law is not really divine, what right do I have to expect God's help to those who obey it? It is distinctly the problem of the non-orthodox with regard to Revelation. It is clear from Baeck's writings that he would utterly reject the possibility that "ethics is, at best, but a precarious deduction from God's disclosure of Himself as the Holy One." With equal certainty Baeck

would deny that the ethical obligation is merely grounded "in the universality of reason." He believes in the law of ethics as revealed by God to the prophets, individually, and to Israel, collectively; his faith in the actual Revelation of this ethical law is all the more strengthened because it corresponds to the categorical imperative of ethical rationalism. The mainstay of his faith, however, is the mystery of prophecy. The prophets defy rational comprehension. They are unprecedented and unparalleled in the perspective of history. They compel credence "because of the certainty of their intuition."⁴⁹

Baeck does not formally by definition establish a criterion for the validation of Revelation. His approach is not analytical but historical and phenomenological. His description of the baffling, mystifying phenomenon of the monotheistic prophets and of Israel as a people uniquely endowed with such prophecy, is a challenge to the mind which, finding neither natural nor rational explanation, is driven to postulate a supernatural cause for such effects. We are thus compelled to credit the supernatural interpretation offered by the prophets themselves as documented in the Bible and oral tradition of Israel. In other words, from the known effects -- prophecy and a prophetically guided people -- we postulate the cause: divine Revelation as claimed by historic Judaism.

There is one grave inconsistency in Baeck's approach. Baeck treats of Biblical Revelation in the strictly ethical sense, and if indeed Biblical Revelation were all purely ethical in content, Baeck's criterion would be well-nigh flawless. But the fact is that a great deal of

revealed literature does not deal with ethics by any definition. The Torah, the prophets, even the decalogue, contain, side by side with ethical instruction, a great deal of liturgical, ceremonial, and historical instruction. Can it be said of this non-ethical material that it has the same quality of irresistible truth which Baeck claims for the ethical message of prophecy? Moreover, the Bible itself does not distinguish ethical from non-ethical Revelation. Baeck arbitrarily makes this distinction in line with the tradition of 19th century Reform Judaism. The flaw is in Baeck's failure to explain by what right he has singled out the strictly ethical elements as divine Revelation. What, if any degree of Revelation, is in the non-ethical element of Jewish tradition? Why should this be less binding than the ethical element?

Baeck's failure to define the principle of distinction and selection between the so-called ethical and non-ethical elements of Revelation undermines the whole concept of Revelation. If the liturgic or sacerdotal contents of revealed literature may be ignored, suspended or annulled, why can not also any part of the ethical message be ignored, suspended or annulled? The crucial question left open by Baeck is this: who in Israel has the authority of deciding which part of Revelation is valid and binding at any time in history? It is not sufficient for Baeck to invoke "Dieses Volk," the holy community of Israel, as the supreme instrument formulating and validating the contents of Revelation, for, after all, it is the Mitzvah that sanctifies Israel and not Israel that sanctifies the Mitzvah.

Finally, Baeck's view of Israel as the people of Revelation ignores entirely the fact that this people is presently so deeply divided precisely on the question as to what is and what is not Revelation. The division is real enough and must be accounted for.

The fact that Baeck leaves unanswered some of the important problems of Jewish existence should not cause us to underestimate him. Time will tell whether Baeck is really as "dated" in his 19th century neo-Kantian rationalism and theological liberalism as some critics suggest, or will be counted among the most durable Jewish thinkers of the century. ⁵⁰

10. MARTIN BUBER

(1873 - 1965)

Considering the remarkable career and work of Martin Buber, one is struck by the numerous dislocations of his life on the one hand, and the immutability of his philosophy on the other. His life was full of change and upheaval. He was born in Vienna, but already uprooted at the age of three. Because of a broken home, he was taken to Galicia to be raised by his grandfather in a traditional Jewish atmosphere. There he was exposed to strong drafts of Haskala and simultaneously was brought into contact with Hassidic circles. He received the customary Jewish education which, from the age of 14, he had to reconcile with a secular education in a Polish gymnasium. A few years later he was back in Vienna as a University student. Later, he pursued studies in Leipzig and Berlin. From childhood on he mastered four languages: Yiddish, Hebrew, German and Polish. He was simultaneously absorbed in the study of philosophy, sociology, socialist theory and mysticism. He swung from his orthodox upbringing to the desertion of formal religion in his teens, from youthful admiration of Friedrich Nietzsche,¹ who proclaimed "God is dead," back again to lifelong labor for the revitalization of Judaism.

Still a young man, Euber tangled with two giants of modern Jewish history -- Theodore Herzl, whose Zionist movement he joined and from whom he soon separated in a fierce dispute, and Hermann Cohen, whom he opposed in public controversy only to acknowledge later in life a considerable debt to

his philosophy. He withdrew for five years of isolation to study Hassidism in Galicia, only to plunge afterwards into an increasingly busy and turbulent life as writer, teacher and public lecturer in which he rose from occupant of the chair for Jewish religious thought at Frankfurt University (since 1923) to the highly responsible position of director of the Central Office for Jewish Adult Education in Germany (1933-1938). He moved to Palestine in 1938 as Professor at Hebrew University, from which he retired in 1951. In Palestine and then Israel, Buber continued to be a highly controversial figure as founder of the Ichud movement for peace and bi-national existence with the Arabs. After his retirement in 1951, he made three tours to America, lecturing also in England and Germany. His 80th birthday, on February 8, 1958, was noted throughout the world -- as was his protest against the hanging of Adolf Eichmann a few years later. He died, leaving behind him a prodigious literary work of some 800 books, translations, essays, articles and lectures, and a reputation as the best known and most influential Jewish thinker of his time -- even if we allow for "the momentary lack of rivals," as suggested by one sardonic critic.²

Considering a life so involved, so filled with different roles, so buffeted by events, so often compelled to adjust to new situations, the constancy of Buber's philosophic view-point is cause for amazement. From the publication of his first full statement of religious philosophy in 1923, the "Ich und Du," a philosophic prose-poem now universally recognized as an event in the cultural history of this century, to the time of his death in 1965, Buber's mind did not change one whit in his approach to religion. There is no need to trace a development of Buber's thinking on the concept

of God, Revelation, or the highly complex issue of Jewish law and authority during the last forty years of his life. Global changes in political structure, the rise and fall of vast ideological movements, the clash of philosophic currents, the widening splits in Judaism between religionists and secularists, traditionalists and liberals, even the holocaust of the six million and the atomic age, have not caused Buber to change a single line of the theological position taken in "Ich und Du," forty-two fateful years ago.

Thus it was possible for Buber to publish in 1964 an article entitled "On Revelation" in a Hebrew periodical (in honor of the 80th birthday of his friend, S. H. Bergman) which was actually written in 1925.³ As we shall soon point out, this article reflects concisely Buber's view of God, Revelation and religion as stated in "Ich und Du." What he had written in the 1920's apparently still reflected the author's thinking in 1964.

Buber acknowledges that "The question of the possibility and reality of a dialogical relationship between man and God" already challenged him in his youth.⁴ It has been the leading, one might say, the only significant theme in his work as religious thinker and philosopher. He claims that as early as 1905, in conjunction with his Hassidic studies,⁵ this question became for him "the innermost" problem. He traces his own first terminological formulation of the dialogical principle, the "I" and "Thou," to his book, "The Legends of the Baalschem" (1907). In 1919, the first rough draft of "I and Thou" was completed. The first edition was published in 1923.⁶ The core of the dialogical principle of the "I and Thou," Buber tells us,⁷ was anticipated in his "Daniel" (published 1913) where he drew

a basic distinction between two postures men take toward their experience and environment: orientation and realization. Orientation "objectifies" the environment and classifies the data of experience for knowledge. Realization is the perception of meaning and value. In "Daniel" this distinction is entirely in the area of subjective attitude. However, in "I and Thou," Buber points out, it is developed as a distinction "in essence."⁸

The primary words (Grundworte⁹) I-THOU and I-IT describe two opposite relationships. The I-THOU relationship is a relation of person to person, or subject to subject, marked by mutuality and reciprocity. The I-IT relationship is that between person and thing; it describes the attitude of subject to object in which there is manipulation, utilization of the object by the subject. Only the I-THOU relationship is true relation in the sense of meeting or encounter, into which man enters with his whole being and which totally engages him as a personality. The world of the I-IT relationships, on the other hand, is that of measurement, analysis and control which engages only some of man's capacities and skills, but not his whole person.

The I-THOU relation is possible not only between persons, but also between person and animal, or plant, or anything in nature. What matters is that there be a genuine response to the existence of the other, the giving oneself over with one's whole being to the other. It is only in the I-THOU relation that man, being fully enlisted, becomes a real person. It is through the THOU that man gains full awareness of his "I." It is therefore characteristic of the I-THOU relation that it sharpens man's consciousness of his "singleness" as a person encountering the other.

The I-THOU relation is strictly personal. It cannot be collectivized, nor shared with others. Though many persons might be identical in their dialogical response, it is for each his own fresh experience, each responding as a single person in the encounter with the other. (This stress on the "singularity" of the participants in the dialogue is of the greatest consequence, as we shall soon see, for Buber's approach to Revelation.)

It is in the dialogical life of the I and THOU that man has authentic human existence. The necessities of life, however, make it impossible to remain in this relation permanently. On the contrary, the I-THOU relation consists of fleeting moments, sublime in their purity and exaltation. Ordinarily, as a matter of practical necessity, we depersonalize our relations. We need to know and use our environment. Whereas, the I-THOU relation is distinguished by communication and spontaneity, the I-IT relation is marked by calculation and various degrees of exploitation. Inevitably, the I-THOU dialogue degenerates into the "thingification" of the I-IT relation in which the other is used as means to an end. However, it is possible, indeed necessary, for man to recover the I-THOU relation. When the I-IT relation becomes predominant, it is an evil time, an age of depersonalization in which man is stunted in his humanity.

This typology of man's relation to his environment is applied by Buber to the area of religion in the third part of his "I and Thou" on which we now concentrate our attention. The essence of authentic religious experience is a dialogue between God and man. For this every I-THOU relationship is preparation and guidepost. "The prolonged lines of relationships meet in the eternal Thou. Every single Thou affords a glimpse

toward Him."⁹ Essentially, all men address themselves to the same "THOU" regardless of the Babel of theological definitions. "Men have addressed their eternal Thou by many names."¹⁰

Reciprocity is preserved even in the encounter with God. "The relationship is being elected and election, passion and action, all in one."¹¹ The encounter involves the whole person with all his being. There is no need to transcend the experience of our senses. Likewise unnecessary is absorption in the realm of ideas or spirituality. There is no effective preparation for the encounter by means of exercises or the dissolution of the "I" as prescribed by mystics. God is in the every day.

"We do not enter into the pure relationship by renouncing all, but rather by seeing all in the 'Thou;' ... Turning aside from the world does not bring us nearer to God; staring at the world also does not bring us to Him; but whoever sees the world in Him, stands in His Presence." ¹²

If we want to find God, we need only remain wherever we are, giving ourselves over to the dialogical relationship which will bring us to His Presence: "He who goes out to meet his THOU offering all his worldly being, finds the one whom one cannot seek ... when you sanctify life, you encounter the living God."¹³

Speculation is not the way to authentic knowledge of God. God cannot be derived from history or nature, not even from self-analysis. "It is not that something else is 'given' from which this is derived, but it is that which is immediately, directly and permanently opposite us: that which may be properly only addressed, not expressed."¹⁴

Man's relationship with God is the only dialogue that has permanence.

Love itself is subject to alteration. It cannot persist unchanged as immediate relationship; it changes all the time from actual to latent. "Every Thou in this world is bidden by its nature to become a thing for us ... Only one Thou, by its very nature, never ceases to remain our Thou." Those who know God are well aware of God becoming distant ... but not of the loss of the Presence. It is only we who are not always present." Every descriptive reference to God is allegory. Mortal beings can give voice to the unbroken truth of the world only "by addressing Him as Thou."¹⁵

The dialogue between God and man is comparable to human dialogue insofar as in both there is genuine response to genuine address. The difference is that in man's dialogue with man language is the chief means of communication. But in God's response everything, the all, becomes the language of Revelation."¹⁶ The whole universe, all things, all beings, all events are God's sign-language. This brings us now to the meaning of Revelation. Buber states eight characteristics which might be cited as his criteria for Revelation. 1) Man emerges "different" from his experience of Revelation. "Man does not come out of the highest encounter the same as he was when he entered into it ... Something happens to man."¹⁷ 2) Something new has been received in this experience the origin of which can not be properly designated. Whatever the scientific explanation "the fact is that we receive what we did not have before and that we receive it in such a way that we know: it was given to us."¹⁸ 3) What is received "is not a 'content,' but a Presence, a Presence felt as power."¹⁹ 4) The sense of the Presence conveys to us "the fullness of true mutuality, of acceptance and belonging without our being able to explain just what one is connected with."²⁰ 5) Another effect of the Presence conveyed

by the Revelation is "the unspoken confirmation of meaning ... Nothing, nothing can now be meaningless." There are no more questions about the meaning of life. But if such questions arose, you could not answer. "You have no formula and no picture for it, and yet it is something more certain than the feelings of your senses."²¹ 6) The Presence of which we are made aware by the Revelation arouses in us the sense of a task. It makes a demand upon us. 7) The Revelation is intensely personal, not transferable, not something we can generalize as universally valid and acceptable knowledge. "It is not something written on tablets to be raised above all heads." Each person can "validate the newly received meaning only with his single being and in the singleness of his life."²² 8) Finally, there is no rule leading into the encounter, nor does any rule lead us out of it. "We arrive at the encounter only with "THOU" on our lips, and are discharged into the world with him on our lips."²³

Revelation does not enable us to penetrate the mystery of the divine Being. The mystery remains as it was. "We have come nearer to God, but not closer to an unravelling and unveiling of the Being. Salvation, not solution, has been perceived."²⁴ And now Buber stresses what is undoubtedly the most characteristic feature of his concept of Revelation: It is not a communicable message, a creed to know or a code to observe. "We cannot go to others with what we have received and say, 'This is to be known, this is to be done.'²⁵ We can only go and give assurance." Buber's resistance to a "freezing" of the Revelation into an authoritative code, as we shall see, remained unbroken to the end of his life. The Revelation comes only to a single individual with a meaning addressed to him alone in his living encounter with God. General codes or creeds do not document Revelation.

It is not a group experience. It is authentic only within the soul of a single being. Buber underscores his belief that there are no exceptions. All Revelations are alike, for they are all one, eternal, continuing Revelation.

"This is the eternal Revelation taking place in the here and now. I know of none which in its essential phenomena is not the same. I believe in no other. I do not believe in God naming Himself, or identifying Himself before men. The word of Revelation is: I am what I am. The Revealer is the Revealer." 26

Buber's basic view of religion is that it represents a corruption, a vulgarization of Revelation. He sees the whole history of religion as a swinging back and forth between the sense of God's immediacy, captured in the living encounter, the loss of the Presence of the divine "THOU" as it is turned into an "IT" -- a thing refashioned in our own image -- and the recapture of the living God in the renewal of Revelation. God, according to His essence, cannot be comprehended as the sum of attributes, not even as an infinite sum of attributes raised to transcendence. Even "when we say: 'I believe that He is' -- the 'He' still is a metaphor, not, however, 'THOU.'" 27

Why, then, do we always try to turn the eternal THOU into an "IT," making God into a thing in our own image? "Whence," asks Buber, "come the declared knowledge and the set deed of the religions?" Why does man distort authentic Revelation into a "content?" 28

Buber explains the emergence of creeds and codes, so typical of historic religions, as concessions to human needs, two in particular. Man desires continuity in his possession of God. "He is not satisfied with the inexpressible confirmation of meaning; he wants it spread out as

something that he can again and again set forth and handle, a temporal and spatial continuum without loophole, which will guarantee his life in every point and at every moment."²⁹ Thus, God becomes a creedal object. At first the creed supplements the acts of relationship, later it replaces them. "The confidence, maintained in spite of everything by the one who struggles and knows the distance and nearness of God, is transformed ever more fully into the assurance of the exploiter that nothing can happen to him because he believes that there is One who won't let it happen."³⁰

There is another reason why men are not satisfied with the encounter of God in the authentic dialogue. The pure relationship, the "loneliness" of the single "I" before the "THOU" does not still the thirst for continuity felt by men. "He desires spatial expansion, representation in which the community of believers is united with God. Thus God becomes a cult object."³¹

What then is the true religious community? Buber's insistence upon the primacy of the single person in his encounter with God would logically negate the possibility of religious community. There is a way, however, to escape the anarchy of absolute religious individualism. Men, directed toward their common "THOU," each maintaining the integrity of his personal encounter, can, indeed do, form a community. An analogy which appears contrived to the point of being bizarre, illustrates the great length to which Buber goes in maintaining the individual character of the dialogue between God and man. The relations of men to their genuine Thou are like radii which, going forth from all the I-points toward the central THOU, form a circle.

"It is not the periphery, not the community that comes first, but the radii, having in common the relationship to the center. It is this common element (i.e. of personal God-man relations) which guarantees the maintenance of genuine community." 32

Religion is for Buber not the fulfillment of Revelation but the escape from it. "All Revelation is a call and mission. But again and again man, instead of fulfilling the Revelation, reflects on the Revealer. He would rather concern himself with God than with the world." 33 Thus the word of God is enveloped in "the cocoon of religion" from which it must be liberated in renewed turning to the eternal THOU.

With reference to those fundamental Revelations to which historic religions owe their origin, Buber points out that they are no different from those that are unheralded events in private life. If Revelation is an ever-present possibility for every person in his encounter with God, there can be no special Revelation. It must be continuous, awaiting only man's response in genuine dialogue.

"The tremendous Revelations, to which the religions refer, are essentially identical with those that take place quietly, everywhere and always. The tremendous Revelations which took place at the beginning of great communities, at turning points of history, are nothing but the eternal Revelation."

Again, there is no Revelation to a group, only to an individual person. "The Revelation is not poured through its recipient, like a funnel, into the world, but it happens to him, it seizes him in every part of his being and is fused with it." 34 Buber's point is that Revelation cannot be recapitulated in its verbal contents, but must be understood as an event that transforms the person. He does not reproduce the Revelation verbatim like a megaphone or mechanical instrument. Man, the organ of Revelation,

transmits it with the modulations that are characteristic of the organ.

Although Revelation is equally available at all times, there are special periods in history when the human spirit reaches the ripeness of maturity and needs but the slightest "touch of the toucher" to break forth. "The Revelation which then occurs takes all of the ready element as it is and, in recasting it, produces within it a 'Gestalt,' a new 'Gestalt' of God in the world." This is not an exceptional event, but happens regularly. "Ever new spheres become locations for the theophany." What happens is neither all man's doing nor God's, but "a mixture of the divine and the human." The one who experiences the Revelation brings back from it "an image of God."³⁵

Buber ends the book with another thrust at established religion with its institutions, cult, code, creed and community. He sees a historical paradox. The true word is in the Revelation, but with the accession of power, it is lost.

"The times when the essential word appears are those in which the connection between I and world is renewed; the times when the word effectively governs are those in which there is harmony between I and world; the times in which the word becomes authoritative are those in which the loss of reality, the alienation between I and world, the dire fate is completed."³⁶

The messianic vision, seen through the perspective of the dialogue between God and man, is "the theophany that moves closer and closer to the sphere in between beings, the realm hidden in our midst, the in-between." This reunion is the goal of history. On our part we call it return, but "from God's point of view it is salvation."³⁷

In a vast amount of writing that followed his "I and THOU," Buber proceeded to apply its basic concepts to Judaism. The only new thing is the illustrations, now taken from a Jewish context, but the concepts presented in the "I AND THOU" remain the same.

What is the people of Israel? It is among the nations God's partner in the dialogue. "At the very outset of its history, Israel, as a people, experienced the Divine."³⁸ The evolution of humanity must begin with the perfection of a particular nation. Israel was given the task to pave the way for true humanity.

"There is one nation which once upon a time heard this charge so loudly and clearly that the charge penetrated to the very depth of its soul. That nation accepted the charge, not as an inchoate mass of individuals but as a nation. As a nation it accepted the truth which calls for its fulfillment by the human nation, the human race as a whole. And that is its spirit, the spirit of Israel. The charge is not addressed to isolated individuals, but to a nation. For only an entire nation, which comprises peoples of all kinds, can demonstrate a life of unity and peace, of righteousness and justice to the human race, as a sort of example and beginning. A true humanity, that is, a nation composed of many nations, can commence only with a certain, true nation. The hearkening nation was charged to become a true nation."³⁹

What is the form in which Israel received its divine charge? Is it the Torah? Is it any revealed code of specific content? Revelation comes to the people but not in a document. "The community of Israel experiences history and Revelation as one phenomenon, history as Revelation and Revelation as history."⁴⁰

Revelation in the experience of Israel is understood by Buber precisely in the dialogical sense as stated in "I AND THOU" with reference

to individual encounters with God. God does not convey a specific message but "everything, the all, becomes the language of Revelation."⁴¹ The "charge" is really not that which God gives, but that which man -- in this case, Israel -- takes from the encounter with God's Presence.⁴² This is clearly brought out as we examine Buber's view of the Bible, the theophany at Sinai and the role of Moses.

The Bible in its totality is essentially a dialogue between "the 'I' of the speaking God and the 'THOU' of the hearing Israel."⁴³ It is Israel's encounter with God that gives unity to all parts of the Bible. It is one book "for one basic theme unites all the stories and songs, saying and prophecies, contained within it. The theme of the Bible is the encounter between a group of people and the Lord of the world in the course of history."⁴⁴ This should by no means be taken as endorsement of the Biblical text, or any part thereof, as verbatim Revelation. The Bible records only the events of Revelation; it documents the dialogical relationship between God and man -- or, God and Israel -- but it is not a revealed text.

The Bible is God's address to Israel -- by way of individuals. But it is not Revelation in a vacuum. Words and events go together. The Revelation becomes meaningful precisely because the historical situation is preserved in the Biblical record. The Bible reflects a religion made real because "it made the spirit incarnate, and sanctified everyday life."⁴⁵ In the Bible

"both events and words are placed in the midst of the people, of history, of the world. What happens does not happen in a vacuum existing between God and the

individual. The Word travels by way of the individual to the people, so that they may hear and translate it into reality ... This people is called upon to weld its members into a community that may serve as a model for the many different peoples." 46

The reader of today may participate in the dialogue -- indeed, the Bible becomes relevant to our lives only when we find God addressing us through the Bible. How can this be done? The reader must hold himself open, approach the Bible in expectation of the spirit that might enter into him by way of any of the Biblical sayings or images. The reader of today will find his point of spiritual anchorage in the Bible if he recognizes it as "the true history of the world, that is to say, of the history according to which the world has an origin and a goal," and identifies the origin as his own, and the goal as his own.

"The Jewish Bible demands that the individual fit his own life into this true history, so that 'I' may find my own origin in the origin of the world, and my own goal in the goal of the world. But the Jewish Bible does not set a past event as a midpoint between origin and goal. It interposes a movable, circling midpoint which cannot be pinned to any set time, for it is the moment when I, the reader, the hearer, the man, catch through the words of the Bible the voice which from earliest beginnings has been speaking in the direction of the goal. The midpoint is this mortal and yet immortal moment of mine. Creation is the origin, redemption the goal. But Revelation is not a fixed, dated point poised between the two. The Revelation at Sinai is not this midpoint itself, but the perceiving of it, and such perception is possible at any time." 47

Buber's highly original idea is that the Torah is in the present.

Buber's stress on the timelessness of the Bible clearly corresponds to his view of Revelation as continuous and eternal. It leads -- or misleads --

him to the minimizing of the Sinaitic theophany. If the dialogue with God is continuous, what need is there for a central, pivotal Revelation? Also, seeing Revelation in the "singular," Buber is not prepared to accept the collective experience of Revelation at Sinai as reported in the Bible. The encounter with God, he holds, always involves the single "I" in dialogical relation with the eternal "THOU." Thus, the role of Moses at Sinai is magnified -- and that of Israel modified.

Buber's views on the Revelation at Sinai are developed coherently in his study entitled "Moses, The Revelation and the Covenant,"⁴⁸ and partially restated many times elsewhere. Its essential point is that the Revelation at Sinai was truly experienced as Revelation only by Moses and only indirectly through him, by the people of Israel. Moreover, the real significance of Sinai for the people was the theo-political act of the covenant, the establishment of the theocracy with God as King and Israel as His kingship people.⁴⁹

The crucial role belongs to Moses: Israel had known God before, but entered into a new relationship with Him through Moses.

"But it was Moses who, on this religious relationship, established a covenant between the God and 'His people.' Nothing of such a kind can be imagined except on the assumption that a relation which had come down from ancient times has been melted in the fire of some new personal experience. The foundation takes place before the assembled host; the experience is undergone in solitude."⁵⁰

Buber confronts the heart of the matter straightway. Why was the decalogue revealed? What was the original purpose of the decalogue? To whom was it revealed? To whom? -- this is made clear by its key word, "Thou."

"The soul of the Decalogue, however, is to be found in the word 'Thou.' ... orders are given to the one addressed, to the listener ... It is possible that only the man who wrote down the words had once had the experience of feeling himself addressed; possibly he transmitted that which he heard to his people ... At all times, in any case, only those persons really grasped the Decalogue who literally felt it as having been addressed to them, themselves; only those, that is, who experienced that first one's state of being addressed as though they themselves were being addressed." 51

The commanding "I" speaking to a "THOU" is taken as clue of a personal experience of Revelation of that one man -- Moses -- prior to the promulgation of the Decalogue. From that original encounter, Moses may or may not have emerged with the decalogue, but only because he encountered God, at Sinai or before, was Moses able to speak in His name. What he said then, at Sinai, was understood and will be understood at all times only by those who hear in those words God addressing them also. The Decalogue, then, is a Revelation that has filtered through the mind of Moses to Israel and to mankind but can be recognized as divine only by those who identify the Voice that speaks in the Decalogue as the same Voice which they have encountered afresh in their own lives.

The essential point to retain from this discussion is that not even the Decalogue may be considered as a revealed text. Buber will not yield on the point that there is no such thing as revealed content which one person can "take over" from another. The decalogue will appear to a person as "divine" only after it has been so confirmed to him personally. If it is actually revealed to him too, it will seem revealed, not otherwise.

What was it, then, that happened at Sinai? According to Buber, the chief event at Sinai was not the Revelation of the decalogue as law, but

its promulgation as the constitution of the covenant. It was an act of Mosaic statesmanship.

"He aims at nothing else than to prepare the Community for this God, who has declared that He is ready to be their covenantal Lord; but, and for that very reason, he must provide Israel with a basic constitution, in order to make Israel united and firm in itself." 52

Thus Buber sees Moses "upon whom it was incumbent to master the situation" withdraw "to the loneliness of God's mountain in order, far from the people and overshadowed by God's cloud, to write God's law for the people." 53

No thinker has affirmed the reality of Revelation as unreservedly as Buber and yet denied the possibility of specifying its content. It can happen to anyone, any time. It is part of the every day. Every facet of existence can become God's language of Revelation in man's encounter with the eternal Thou. Of all things Revelation is the most possible. What is impossible, according to Buber, is to give the objective content of any of these Revelations. No content is ever given. The "message" we seem to gain from the experience is strictly man's own response to the encounter in which nothing but the Presence is "experienced." Buber has never retreated from this position. His clearest, sharpest statement of refusal to accept any text, any creed, any law as "God's" is the celebrated passage which predates the publication of the "I and THOU":

"O you secure and safe ones who hide yourselves behind the ramparts of the law so that you will not have to look into God's abyss! Yes, you have secure ground under your feet, while we hang suspended looking out over the endless deeps. But we would not exchange our dizzy insecurity and our poverty for your security and abundance. For to you God is one who created once and not again; but to us God is he who 'renews the work of creation every day.' To you God is one who revealed Himself once and no more; but to us he speaks out of the burning thorn-bush of the present.....in the revelations of our innermost hearts -- greater than words.

We know of his will only the eternal; the temporal we must command for ourselves, ourselves imprint his wordless bidding ever anew in the stuff of reality....In genuine life between men the new word will reveal itself to us. First we must act, then we shall receive: from out of our own deed." 54

This is the life "on the narrow ridge", in which one holds oneself open for the living dialogue with God, while in precarious suspense between the dual hazards of so-called "objective truths", unconfirmed by personal experience, and unbridled subjectivism.

Its possible rewards are those stated: spontaneity, the freedom of decision, the ever renewed sense of the Presence. Its dangers, some would argue, far exceed those listed: Not only insecurity and scant knowledge of "the way", but also the impossibility of transmitting word or way to others and to the future. There is precious little room "on the narrow ridge" on which to build the life of the community. Grave, indeed, is the danger of encountering nothing but oneself, or even worse, imagining it to be an encounter with God.

In the course of years, Buber became aware or was made aware of all this, but it changed nothing. For example, he acknowledged the need for law, but only if it were ever again renewed in spiritual rebirth.

"God rules through men who have been gripped and filled by His spirit, and who on occasion carry out His will not merely by means of instantaneous decision, but also through lasting justice and law....for without law, that is, without any clear-cut and transmissible line of demarcation between that which is pleasing to God and that which is displeasing to Him, there can be no historical continuity of divine rule upon earth." 55

But, Buber cannot refrain from pointing out the curse of the law when "what has been inspired always becomes emptied of the spirit." The danger is "that the living element always dies off, but thereafter, what is left, continues to rule over living men." And so he concludes, "the law must again and again immerse itself in the consuming and purifying fire of the spirit, in order to renew itself and anew refine the genuine substance out of the dross of what has become false."⁵⁶ In other words, the encounter in the here-and-now must be the corrective of the law transmitted by the past, which means, of course, that the tradition is only valid with the consent of each single person who, in the final analysis, remains answerable only to his eternal Thou as he sees that "Thou."⁵⁸

Buber cannot go farther in meeting the criticism of subjectivism. He is well aware of the hazard that he might not receive the needed guidance in the dialogical situation. But, as late as 1961, in a response to a volume of 29 essays on his work by various scholars and philosophers, Buber repeats that he can accept no authority above the "Revelation" which emerges from the dialogue. He will not absolutize any Revelation — not even his own.

"I know of no other Revelation than the encounter between God and man, in which the human shares with the divine. The divine appears to me as a fire which melts down the human iron, but what results from it is not itself a kind of fire. I therefore can not accept anything as divinely declared or instituted which, directly or indirectly — i.e., by oral or written tradition — comes out of the actual Revelation, be it word or custom or institution just as we have it. In other words: I possess no assurance against the necessity of living in fear and trembling; I have nothing but the certainty that we participate in Revelation."⁵⁹

Buber admits the possibility that what he calls "Revelation" might be his own invention. He has no choice, he reminds his critics, but to hold his own soul open toward all of the transmitted ought and ought-not in order to probe honestly what he can acknowledge as divinely commanded and prohibited, in view of the lack of objective criteria. Such is the lot of 'beggars.'⁶⁰

In the final analysis, Buber reminds us that every person "must regard himself every moment under God's judgment." There is no such thing as human inerrancy. "Both, human faith no less than human conscience, can be in error and err again and again; and both, the conscience no less than the faith, must, in this knowledge, submit to Grace."⁶¹ It is man's lot to be perplexed by Revelation and to be mistaken in its interpretation. From this not even the prophets were exempt, as Buber points out in his comment on "Samuel and Agag."⁶² Was it really God's will that the captured Amalekite king Agag be hewed in pieces "before the Lord?" Buber says bluntly that the prophet was in error. He misunderstood the Revelation.

"Man has been created in such a way that he can, but does not have to, understand what God speaks to him ... he mingles already in listening the heavenly command with terrestrial statute, Revelation of what is and orientation which he himself arranges ... We have no objective criterion by which to draw the distinction; we have only faith -- if we have that much."⁶³

Buber does not lack critics who have rightly argued that his kind of Revelation can not possibly be validated. How do I know that the voice I hear out of the dialogue is God's and not my own? "Who is then to say which is the divine law within him and which is not divine?"⁶⁴ As we have

seen, Buber freely admits the possibility of error and self-delusion. He openly concedes that there are no objective criteria by which Revelation, as he understands it, may be validated. More cogent is the criticism that Buber's image of the dialogue runs counter to the Biblical phenomenology of Revelation.. Buber's insistence on man's freedom in the dialogue and the autonomy of his response is nowhere illustrated in Biblical accounts of Revelation. The Bible presents Revelation as an overwhelming experience which takes hold of man and leaves him no choice. The people no less than the prophets are simply overwhelmed by it.⁶⁵ Another objection is that contrary to Buber's claim, the dialogue with God, far from being the most natural phenomenon in man's religious life, is actually one of the rarest occurrences.⁶⁶

Another criticism which merits attention is the fact that in Buber's humanism, implicit in the dialogue, "God is made a respondent of man. Although Buber everywhere insists that God acts, that God reveals, what in fact does God do that is not in response to man? Where is the initiative of God before which man -- sullen and unbowed -- must yield?"⁶⁷ Will the dialogue ever produce anything other than what man in his own heart really wants to do? Will the "call to a task" which man perceives in the dialogue be anything but a projection of his own deepest wish? Can we compare man's autonomy of the dialogical response to that profound struggle, so often pictured in the soul of the prophet, who resists with all his might the task God has imposed and which, in the end, he must perform?

Doubtless correct is also the conclusion that Buber, by overstressing the Revelation in the here-and-now, tends to eliminate God from history, thus robbing tradition of all authority.⁶⁸

Among Buber's last publications was the article "On Revelation" previously referred to.⁶⁹ It restates his basic position, which remained unchanged throughout his life. What is revealed is only Revelation itself -- and that cannot be validated because it lacks objective content.⁷⁰ In one small paragraph, however, there is the suggestion of a criterion. The struggle between false and true authority is inescapable, but cannot be decided in our time.

"The triumphs of this struggle are generally obscured and become apparent only after a considerable lapse of time. But human history is also the purifying waters through which the authority must return and become cleansed, in the aspiration to remove the human dross recognized as such. Every person of faith has to take part in this process of purification. Here, too, the results are sometimes apparent only at a later age."⁷¹

The criterion suggested here is the test of time: the survival of truth as the fittest reality of them all.

II. FRANZ ROSENZWEIG

(1886 - 1929)

It is one of the ironies of life that the thinker who made man's anguished response to the inescapable fact of mortality the pivotal motive for philosophy, was himself destined to die at the tragically young age of 43, after a dreadful illness of eight years during which he was given the "opportunity" of testing his cardinal belief that love is as strong as death.

The life of Franz Rosenzweig is one of the shining pages of Jewish history, a saga of heroism, that will inspire a literature of its own. Here we can only sketch the bare outline of biographical facts¹ insofar as they relate to a discussion of his stature as a Jewish thinker. He was born in Cassel on December 23, 1886, into a well-to-do middle class family whose ties with Judaism had been reduced to little more than the residual pride of descent. He was Bar Mitzvah and taken to High Holiday services. Not until college age did he learn of such things as the Sabbath eve Kiddush.

His education included gymnasium and a university study of history and philosophy. His doctoral thesis on Hegel was completed in 1912. Soon afterwards, he abandoned Hegelianism, or rather, the whole gamut of philosophic idealism, under the influence of the new existential approach, to which he had been lead through his friendship with Rosenstock-Huessy. Frequent discussions with this young Christian philosopher of Jewish

origin, and with other Jewish intellectuals who had converted to Christianity, including several cousins of his own, convinced him of his own religious emptiness. Increasingly he looked toward Christianity for the satisfaction of his personal needs which philosophy and his own faulty Jewish upbringing had left unanswered. In the summer of 1913 he was ready for baptism. An agonized reappraisal, coupled with a "final" Yom Kippur visit (October 1913) to a small Berlin synagogue on the threshold of conversion, resulted in a reversal of his decision. In effect, a conversion did take place — a conversion to Judaism.

He rediscovered the genius of Judaism, the Jew's immediate apprehension of God. As a Jew, Rosenzweig found that he already was with the Father whom Christians were still trying to reach by way of the son.

"Nobody comes to the Father — except when he no longer needs to come to the Father, since he already is with Him. This is the case of the people Israel (not the individual Jew). The people Israel, chosen by the Father, gazes over the world and history toward that last and farthest point when this, their Father, this self-same One and unique One, will be — 'All in All.'"²

Immediately after that fateful day in the synagogue came a period of highly concentrated Jewish autodidactics. He literally threw himself into Jewish studies, attended lectures at the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums and fell under the spell of Hermann Cohen. During the war, in which he served on the Balkan front, his interests gradually turned toward a teaching career. He made a penetrating analysis of the state of Jewish education ("Zeit Ists").³ Then, only five years after his decision to turn Christian, deeply absorbed in the fundamental problems of Judaism and under the impact of a sudden inspiration, he began to pour out

his magnum opus, "Der Stern der Erlösung."⁴

After the war, Rosenzweig married and resettled in Frankfurt where he founded in 1920 the "Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus," which became the pilot project of his new Jewish educational theories. Barely one and a half years later, Rosenzweig, a victim to creeping paralysis, was forced to resign from his directorship of the Lehrhaus. From 1922 he is confined entirely to his home and within a few months he is a total invalid. With heroic efforts, aided by his utterly dedicated wife Edith, he maintains communication with visitors (largely by means of a sign language), continues his own studies, engages in a voluminous correspondence and produces a sizable number of articles and critical reviews. The last five years of his life (1924-1929) were crowned by his collaboration with Martin Buber on the new Bible translation, an irrefutable witness to the renaissance of Judaism and German Jewry's last testament of an epoch of Jewish culture that was soon to die.

As the appearance of a mountain changes relative to the position of the viewer, so the appraisal of a man will differ greatly, subject to the vantage point of the appraiser. Despite the brevity of his life, Rosenzweig achieved stature in several roles which critics will evaluate according to their own special interest. Thus, the historian will dwell at length on the symptomatic metamorphosis of Rosenzweig from a religiously uprooted German-Jewish intellectual to an affirmative Jew with profound religious commitment. The educator will be intrigued by his concept of adult education and will scrutinize the organization, method, success and failure of the Lehrhaus. Theoreticians of Reform and Conservatism will find

particularly significant Rosenzweig's discussion of Jewish law and his own personal style of life, which went beyond liberalism and orthodoxy.

Jewish apologists will turn to the famous Rosenzweig-Rosenstock correspondence of 1916⁵ as one of the great rehearsals for the current Judeo-Christian dialogue. Historians of philosophy will analyze Rosenzweig's position as an existentialist philosopher in relationship and comparison with those who preceded him, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche -- as well as those who were his contemporaries and successors, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel and Sartre.⁷

In this study, our interest in Rosenzweig as philosopher is only peripheral. We are concerned chiefly with his contribution to Jewish thought and shall refer to items of general philosophic interest only where this is absolutely necessary for the elucidation of his approach to the theological problem with which we are concerned.

Rosenzweig was emphatic in defining his "Stern der Erlösung" (henceforth to be referred to only as the "Star") as a philosophic system. Formally, the work represents a conscious departure from the neat tripartite compartmentalization prevalent in German philosophic systems; logic, ethics, aesthetics, with an additional volume on philosophy of religion. The Star, despite its very different structure, retains the formalism of a system with this difference: the categories of logic, ethics and aesthetics are integrated within the three major foci of reality which Rosenzweig sets out to illuminate in their mutual relation -- God, man and the world.

The "Star's" point of departure is the situation of the individual

person, left high and dry with his personal needs, while German idealism organizes the universe within a thought-structure that tends to reduce all reality to a single essence: thought itself. It is an imposing structure but indifferent to the individual and irrelevant to his personal needs. The speculative systems, identifying reality with conceptual truths, entirely overlook the individual with his anxieties. Man, to begin with and always, is face to face with death, with the necessity of finding support against annihilation that threatens his existence every moment. Though man be a seeker of knowledge, he is above all a creature in need of love and redemption from solitude, fear and death. Rosenzweig then proceeds to show why philosophic idealism is incapable of meeting man's needs. This whole philosophic movement which reached its culmination in Hegel has reduced reality to an abstraction in which man as a living being with particular needs does not count. The "new thinking" must restore the three fundamental realities of experience: God, man and world. One cannot be derived from the other, neither identified with the other, nor transformed into the other. Already the unsophisticated pagan mind saw reality in this fulness -- but it saw it, tragically, unrelated. The world was seen without beginning and without end, eternally existing, self-sustaining and yet suspended in the nowhere -- unrelated to the gods and insensitive to man. The mythological gods lived in a "world" of their own, unresponsive and unconcerned about human destiny. Man himself remained an alien, a tragic victim of the blind forces of nature and the caprice of the gods.

The redeeming vision of the "Star" is the relationship it proclaims between God, man and world. God and world are linked through creation; God and man are joined through Revelation; man and world are correlated through redemption. Thus the irreducible realities of God, man and world are inter-linked through creation, Revelation and redemption.

The first part of the "Star" gives primacy to God as creator; the middle section deals, for the most part, with Revelation; the last part illustrates how Judaism and Christianity are both valid faiths, based on the identical understanding of the ultimate realities of God-man-world as related through creation, Revelation and redemption. The differences between these two religions are in their historical functions and in the forms of their faith community, but not in the fundamentals of faith.

We now turn to a close examination of Rosenzweig's understanding of Revelation. Rosenzweig traces the origin of the "Star" back to his pre-occupation with the problem of Revelation. In his important letter of 1917 addressed to Rudolf Ehrenberg,⁹ which has come to be known as the "germ-cell" of the "Star," Rosenzweig outlines with feverish intellectual excitement the contents of that momentous inspiration which soon was to be expanded into the book. It all began, he reminds his cousin, with a philosophic discussion they had engaged in, during a hike through the Harz forest in 1914, on the possibilities of separating Revelation from man's own cognition. What were the criteria for this distinction?

At that time, the only criterion he could cite was the prophet's own resistance to his vision. But he realized the weakness of this criterion, predicated as it was on the view that man invariably follows his own urges and that the voice of God must always call him into the opposite

¹⁰
direction. Now, thinking consistently with the creature's need as his springboard, Rosenzweig envisages Revelation in a new light. It is relationship. The essence of Revelation is the moment when the person in full consciousness of his identity as an "I" gains awareness of God as a "Thou," loving him, making demands on him, commanding him.

"Er darf und muss verlangen, dass Gott ihn wiederliebe. Ja er muss verlangen, dass sogar Gott ihn zuerst liebe. Denn sein Ich ist stumpf und stumm und wartet auf das erlösende Wort aus dem Mund Gottes 'Adam, wo bist Du?', um dem ersten lauten nach ihm fragenden Du das erste halblaute zaghafte Ich der Scham zu erwidern. ... Im Ich der Offenbarung und im Du der Gewissensfrage oder des Gebots und erwidern in Adams Ich der Scham oder in Abrahams der Bereitschaft, und rückwärts wieder im Ich der Reue und im Du des Gebets und im Ich der Erlösung." ¹¹

Love is the essence of Revelation. It is the spark that awakens the creature to conscious life in the presence of the Creator. God's call to Adam, "Where art Thou?" is the arch-typal loving concern of God, made manifest to the mind of man.

Spinoza's love which moves from universal essence to the particular, is contrasted with that other kind of love which rises out of event, the most particular thing there is. ¹² He speaks of this love which proceeds from the particular to the next particular and would ever be love of the nearest before it turns into love for those that are far. The organizing principle of the world is not some generality but the single and particular, the event in its concreteness. This "center of the world" is the point of contact for Revelation.

"Die Offenbarung also ist fähig, Mittelpunkt zu sein, fester, unverrückbarer Mittelpunkt. Und warum? Weil sie dem Punkt geschieht, dem starren tauben unverschiebbaren Punkt, dem trotzigem Ich, das 'ich nun einmal bin.'" /3

Rosenzweig now delimits ethical idealism from Revelation. The distinctive quality of ethical idealism is a call to self-development.

"Ideals call on us, 'become what you are,' fulfill your 'destiny.' By contrast, Revelation says, 'Do my will! Carry out my work!' The presupposition is that man is entrusted with what belongs to God, God's Will, God's work for him to do ... The Highest ... descends upon us, instead of promising our very self as reward (become what you are), it offers us transcendence of the self, God's nearness, as bliss ... thus man receives, by making room for God within himself, everything that he surrendered to God, including himself, man." /4

Ethical idealism involves an inflation of myself. Revelation is the surrender of my self to God who, in taking possession of me, gives me everything.

There is another distinction. In ethics "rules the tragic conflict of duties. God's command is an order issued unequivocally to this man, and into this particular situation." /5

What is the characteristic language of Revelation? It is the language of the command. It is the demand, the unconditional call of duty and love that rises above every other kind of duty and love. What is the secret of the authority which rings out of the revealed word of prophecy? Rosenzweig points out the difference between the ethical ideal in which philosophy instructs us and the imperative inspired by Revelation:

"So ist dem Frommen kein 'Gesetz gegeben, denn er steht unter einem 'Befehl.' Einem Befehl, der ihm Vollmacht gibt über die ganze Welt und ihre Ideale. ... " /6

And unlike the ethical generalities of idealism, the prophetic word of Revelation is always addressed to a particular duty, a specific deed within a specific situation.

"Nicht ein solcher irgendwie allgemeinbegrifflich verstehbarer Kampf ist dem Frommen befohlen. Sondern ... diese Pflicht und diese Liebe schiebt jede andre Pflicht oder jede andre Liebe beiseite. Die Offenbarung schiebt sich als ein Keil in die Welt." 17

The impelling force that drives the prophet to his proclamation must be understood as an intervention. The prophet himself becomes conscious of the "foreign" interference into the whole value system and thus initially resists it:

"Deshalb ist der Widerstand des Profeten gegen seine Sendung, sein Kampf gegen das mählich steigende Bild unverwechselbar mit sittlichen Kämpfen. Es streitet da nicht das Höhere gegen das Geringere, sondern das Geheissene gegen alles andre was bloss möglich wäre, unbeschadet dessen, dass zu diesem Möglichen auch das 'Hohe' gehört;" 18

The prophet's resistance against the command flows out of the reaction of his total personality, of his secret devotion to the value-system which is being suspended by the invasion of the commanding word. "This demonstrates," Rosenzweig points out, "that there is between Revelation and the world a relationship, not only in speculation ... but in reality." 19

The essential point Rosenzweig makes with reference to Revelation in that first draft of ideas which became the "Star," we now repeat, is that Revelation is a relationship -- not of concepts and ideas, but a relationship in reality: It is God's outreach, in love and in command, to the individual man. It is not the formulation of a general principle, but

the sharply edged word directed to a specific situation.

The actual composition of the "Star" has become a legendary tour de force. Begun on August 22, 1918, on army postcards which were mailed home for transcription, the work was completed within six months, on February 16, 1919.²⁰ We find in it a substantial elaboration of the thoughts on Revelation which, in nuclear form already appeared in that "germ-cell" letter to Ehrenberg of 1917.

One theme, however, is altogether new, and that is the association of Revelation with creation. Not since S. L. Steinheim do we find in any of our thinkers so strong an emphasis upon creation ex nihilo as the cardinal principle of the Biblical faith. There was no "chaos" before God. God created "being" itself, even that which preceded the world of creation.²¹ "The chaos is within, not prior to creation."²² Creation is neither self-evident, nor can it be proven speculatively. The idea of creation is not validated by appearing to us as an adequate explanation of the riddle of the world. No one has the right to accept the idea of creation as though it were a scientific hypothesis, unless the voice of Revelation has reached him:

"Aber die Schöpfung selbst wird nicht durch die Welt bewiesen ... Der Schöpfer selbst muss be-wiesen, nämlich in seiner Gänze ge-wiesen werden ... Der Schöpfer ist auch der Offenbarer. Die Schöpfung ist die Weissagung, die erst durch das Wunderzeichen der Offenbarung bestätigt wird. Es ist nicht möglich, die Schöpfung deswegen zu glauben, weil sie eine zureichende Erklärung des Welträtsels bietet. Wer von der Stimme der Offenbarung noch nicht erreicht ist, hat kein Recht, den Gedanken der Schöpfung, als wäre er eine wissenschaftliche Hypothese, anzunehmen."²³

Again, as emphatically as Steinheim, he rejects the idea of emanation

as a plausible substitute for creation. The idea is rejected on strictly rational grounds. The concept of God as "producer" of the universe by way of emanation ("Erzeugergott") is, after all, an object of cognition. In that case, how can such a God be rationally considered as Origin ("Ursprung") and thus be exempt from cognition? Rationally this cannot be done. God, too, must be cognized and thus change from "Origin" into a content of the very essence of what is cognized. In the place of God another origin of the world, God included, must be posited. This leads to the sinking of the world within the Self -- the "I" of idealism. This "I" or its synonyms such as "subject," "transcendental apperception," the "spirit," the "idea," are all different names for the Self, the only element left besides the world and God, which thus replaces the God of emanation.²⁴

The result is no different when idealism puts in the place of the impersonal principle of emanation the idea of God as absolute Personality. Again, both world and God are annihilated in the thinker's own thought. Again the "I" is the root of all cognition: God becomes an object, the absolute object not of cognition but of the will. But absolute Personality is really unthinkable in the sense of genuine personality. So, He becomes "spirit," not an "I" but a "He" or "It." But God as spirit is none other than the subject of cognition -- the "I" of the thinker. The result is a victory -- but at what price! The whole structure of reality lies shattered.

"Ein Sieg also auf der ganzen Linie, aber ein Sieg um welchen Preis! Das grosse Gebaeude der Wirklichkeit ist zerstört." 25

Idealism leaves us with a chaos in which remains only one firm point, pushed to the extreme limit of objective being but not yet "worked over" by idealism: the "Ding-an-sich." In idealism's uncharacteristic suggestion of a common root for this and man, the prospect appears of an all in which the three elements, world, man and God, might live in undisturbed actuality. But idealism cannot enter the land of this truth which it glimpses on its horizon.

"It forfeited its right of entry by its God-denying self-confidence which seized the staff of reason trying to force the living waters of the all out of the rock of creation instead of being trustfully contented with the stream of speech God would allow to flow forth from this rock." 26

Rosenzweig's metaphor, with its ingenious allusion to the sin of Moses in "smiting the rock," is clear. The truth of reality in its irreducible elements of God-man-world cannot be constructed by reason but is a truth of Revelation. This explains Rosenzweig's thematic statements made a few pages earlier:

"Wir entwickeln den Schöpfungsgedanken im Lichte der Offenbarung; ... Wir können den Schöpfungsbegriff ruhig als einen Anfang des Wissens gelten lassen ... Wir stellen ihn in den grösseren Zusammenhang der Offenbarung." 27

Creation, precisely because it defies rational comprehension, is itself Revelation. But it is a Revelation in deed, not yet in word. The need for the "word" of Revelation, by which God enkindles man's consciousness, arises from the fact of death which is built into creation as promise of something that transcends terrestrial life.

"Death is to every creature the completion of its corporeality ("Dinglichkeit"), transposes the creation into the past and turns it into the still and steady promise of the miracle of its renewal." 28

Thus, creation, which incorporates death, calls for a power which can counteract death. This power is love which is as strong as death. The giving of love is the heart of Revelation. In revealing love to man, God orients man toward the present moment for love is all in the present.

"Revelation is to the soul the experience of the present." 29

Rosenzweig proceeds to speak of Revelation as love and love as Revelation. The terms become interchangeable. Love alone is overpowering in its domination of the heart and yet appears always newborn, as though it had no past, the child of the spontaneous moment.

"Denn Liebe allein ist so zugleich schicksalshafte Gewalt über das Herz, in dem sie erwacht, und doch so neugeboren, so -- zunächst -- vergangenheitslos, so ganz dem Augenblick, den sie erfüllt, und nur ihm selbst entsprungen." 30

In creation God merely began the process of Revelation. The reality of God would be in danger of being hidden within the infinity of creation by appearing as its remote origin.³¹ Thus, the first Revelation through creation demands, in order to be recognized as Revelation, another Revelation in the strictest sense of that word:

"So verlangt die erste Offenbarung in der Schöpfung, grade um ihres Offenbarungscharakters willen, das Hervorbrechen einer 'zweiten' Offenbarung, einer Offenbarung, die nichts weiter ist als Offenbarung, einer Offenbarung im engeren, nein, engsten Sinn." 32

What kind of Revelation must it be? To begin with, it must be "disclosure of something hidden." That means, it must be "a loud word breaking

the silence of an otherwise mute being, a living moment breaking forth from an otherwise quietly resting permanence.³³ Such Revelation in time, in this present moment of existence, would make the God of eternity, the God of creation, also the God of temporal life. If these are the marks of Revelation, only love has them, that is, the love of the lover, not the love of the beloved.

"Es ist die Liebe, auf die alle hier an den Begriff des Offenbarers gestellten Forderungen zutreffen, die Liebe des Liebenden, nicht die der Geliebten."³⁴

Love has everything that would also describe Revelation. It is self-dedication, renewed every moment; it is the free giving of oneself in love; the beloved receives something which is not of himself -- a present. But, the lover gives something that issues forth from himself, like a branch out of a tree. If we ascribe love to God, are we not imputing a need to Him? Love is not a quality or attribute. It is an event. It is dynamic, unpredictable self-expression. "God loves" is purest present."³⁵

As love cannot be understood to be "timeless" so it should not be seen as "unlimited." Love cannot be expanded endlessly, like wisdom to omniscience and power to omnipotence. There is no such thing as "universal" love. Love is discriminating; it confines itself to the one-and-only-one, within this very moment. Yet, God is capable of love for everything. What separates His specific love from the love of all is a "not yet." His love is on the move from what He already loves to that which He shall love.³⁶ Thus, God's love is not like light radiating equally in

all directions, but

"it has a puzzling focus on the particular -- men, nations, times, things -- unpredictable in its interventions except for the certainty that it will eventually embrace everything not yet touched by it." 37

What is the essential content of all Revelation? It is the command, "love me." It is not only the highest, it is the only command, the sense and meaning of all commands.³⁸ Only a God who is Himself a lover would command us, "Thou shalt love the lord Thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might." A third person could not possibly command love, but the mouth of the lover can.

"Die Liebe des Liebenden hat gar kein anderes Wort sich zu äussern als das Gebot. Alles andere ist schon nicht mehr unmittelbare Äusserung, sondern Erklärung -- Liebes-erklärung." 39

Rosenzweig now turns to a significant distinction between command (Gebot) and law (Gesetz).⁴⁰ Revelation comes to us as a present event in the form of command. In time the commands turn into laws as part of the remembered past -- all commands, except this one, to love God. It is always spoken into the today. It can never become law, only command. And wherever this command is seen highest, all the laws below may likewise turn again into commands. Thus, the supreme command to love God vitalizes and validates the laws of the past.⁴¹ God always speaks to us in the imperative. This is best exemplified through the prophets. The commanding "I" identifies the prophet's speech as God's. God does not speak to the prophet; He speaks out of him:

"The prophet is not intermediary between God and man. He does not receive the Revelation and pass it on, but immediately out of his mouth comes the voice of God, speaking in the first person, as 'I.'" 42

Rosenzweig's object, we should note, in this passage is not to reaffirm the literal truth of the prophetic message as recorded in the Bible. His object in this context is to understand the prophetic "I" as criterion for the reality of Revelation. The prophet cannot speak of God in the third person because God has taken possession of him and speaks out of him.

"Er lässt Gott überhaupt nicht reden, sondern indem er den Mund auftut, spricht schon Gott; der Prophet kann noch kaum sein 'So spricht der Ewige' oder das noch kürzere, noch eiligere, selbst die Verbalform sparende 'Spruch des Ewigen' herausbringen, da hat Gott schon von seinen Lippen Besitz genommen." 43

Revelation, then, is divine speech breaking forth from lips that would otherwise remain silent.

"We have thus recognized Revelation as the silent Self gaining, under the love of God, the power of articulation as a speaking soul." 44

Love is the strongest validation of the reality of God. The soul that knows itself loved by God, testifies with the utmost certainty to the existence of the lover. Every creed essentially has only one content: he, whom I have recognized as lover in my experience of being loved by him -- he is.

"Der Gott meiner Liebe ist wahrhaftig Gott." 45

Only after we have gained certainty of God's reality through such Revelation, in our own experience as a Being in the present, can we refer back to the past, to God's creatorship, for further confirmation. Rosenzweig now formulates a principle of cardinal importance in his concept of Revelation. Revelation itself is the primary source for

our knowledge of Revelation. We must stand within Revelation to know it. We cannot understand it from without.

"Er gibt sich nicht zu erkennen, ehe er sich offenbart hat, sondern sein Offenbargewordensein muss vorangehen, damit er sich zu erkennen geben könne. Ehe ihn die Seele bekannt hat, kann er sich ihr nicht zu erkennen geben."⁴⁶

But, once the commitment of faith has been made and God's reality recognized in the living immediacy of Revelation, it is necessary to implant upon the foundations of the past that which has come to us out of present experience. Now we may safely delve into the Revelation which is implied in creation. This is not to prove Revelation from creation; on the contrary, it is the living Revelation in the present which proves to us the creation of the past.

"Im Lichtschein des erlebten Offenbarungswunders wird eine dieses Wunder vorbereitende und vorsehende Vergangenheit sichtbar; die Schöpfung, die in der Offenbarung sichtbar wird, ist Schöpfung der Offenbarung."⁴⁷

Thus, as it were, our living experience of Revelation "creates" for us creation.

"God responds to our soul's confession 'I am Thine' no longer with the simple 'thou art Mine' but He refers back to the past and identifies Himself as the originator and initiator of this entire dialogue between Him and the soul: 'I have called thee by name. Thou art mine.'"⁴⁸

Revelation is completed in our personal experience of God's love combined with the knowledge that He is creator. This is as far as Rosenzweig could go at the time that the "Star" was written. Soon afterwards, he realized that he had not come to terms with the crucial question of the objective content of Revelation. Was "Love of God" really the only command that remained valid forever? Were all other laws merely

symbols of that higher command? On what basis could the Jew today decide which of the vast mass of transmitted Jewish law truly represented the command of God -- if not all, why only some? Already three years after the completion of the "Star," he recognized its limitations and referred to it in a letter as an armor of faith useful until he had learned to get along without it. In that same letter he called it "that dangerous book."⁴⁹ What was its danger? It provided insufficient guidance for daily living. It established insufficient criteria for the authority of Jewish law, which, after all, represents the everyday application of the faith. This deficiency is suggested by Rosenzweig himself in his essay, "Das Neue Denken," written in 1925 as a postscript to the "Star."

"Everyone should philosophize at some time in his life, and look around from his own vantage point. But such a survey is not an end in itself. The book is no goal, not even a provisional one. Rather than sustaining itself or being sustained by others of its kind, it must itself be verified. This verification takes place in the course of everyday life."⁵⁰

The "Star" was to be verified by Rosenzweig's soul-searching struggle to come to grips with Jewish law as transmitted, and, above all, by his own chosen way of life.

Already in the "Star" Rosenzweig voiced the need for a "fixed point" in life. Man craves escape from the anonymity of life. He cannot tolerate a life without limitation, without form and concreteness. Namelessness is abhorrent to him.

"Es verlangt nach Orientierung, nach einer Welt, die nicht in gleichgültigem Nebeneinander liegt, in gleichmütigem Nacheinander hinfließt, sondern eine, die seiner inneren, es in seinem Erlebnis stets begleitenden Ordnung den festen Grund einer äusseren Ordnung unterbaut. Der eigene Name fordert Namen auch ausser sich. Adams erste Tat ist die Namengebung an die Wesen der Welt."⁵¹

The assumption of a name and the giving of names to others is man's elemental consolidation in existence, tantamount to the fixing of boundaries and the concretization of relationships.

"Was einen Namen hat, kann nicht mehr Ding,
nicht mehr jedermanns Sache sein ... " 52

Having a name means to a creature having a place in life, a "here" and "now."

"Es hat auch nicht mehr seinen Ort in der Welt,
seinen Augenblick im Geschehen, sondern es trägt
sein Hier und Jetzt mit sich herum;" 53

Man receives the confirmation of his own being by means of that "historic Revelation" which is expressly addressed to him, in time and place, and thus gives him identity.

"Solche Begründung muss, weil in der Welt, raum-
zeitlich sein, gerade damit sie der absoluten
Gewissheit des Erlebens, seinen eigenen Raum und
seine eigene Zeit zu haben, Grund geben kann." 54

Revelation must, therefore, be located and dated.

"Es muss ein Wo, einen noch sichtbaren Ort in
der Welt geben, von wo die Offenbarung ausstrahlt,
und ein Wann, einen noch nachklingenden Augenblick,
wo sie den Mund auftat." 55

From this basic principle, which we might call "the concretizing of Revelation," Rosenzweig now draws a conclusion of the utmost importance for his future approach to Jewish law and its observance today. At one point in the past, Rosenzweig argues, Revelation's dimensions of time and place must have converged in the actual historical event when the spoken word was received by man, or the people. It is not absolutely necessary that we today likewise experience Revelation dimensionally unified as it was in its original occurrence. It is sufficient for us

today, if the after-effects of Revelation continue in separate bearers, God's people and God's word -- the people testifying to Revelation's occurrence in the dimension of space, the recorded word (Scripture) testifying to Revelation's occurrence in time. Yet, at one time in history it must have happened all at once -- the word was spoken and the people received it in a single revelatory event.

"Mag in der Nachwirkung das räumliche Statt-gefunden-haben und das zeitliche Geschehen-sein der Offenbarung heute in getrennten Trägern fortleben, in Gottes Gemeinde jenes, in Gottes Wort dieses, einmal muss es mit einen einzigen Schlage gegründet sein." 56

Rosenzweig concludes this theme with the suggestion that we must understand the name of God as symbol of the concreteness of Revelation. The very survival of the Jewish people and of the Biblical world, even our own personal experience today, is rooted in the confidence that Revelation had actuality.

"Aus dem geoffenbarten Namen Gottes leben ihr Leben die verfasste Gemeinde und das verfasste Wort bis auf den heutigen Tag, bis auf den gegenwärtigen Augenblick und bis in das eigene Erlebnis. Denn wahrhaftig, Name ist nicht, wie der Unglaube immer wieder in stolz-verstockter Leere wahrhaben mochte, Schall und Rauch, sondern Wort und Feuer. Den Namen gilt es zu nennen und zu bekennen: Ich glaub ihn." 57

Several years later Rosenzweig referred back to this passage and called it the core-sentence ("Kernsatz") of his work. The concreteness of Revelation is the philosophic basis for the authority of Jewish law and the need to "fix" its content. We shall now understand Rosenzweig's insistence that "doing" the commandment be taken as seriously as "studying" the word.

All of Rosenzweig's significant utterances on this point may be dated immediately preceding and following the publication of his important treatise "The Builders: Concerning the Law" ("Die Bauleute: Über das Gesetz"⁵⁹). Besides this treatise, we shall consider several letters to Rudolf Hallo, Martin Buber and one letter addressed to a group of friends, including Nachum Glatzer.

In many ways the most intimate and suggestive statement Rosenzweig ever made on his approach to Jewish law is his letter of 1922, addressed to Rudolf Hallo whom he had brought back from a confused conversion to Christianity and whom he regarded as a sort of spiritual protege.⁶¹ Rosenzweig's whole approach is unintelligible unless we bear in mind the existential situation from which it proceeds. He speaks of himself as a returnee to Judaism, as a rediscoverer of the way, as a *חורבן* *ישראל*. To begin with, he warns his younger friend against an all-or-nothing approach to Jewish law. "Uns gehört weder das All noch das Nichts, uns gehört das Etwas."⁶² His next point is that one who "returns" must take a strictly personal approach, seeking not to establish the validity of Jewish law in general, but for himself. What counts is not finding something that could be "a model for another person. The only thing that serves as a model is my own courage ... to live in my 'something.'"⁶³ The third point made by Rosenzweig is that of an "open end" approach to Jewish law observance. There is no telling to what it may lead once you begin. "Ich fange ja nur an. Was daraus wird, weiss ich nicht ... Ich hoffe und weiss, dass auch andre anfangen. Aus all dem zusammen wird etwas Musterhaftes werden." Here Rosenzweig draws a clear distinction

between his approach and that of Jewish religious liberalism in the 19th century. Liberalism began from a statement of fundamental principles which were to govern reformed Jewish practice. They turned out to be "officers without soldiers, fathers without children." Rosenzweig proposes a pragmatic approach.

"We begin with the acts. Let us, or let others, some day find the appropriate principles ... I hope that ... one day in decades to come I shall know the principles, the laws, 'the Law' ... "

What entitles him to proceed without benefit of principle or system?

He answers with a memorable sentence: "Das Judentum ist nicht Gesetz. Es schafft Gesetz." Judaism is "to be" a Jew, i.e., something that must be verified through living, through creative participation in the faith-community which produces law. This entire approach to Jewish law, call it empirical or pragmatic, is re-stated in the form of a striking metaphor. It is introduced with this thought: Although each must choose his own way in Judaism, this freedom of choice does not absolve the individual from the obligation to know Jewish law, not a knowing in theory, but in practice.

"Ich darf mich nicht darum drücken, Kenntnis von allem lebendigen Gehen des jüdischen Wegs zu nehmen, von allem was mir in Sehweite kommt, in Gegenwart und Vergangenheit ... Es braucht nicht mein Weg zu werden. Aber ich muss lernen, den Zusammenhang zwischen ihrem Weg und meinem Weg zu spüren." 64

But in this highly subjective approach to Jewish law -- a matter of personal choice -- is there not great danger that my way might lead me into isolation? Rosenzweig answers with a metaphor which illustrates all

he had been trying to say before. The Jew who seeks a way of his own within current or past Jewish practice shares a common landscape with his fellow Jews. It may not be the exact same road for everyone, but it is the same landscape, the same spiritual climate for all.⁶⁵ He concludes with a few "practical" suggestions as to how one should choose one's way. Choosing one's own road within this landscape is not really a helter-skelter selection. It is "selection" in a rather limited sense. However, he adds, "Good will, is, of course, necessary." One must want to meet half-way the "inner must." By wanting to do so, by looking around, by living together with others (past and present), by seizing opportunities, and above all by doing what one can, one arrives eventually at something natural which is truly one's own. Do what you can, and soon you must do it for you cannot do otherwise.

Shortly after this extraordinarily explicit statement, he engaged Martin Buber in a debate on Jewish law which proved to be rather one-sided since Buber, anxious to avoid a head-on clash, was guarded in his replies. It began with Rosenzweig's treatise, "The Builders," published in 1923. His declared purpose was to answer Buber's position on Jewish law as it emerged in his Lectures about Judaism ("Reden über das Judentum"). He takes particular issue with the last, the eighth lecture in the series, which drives to a decision on "what to do" about the twin problem of study and practice, or teaching and law. He endorses Buber's unconditional commitment to the study of Judaism in all its forms and manifestations, without false distinctions between "essentials" and non-essentials.⁶⁶ He agrees that only after knowledge has been gained, can

the student make an authentic choice of those elements in Judaism which are relevant to him. The selection cannot be made in advance of study. There is no escape from "learning." He who goes through the arduous road of study, instead of jumping right away to a conclusion about Judaism, has one advantage: the certainty that what he is jumping into is really authentic Jewish teaching.⁶⁶ Why should not the same logic apply to Jewish law, asks Rosenzweig. What goes for the area of study should also go for the area of practice; our approach to Halachah should be like our approach to Torah. First, practice as much as possible, then select, on the basis of experienced Jewish life, that which remains truly meaningful.

Just as we must first study all that is "knowable" in Judaism, so that we might end up appropriating into ourselves that which becomes our teaching, so we must first plunge into Jewish living and do what is "do-able" in order to end up doing those things which we can do with conviction. There comes a point when Jewish law, this or that element of it, turns into a command for us, when I realize not only what I must do in terms of the law, but, with a sudden leap, discover what I can do in personal response to the law.⁶⁷ In this fashion the old law is renewed and regains its current validity. For what had been lacking in the law as transmitted to us was that the old was not also new.⁶⁸

What Rosenzweig proposes is a reconstitution of Jewish law, using the "debris" of the past as the building blocks for a new structure of Jewish living today. His logic seems to be that as long as the constituent elements are Jewish, the new form in which they are put together will of necessity be also authentically Jewish. We need not live in precisely

the same house in which the Jewish past lived, but we must build it of the same material.

The subsequent correspondence between Buber and Rosenzweig (during 1924 and 1925)⁶⁹ sharpens the issue, without ending their disagreement. In a letter, dated June 24, 1924, Buber answers Rosenzweig's contention in "The Builders" that immersion in maximal practice will lead to the encounter with God's command. He simply does not share Rosenzweig's faith "that Revelation is ever a formulation of law." Law, he maintains, "is the fact of man." It is the product of man entirely. Revelation, in Buber's view, is an experience all its own, a new beginning, a uniquely personal encounter that should not be screened off by laws which are framed by others.

"I cannot admit the law transformed by man into the realm of my will, if I am to hold myself ready as well for the unmediated word of God directed to a specific hour of life ... and I cannot imagine that this position will ever change for me."⁷⁰

Rosenzweig, in reply, called attention to the dynamism which was not altogether lacking in his approach.

"We do not consciously accept the fact that every commandment can become law, but that the law can always be changed back into a commandment ..."⁷¹

His point: entrust yourself to the practice of the law -- and some of it will speak to you directly as God's living command.

Buber could only reiterate their fundamental disagreement, which Rosenzweig apparently failed to grasp. Buber denied altogether that there was anything divine in the law.

"You fail to consider, I believe, that it is the fact of man that brings about transformation from Revelation to what you call commandment ... " 72

A week later, Buber put his objection most succinctly:

"God is not a law-giver, and therefore the Law has no universal validity for me ... The Builders want to make me accept the Law as something universal, the way I accept Teaching as something to be learned in its totality." 73

Buber could not but reject a claim which Rosenzweig could rightly make for the law, for Rosenzweig brought a faith to it which Buber simply lacked. This faith Rosenzweig expressed in his reply dated only three days after Buber's letter:

"For me, too, God is not a Law-giver. But He commands." 74

"But He commands" -- this was Rosenzweig's faith, precisely what Buber denied. For Buber's unyielding position was that whatever commandments are derived from Revelation are purely man's own creation, in response to the encounter, but still man's creation. Rosenzweig's modifying comment in the same letter does not touch Buber's objection but clarifies his own understanding of the problem of Law. The authentic Revelation, he believes, is in the commandments which, however, are corrupted into mere legalism when observed "without the awareness that the man stands under God's command."

A year later, Buber, in another communication to Rosenzweig, confessed once more that the question, "Is the Law God's Law?" could be answered by him only in the negative. 75

In his reply, which closed the debate, Rosenzweig put forward two important ideas which further illuminate his concept of Revelation.

First, he will not admit a theoretical judgment concerning the law. What matters is not what I think or believe at the end of my "thinking" about Jewish law, but only at the end of experiencing it. An opinion about law, positive or negative, is valid only if it flows from experience. The inference is clear: Jewish law is to be approached only on the level of practice, not theory. His second point has to do with the crucial question of what is and what is not Revelation. Granted that Revelation is not law-giving; granted, furthermore, that Revelation comes to us in the guise of interpretation upon interpretation, the real question is: "But where does this 'interpretation' stop being legitimate?"⁷⁶ Who is to decide, how dare anyone decide, objectively and positively that this or that additional interpretation contains no Revelation?

"I would never dare to state this in a general sentence; here commences the right of experience to give testimony, positive and negative."⁷⁷

The same impossibility of making a general categorical denial that there is Revelation in this or that interpretation applies also to law. Who can categorically say "that Revelation must never become legislation?"⁷⁸ Rosenzweig insists that the possibility must be recognized, however unlikely one may consider it, that Jewish Law, contrary to all other laws, constituted authentic Revelation. He draws an analogy. We may be convinced that the incarnation never happened. Still we must concede to the Christian a historic and personal right to prove an exception. So, regardless how great our doubt, we must concede "the right of the Law to prove its character as an exception against all other types of law."⁷⁹

One more idea is to be considered as capstone to Rosenzweig's concept of Revelation. It is brought out in a letter addressed collectively to four friends at the Lehrhaus and dated November 1924⁸⁰. The question is how can we distinguish in law between "what is divine and what is human?" Rosenzweig's answer begins with the fundamental assertion that any statement about God will inevitably fall far short of the contents of our experience. A marriage certificate can never fully convey the quality of the marriage.

"It is exactly the same with what man experiences about God: it is incommunicable, and he who speaks of it makes himself ridiculous." 81

What holds true of all other significant experiences, is likewise true in the area of the Law. Law is something between God and man, and I cannot know anything about what belongs to God and what belongs to man until I am involved in the Law. Whatever we know, there is much that cannot be articulated. But an outsider can have no understanding whatever of that relationship which is expressed through the Law.

"But an outsider, no matter how willing and sympathetic, can never be made to accept a single commandment as a 'religious' demand. We wholly realize that general theological connection only when we cause it to come alive by fulfilling individual commandments, and transpose it from the objectivity of a theological truth to the 'thou' of the benediction ... " 82

Historians, psychologists, sociologists, folklorists and all kinds of "experts" will each interpret Jewish Law on a basis other than its divine origin. As outsiders they will not perceive the commandments as addressed by God to the people. But it is divine to the Jew who stands ready to observe the law:

"We know it differently, not always and not in all things, but again and again. For we know it only when -- we do." 83

The previously stated thought that Jewish Law should only be judged as relevant or irrelevant from the vantage point of personal involvement in its practice, is now heightened into the suggestion that in the very observance of the commandment there is for the Jew a new dimension of Revelation. The God who commanded the commandments in the past, is heard anew by the Jew at the very moment when he fulfills the commandment.

In short, the validation of Revelation with Rosenzweig is not a "truth" we can come to know rationally, but something we experience in the religious act itself.

"What do we know when we do? ... in this moment we know nothing other than this moment in that full theo-human reality of the command out of which we may say: Blessed art Thou." 84

Without denying that Revelation may reach man also as a rational "truth," Rosenzweig stresses here an experience of Revelation which is irrational, which cannot be comprehended rationally and surely not be expressed adequately, but which can only be experienced in the act.

"Only in this immediacy, in the particular command, may God be addressed, not expressed. Whoever seeks to express Him, discovers that the Inexpressible One is also beyond our finding. The voice of the One who commands can be heard only in the commandment." 85

Rosenzweig's telling illustration is the Revelation we all experience in the keeping of the Sabbath. We may know of creation in various ways, even through the written word of Scriptures, but another way in which creation is revealed to us -- and for Rosenzweig it is the more convincing way -- is the Sabbath observance:

"No matter how well the written word may fit in with our own thoughts, it cannot give us the faith that creation is completed, to the degree that we experience this by keeping the Sabbath, and inaugurating it with, 'And the heaven and the earth were completed.' Not that doing necessarily results in hearing and understanding. But one hears differently when one hears in the doing." 86

"One hears in the doing" -- these words express Rosenzweig's most original discovery and contribution to the concept of Revelation which is of particular value to Judaism: The Mitzvot which were revealed to us are themselves vehicles of further Revelation. The Revelation is latently hidden within the commandment. In the performance of the command by the Jew, the Revelation is actualized and completed.

Nachum Glatzer, disciple and friend, called Rosenzweig "the re-
discoverer of classic Judaism."⁸⁷ In one respect the statement is irrefutable. He saw most clearly the foundation on which classic Judaism stands, a sense of the absolute reality of Revelation. He also recognized in Revelation a function characteristic of the Bible and authentic Judaism: Revelation is the functional link between creation and redemption. The creator, God, reaches out to His creation -- the outreach is Revelation. So far this is basic Jewish theology. Where Rosenzweig differs is his approach to these conclusions. He arrives at them not speculatively, but from within man's condition. Man not only must "believe" these truths, but he is led to them by "experience."

Life would not be bearable for man in his confrontation with the ever threatening possibility of annihilation in death, if God did not sustain him with love. Love is God's gift by which man is compensated for the

fact of his mortality. Love turns man into the child of the present moment, for love lives in the "today" and invests every moment with infinite value. In love man experiences an infinity and an eternity all its own, a redemption God has especially granted unto man. The essence of Revelation is to know love.

The identification of Revelation with love leads Rosenzweig to what we have called the "concretization" of Revelation. As love is specific in time and place, so is Revelation: an event. We referred to Rosenzweig's own statement that the core-sentence of the "Star" was that which affirmed the "Name" of God. We understand it to mean that the great message of the "Star" -- and we should add, of Rosenzweig's entire work -- is the call away from anonymity, abstraction, conceptualization.

Reality is not to be dissolved into a single entity, "the Absolute," or the "Idea," or "Thought" -- the conclusions of philosophic idealism. Reality is to be rehabilitated and clearly named in its three irreducible elements of God, man, world. The call "away from anonymity" has a significant application to Jewish law. Rosenzweig's insistence upon "concretization" will not allow him to accept a Judaism of ethical abstractions. The commands of God were issued in specific form, as specific as is the language between lovers. The Jew may then look upon commands as the products and also the producers of Revelation. For in observing the law, the Jew becomes fully conscious of Revelation. The commandments, when observed, carry their own validation as Revelation.

Of necessity, then, Rosenzweig had to take a positive approach to Jewish law and struggle for its reconstitution in his own life and wherever

his influence could reach. In contrast to several generations of Jews who said to Jewish law "no more," he returned to it with rekindled reverence, observing what he could with conviction, and holding the rest in reserve with that expectancy which he expressed when he answered a question about his observance of a certain ceremony with, "not yet."⁸⁸

Rosenzweig restored to Judaism its creative fluidity by treating it not as a doctrine to know, but as an experience to be gathered in life. Thus he ended the "Star" deliberately with the words "Ins Leben" -- into life.

It may be argued, as was pointed out by one critic, that the realities which Rosenzweig affirms, are not proven by him. "We are never told on the basis of which experiences our knowledge of the world and God as specific, independent, separate substances is founded."⁸⁹ There is an apparent dogmatism in Rosenzweig and it is not clear what experiences prompted his ideas. It is true, one will look in vain for an iron chain of logic in Rosenzweig. But, as convincing as are the words "I love you" between lovers, so will be the witness of faith in the living God and His Revelation which Rosenzweig voiced in word and life -- for those who share his faith or his experience.

CONCLUSION

Looking back upon the eleven thinkers who are represented in this study on "The Validation of Revelation in Modern Jewish Theology," we may now make a few comments of a general nature.

Their collective life-span extends over two full centuries, from the middle of the 18th century to the present decade. It is impossible to disassociate the thinking of these builders of modern Judaism from their non-Jewish environment in its socio-political and philosophic dimensions. Every one of these great Jewish minds responds sensitively to the historical setting and the philosophic currents of the times.

The outstanding political issue of the entire era is emancipation. The hope it aroused, the long struggle it demanded, the short-lived victory it brought and the disenchantments that followed, are reflected in the lives, moods and basic attitudes to Judaism of these thinkers. Would Mendelssohn have written his Jerusalem without the hope of a general re-alignment of Church and State in the age of emancipation? Is the high note of universalism and the confidence in progressive spiritual evolution, which we find in Formstecher, Hirsch and Geiger, unrelated to the anticipation of the final victory of emancipation?

Another logical response to emancipation was a growing concern over assimilation and a search for that "distinctive" spiritual, theological or ethical characteristic which would justify Jewish survival. Can we fail to see such a concern in Steinheim, Krochmal and Lazarus? And how could we understand the "Teshuvah" of Hermann Cohen

apart from the bitter disappointments prompted by the rise of political anti-Semitism in emancipated Germany? And shall we not see in Baeck, Buber and Rosenzweig path-finders of a post-emancipation Jewry in search of their own soul? The changing Jewish response to emancipation in the course of this era was well illustrated by Leo Baeck's remark that Mendelssohn still prepared to enter Europe from his Judaism, while Rosenzweig made his entry into Judaism from Europe and Germany.¹ Leo Baeck's statement also suggests the progressive alienation from Judaism during this period so that in the end the affirmation of Judaism by some of our thinkers had to be preceded by a conscious rediscovery and "return" to it.

The general philosophic current of the age was no less a factor in shaping the thinking of these eleven men than the socio-political setting of their environment. The entire philosophic movement may be summed up as the rise and collapse of rationalism. It is faithfully reflected in the work of the men under consideration in this study.

Another line of development which emerges in our study is a dialectic movement in Judaeo-Christian polemics. The "Auseinandersetzung" with Christianity is unquestionably the backdrop for Jewish culture in these two centuries. Mendelssohn stressed the non-dogmatic character of Judaism to contrast it all the more with dogmatic Christianity -- to the supposed advantage of Judaism in the age of enlightenment. But it was only with the utmost reluctance that he entered into open polemics with the Christian theologian, Lavater. After Mendelssohn, Jewish

thinkers engaged in polemics with Christianity enthusiastically, even passionately. The tendency of German philosophic idealism to identify itself with Christianity as the "highest religion" challenged them to vigorous response. They found Judaism to dove-tail even better with philosophic idealism and did not hesitate to present it as the summit of religious development (Formstecher, Hirsch, Geiger, Krochmal, Lazarus and even Cohen). Steinheim, on the other hand, fought these claims which were made on behalf of Christianity, not only by direct rebuttal of Christian dogma, but by a rejection of the total structure of philosophic idealism which had been so partial to Christianity. In Baeck and Buber we see the sharp polemical tone change into a dialogue, while Rosenzweig, in the fulness of his own Jewish self-assurance, comes to regard both religions as valid responses to the reality of God.

One more trend needs to be mentioned. It is the shift of emphasis from Judaism to the Jewish people. Mendelssohn, Formstecher, Hirsch and Steinheim focused their attention on various aspects of Judaism, seeing it either as legislation, evolving doctrine or revealed faith. Geiger, Krochmal, Lazarus and Baeck recognized a peculiarly endowed people besides a distinctive doctrine of Judaism. Buber and Rosenzweig clearly give priority to the Jew in dialogue with God.² Judaism is no longer seen as the sum-total of concepts or as an essence of principles, but rather as the response of the Jew to his existence.

All of these trends and currents, evolving from the interplay of the Jew with his socio-political and philosophic environment, have a

bearing upon the shifting theological positions which become evident in our study of the problem of Revelation. These relationships have been briefly indicated in our discussion of each thinker and shall not be repeated here.

If we were to summarize all of the attempts at the validation of Revelation by those included in this study, we would group them under three basic approaches:

1. Rational conceptualization of Revelation
2. Validation by historic documentation or development
3. The existentialist assertion.

We do not intend to classify the thinkers we have studied into these three groups, as though these were neat pigeonholes, but would suggest that one approach is dominant in each case with due allowance for crossing lines into any of the other approaches.

Typical of the first approach are the thinkers most closely identified with philosophic idealism and rationalism -- Formstecher, Hirsch, Krochmal, Geiger, Lazarus and Cohen -- who see all of reality as the self-realization of the Absolute. Revelation is part of the process of God's self-disclosure, conceptualized as the self-realization of Spirit, Reason, or the Idea of the good.

In Formstecher's case, Revelation is the World-Soul manifesting itself in the human spirit. It is the awakening self-consciousness of the Spirit fulfilling itself in the ideal good. Revelation is internalized as a process within the human spirit, not an event in time and place, not a message from the outside directed to a particular person or persons.

Hirsch accepts the historicity of revelatory events as recorded in the Bible but understands them as phases, never to be repeated, in the fulfillment of the divine design: the human spirit rising to full freedom and identity with the Absolute.

Krochmal, Geiger, Lazarus and Cohen conceive of Revelation as that process within the human spirit by which man gains awareness of absolute metaphysical reality perceived as the spirit of reason or moral perfection. Krochmal accepts, in addition, the historicity of Sinai as a special auxiliary Revelation granted unto Israel. With the exception noted in the case of Krochmal, this approach eliminates specific Revelation with specific content in time and place. The only validation conceivable is human reason verifying its own rationality.

The second approach to the validation of Revelation is through the perspective of history. To Mendelssohn Revelation, such as the Sinaitic theophany, is a matter of documented history. Of an altogether different quality is the historical argument developed by Krochmal, Geiger, Baeck, and, to a degree, Lazarus. History proves the Jewish people to possess a spiritual uniqueness represented chiefly by the gift of prophecy and a special aptitude for pure monotheism and ethical perfection. This national characteristic of the Jewish people is related to a metaphysical core, the indwelling Presence. Revelation, then, is divine immanence, coming to expression through the religious and ethical culture of the Jewish people in the progressive unfolding of its history. The validation consists of the unparalleled quality of the Jewish people, its unique historical march through the ages, and the evidence of exalted literature and

the creation of an ethically elevated way of life. In the absence of all other plausible explanations, these effects are attributed to divine inspiration.

The third approach to the validation of Revelation is represented by the existentialism of Buber and Rosenzweig. Revelation is personal experience. Buber limits authentic Revelation to the encounter with the divine Presence. Only the Presence is encountered, without further content or message.³ God discloses nothing but Himself. Anything beyond that is man's own interpretation of the experience. Rosenzweig insists that Revelation is a category of experience all its own, God's outreach to man in love. Revelation can be apprehended best of all in the vocabulary of love. As love is demanding, so God is demanding. He commands. Consciousness of His command is a revelatory experience of His love. The Mitzvot in Jewish life represent the love-language between God and Israel. By entering into this dialogue of "observance" the Jew hears again God's voice coming through the "command." Thus, Revelation is renewed for him.

Buber and Rosenzweig rehabilitate Revelation as an actual experience in time and place. They replace the mystique of reason with the mystique of action. The validation of Revelation for them is nothing but the inner certainty arising from experience, from the very moment of the living encounter with God.

Related in some ways to Rosenzweig, and yet a unique figure among the thinkers we studied, is Steinheim. He anticipated something of Rosenzweig's approach. Steinheim was the first of our 19th century thinkers

to rise up against the tide of rationalism which had swept over the whole field of Jewish thought. Judaism, he argued, must not be identified with any of the current systems in philosophic idealism. On logical grounds, with closely reasoned arguments, he pointed out that Judaism's core-faith, the God who created out of nothing, is not rational, and yet it is the only possible explanation of reality. If it cannot be derived from reason -- it must be the result of Revelation. The logic of this argument is supported existentially by man's inner certainty of his free-will and its verification in daily experience. Similar to Kant, he looks upon man's sense of freedom as the true marvel and mystery for which no rational explanation is adequate. It is a gift from God and a token of that perfect freedom which in unlimited measure belongs to God. The validation of Revelation, Steinheim would argue, lies in the sheer force of logic which would permit no other explanation of the world's existence; in addition, there is the testimony of our lives that we are free agents, an irrefutable fact, not derived speculatively but gained existentially, for which there is no explanation other than its origin in God, the self-revealing, perfectly free creator.

We have pointed out three basic approaches to the problem of the validation of Revelation. As long as the Jewish people continues its present multi-dimensional existence -- here as a nation, there as a religion; here in prosperity, there in peril for their lives; here within a self-enclosed community, there in cosmopolitan integration -- it will require different theological approaches. In some quarters,

the only acceptable understanding of Revelation will remain that of a concept within rationally constructed reality. For them the bearer of Revelation will be reason. Among other sections of our people, the only significant reality in Judaism will be our peoplehood. Revelation will be meaningful to them only as a national endowment of spirituality, with the people as the channel of Revelation. Finally, there will be those who will be satisfied with nothing less than the personal experience of religion in their own lives. They will be at home in the existentialist approach.

Our study does not permit us to conclude that the validation of Revelation has been achieved to the satisfaction of all by any one theological school of thought. Revelation is affirmed in one way or the other by each of the thinkers we studied -- it has not been objectively confirmed. Perhaps it is not in the nature of an item of faith to become a matter of cognitive certainty.⁵ To decide this general problem of epistemology would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

Although theological certainty has eluded us, the work of thought is not without gain. We live in an age of profound spiritual crisis. The rationalist stance of the 19th century (except for Steinheim) has yielded to an anti-rational turn in the 20th century. Whatever contributed to the collapse of confidence in reason, one of the factors surely has been the proliferation of daemonic forces in recent history, the spreading sense of eschatological doom, man's horror, despair and sense of alienation.⁶ If this is the general philosophic mood of the day,

it is not without echo in current Jewish thinking. Anti-rationalism may be the more congenial mood in this generation, but the problem of validating Revelation is not likely to disappear. It will remain with us even within the framework of an anti-rationalist theology. The problem will be defined differently. For the rationalist, the problem is to determine what Revelation is. For the anti-rationalist, the problem will be to determine what is not Revelation. The rationalist, in his search for the objective truth, will always be troubled by the subjectivism of Revelation, and perhaps find himself without a positive faith. The anti-rationalist will find himself without tool or criterion by which to separate the authentic from the inauthentic. The existentialist posture, for example, is always suspect of being a pose.

A reaction against existentialism's unbridled subjectivism and anti-rationalism may gain ground. Whichever direction our theological future may take, future Jewish theologians will find the ground well plowed by our thinkers of the last two centuries.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Abbreviations

- HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual
- JZWL Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft
und Leben
- MGWJ Monatschrift für Geschichte und Wissen-
schaft des Judentums
- WZJT Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für Jüdische
Theologie
- Y.B.-L.B.I. Year Book - Publication of Leo Baeck Institute
- ZRIJ Zeitschrift für die Religiösen Interessen
des Judentums

Literature dealing with our field of study as a whole, or encompassing several thinkers, or presenting aspects of modern Jewish theology involving the works of a number of authors, has been listed under the heading of GENERAL. Publications specifically related to a certain thinker have been grouped in the respective bibliographical section under his name.

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CONCLUSION

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N O T E S

Quotations, translated into English by the writer, are marked with the abbreviation m.t. (my translation) next to the citation of the page in the reference to the source.

Biblical quotations in English are from the J.P.S. Bible translation (Phila. 1917) unless otherwise indicated.

Abbreviations of periodicals or annual publications are listed in the bibliography on page 217.

* * *

Introduction

pp. 1-17

1. Cf. Max Wiener, "Aufriss einer Jüdischen Theologie," HUCA XVIII (1944), esp. p. 354; Emil L. Fackenheim, "Can There Be Judaism Without Revelation?", Commentary, Vol 12, No. 6 (Dec. 1951), pp. 564 -572.

On the particular relevance of revelation to Reform Judaism see Felix Goldmann, "Die Grenzen des Liberalismus, Festgabe für Claude G. Montefiore, (Berlin, 1928) pp.50 - 57; also, Joseph H. Gumbiner, "Revelation and Liberal Jewish Faith," Judaism, Vol.10, No. 2, (Spring 1961) , pp. 119-128 and Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Limits of Liberal Judaism", Judaism, Vol. 14, No.2 , (Spring 1965), pp. 146 - 158.

Last but not least we mention Petuchowski's tour de force, a historical survey of Reform Judaism's persistent concern with the problem of revelation: Jakob J. Petuchowski, "The Concept of Revelation in Reform Judaism," Yearbook of CCAR, Vol. LXIX, (1959), pp. 212 - 239.

2. Modern Jewish theologians are by no means unanimous on the possibility of validating revelation. S.L. Steinheim, in announcing his magnum opus, Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoge, declared with supreme confidence that his work would deliver definite and universally valid criteria of revelation ("sie verspricht gewisse und allgemein giltige Kriterien der Offenbarung" -- "Recensionen", WZJT, Frankfurt a.M., Vol. 1, 1835, pp.367-377, cf. esp. p. 369). Abraham J. Heschel, on the other hand, in his study on "The Prophets" emphatically refused to even consider the question whether revelation happened in reality: "Such an inquiry must suspend personal beliefs or even any intent to inquire -- e.g. whether the event happened in fact as it did to their minds." --Abraham J. Heschel, The Prophets, (New York and Evanston, Harper & Row, 1962) p.XVI. Cf. also this thesis, p. 305, note # 5.
3. Cf. this thesis, pp. 19 -20 and 23 with reference to Mendelssohn's insistence on the traditional view of the Sinaitic theophany.
4. The immediacy of God's communication to the people is stressed repeatedly. Moses brings the people out of the camp "to meet God" (Ex.19.17) ; "And the Lord spoke unte you out of the midst of the fire; ye heard the voice of words..." (Dt.4.12-13); the tablets were inscribed "according to all the words, which the Lord spoke with you in the mount... (Dt.9.10). Even in those passages which report the mediating role of Moses, the people at least initially hear God directly until the theophany becomes unbearable (cf. Dt. 5.4-5 and 22-24).

The uniqueness of the event at Sinai was not alone a collective experience of revelation but that this revelation took the form of "God speaking." Collective experiences of divine acts or even visions of the deity are reported elsewhere (e.g. Ex.24.9-10 and Nu. 11.24-30) but not a message in the form of words such as was received by the entire people at Sinai. That such an event was unique and unprecedented in history is the point of Dt.32-33.

verities, the text establishes the dogma of the immutability of Torah, never to be superseded by contradictory revelation. It does not say that the evidence of reason is superior to the evidence of miracles but that the Torah invalidates all contradictory evidence. The whole passage (Dt. 13.2 ff.) is, in effect, an elaboration of the opening statement, Dt. 13.1 : "All the words which I command you, that shall ye observe to do; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

Formstecher, even more pointedly than Mendelssohn, sees in this text a mandate to let "reason" decide the issues of faith. In the light of Deut. 13, he is pleased to note:

Die jüdische Theologie, die sich stets an das menschliche Erkenntnisvermögen und an die freie Urteilskraft wendet und von ihm fordert, dass er selbst da prüfend zu Werke gehen soll wo ein Prophet durch voraus verkündete und später eingetroffene Zeichen und Wunder sich geltend zu machen weiss. Eine religiöse Glaubenspflicht, welche gebietet, irgend eine Lehre als Wahrheit der Religion aufzunehmen, auch dann, wenn sie sogar der Vernunft widerspricht, und nur deshalb, weil sie von einer höheren, göttlichen Autorität mitgeteilt ward, ist dem Judentum fremd...." -- S. Formstecher, Die Religion des Geistes, (Frankfurt a.M. 1841) p.10.

The higher divine authority which, according to Formstecher, Judaism never invokes in order to validate a religious doctrine which might be contradictory to reason, is of course very clearly upheld by Deut. 13 in the form of previously given commandments. So firmly established is the previously given revelation (i.e. the Torah) that it must be accepted with dogmatic certainty. It is the criterion by which all contradictions may be judged as falsehoods. Deut. 13, contrary to Formstecher, does not sanction the employment of man's own rational judgement in religious issues except for the limited calculation needed to determine if a new doctrine contradicts the previously given, absolutely authoritative commandments.

- 9.. Max Wiener, we think, went too far in suggesting an irreconcilable contradiction between Deut. 13 and 18. He finds in Deut. 13 a dogmatic position, holding up Mosaic teaching as the unchangeable norm against Deut. 18 whose view is that prophecy will go on and fresh revelation is to be expected. (Cf. Max Wiener, "Zur Geschichte des Offenbarungsbegriffs," Judaica, Festschrift zu Hermann Cohens 70. Geburtstag, (Berlin, 1912) pp.14-15).

Actually, Deut. 13 limits its illustration to the case of fresh revelation in contradiction to that of the previously given Torah, but it does not deal specifically with the possibility of fresh revelation in addition to the previously received revelation.

Moreover, Deut. 13 and 18 deal with entirely different problems. In Deut. 13 the problem is how to judge a new revelation in conflict with the old. In Deut. 18 the problem is how to validate a new prophecy which does not conflict with previous revelation, the case of prophecy conflicting with previous revelation having been dealt with already in Deut. 13.

10. Cf. Wiener, op.cit., p. 10.

11. See: Jacob B. Agus, Modern Philosophies of Judaism, (New York, Behrman, 1941) p. 3.

12. *כי כל המדיין מן הצד הלך אפס שימצא ואפס שיטעם, וצד שימצא יפיק בלא דת, ואם ימצא דת ויחזיק בה לא יבטח מעדתו חנה בספק שיעמוד עמו ויכסיו עליו אונותו, ואנחנו כלנו מסכימים שרעושה זה חטא, אם הוא בלא עיון, אלא אנחנו קהל בני ישראל חוקרים ומעיינים על דרך זלזול, ...*

Saadia b. Joseph, ספר האונות והפסוק, (Krakau, Fischer & Weindling) 1880, pp.14-15.

13. *כי אנחנו חוקרים ומעיינים בענין תורתנו בשני ענינים. האחד חנה שיתברר אצלנו בפסל מה שיבחנו חז"א האלוקים בארץ, ופני שניגד על כל מי שטעון עליו בגדר מקבלי תורתנו.*
Ibid., p. 15.

14. Ibid., p. 15. והוא יצאנו כי כאשר נצ"ן ונחיקוק יצאנו הגדול
פשמ בבל שכן כאשר הודיענו על יד נביאי'
15. Ibid., p. 17. ושמו פזוקא מלך אלו הטריחים כלם במהרה ישלח לנו
שוחיו ופיז' לנו בהידרם ובראני בעינינו אותות עליה
יחפתיק שלא פתעדב בהם ספק, ולא מצאנו דרך
לדחותם כמו שניאמר (ג.ג.ג.ג.) אותם ראותם
16. Ibid., p. 174. כי פשל חייג המוחו בעולם אחר, וכל פידוש מסכי' להם
שיש בשל פוא האמת, וכל מה שחבא אל מה שפוא חולק
בשל, פוא בשל.
17. Cf. Max Wiener, "Zur Geschichte des Offenbarungsbegriffs", Judaica, Festschrift zu Hermann Cohens 70. Geburtstag, (Berlin, 1912) p.22.
18. Cf. Wiener, op.cit., pp. 19 - 22, esp. 22.
19. Comparisons between modern rationalists and Maimonides must not overlook the fact that for Maimonides prophecy still represented essentially an act of God. Rational capacities, however increased and purified, could not of themselves turn a philosopher into a prophet. The mystical principle of "grace" remained the crucial factor even in Maimonides' rational approach to prophecy. See, Albert Lewkowitz, "Maimunis Theorie der Prophetie," Judaica, Festschrift zu Hermann Cohens 70. Geburtstag, (Berlin, Bruno Cassirer, 1912) pp. 167 - 175.
- Cf. also Fackenheim's discussion of essential differences between "Maimonides' pre-rationalism" and modern rationalism in
Emil L. Fackenheim, "Two Types of Reform: Reflections Occasioned by Hasidism," Yearbook of CCAR, Vol. LXXI (1961), pp. 209 .

20. Cf. Maimonides, op. cit., II, ch. 32, p.66 ff:
כחו שאלו שבתאור אצלם מצואות השייך יש חכם שלם
דעות בקדמות העולם והקדושו כחו שאינו, כן הדעות
בגבול שלם ואלו
21. Ibid., p. 67 b :
... וזה שאנו נאמין שפראוי לנבואה המכין עצמו
אפשר שלם יתקבא וזה ברצון אלהי, וזה אצל
הוא בדמות הנפלאות כלם ונמשך כמנהגם.
22. Wiener, op.cit., p.22.
23. ואמרו "אדם עדי" קדמה אל מה שכתב העם מן האותיות
קדמות ובחופות פנולטים, ופס על פנים רבים מאב העש
מכות על מצבים ובקידת פים ומעמד הכ סיני ...
ולא שיכיו דמון בני ישראל מסכימים על הענין הזה
ומספיק זה לתנאי כל תורה נאמנת.
Saadia, op. cit., pp. 15 - 16.
24. Cf. footnote 7.
25. שאי אפשר שיכניס אדם עצמו למעמד הכ סיני ביותר
מזה השיעור אשר לכרוכו, שהוא מכלל סתמי תוכן
ואמתת הפשט הפיך ואין פיה הענין נעם מננו מעד,
כי לא קדם כחול ולאו יתאמר
26. Maimonides, op. cit., II, ch. 33, pp. 72 a/b.

Mendelssohn

pp. 18-24

1. Moses Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, ed. by Elbogen, Guttman, Mittwoch, (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1930) Vol. VII, p. 74.(m.t.)
2. Moses Mendelssohn, Jerusalem (Berlin, Welt Verlag, 1919), p.69. (m.t.)
3. "Jene ewigen Wahrheiten hingegen, insoweit sie zum Heile und zur Glückseligkeit der Menschen nützlich sind, lehrt Gott auf eine der Gottheit gemässere Weise: nicht durch Laut und Schriftzeichen, die hier und da, diesem und jenem verständlich sind, sondern durch die Schöpfung selbst und ihre innerlichen Verhältnisse, die allen Menschen leserlich und verständlich sind."

Ibid., p. 74.

4. Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, op. cit., Vol.VII, p. 74.
5. Ibid., p. 73 and 76.

Note the crucial role the dogma of eudaemonism plays in Mendelssohn's argument:

"Die Glückseeligkeit ist der Zweck unseres Daseins, und wenn Gott schlechterdings nur einem Volke die einzigen Mittel zu diesem Zwecke an Händen gegeben, was sollen wir von seiner Regierung denken ? "

6. Ibid. , p. 86.

7. "Ich glaube das Judentum wisse von keiner geoffenbarten Religion, in dem Verstande, in welchem dieses von den Christen genommen wird. Die Israeliten haben göttliche Gesetzgebung. Gesetze, Gebote, Befehle, Lebensregeln, Unterricht vom Willen Gottes, wie sie sich zu verhalten haben, um zur zeitlichen und ewigen Glückseligkeit zu gelangen; dergleichen Sätze und Vorschriften sind ihnen durch Mosen auf eine wunderbare und übernatürliche Weise geoffenbart worden; aber keine Lehrmeinungen, keine Heilswahrheiten, keine allgemeinen Vernunftsätze. Diese offenbart der Ewige uns, wie allen übrigen Menschen, allezeit durch Natur und Sache, nie durch Wort und Schriftzeichen."

Mendelssohn, Jerusalem, op.cit.,
p. 69.

The idea that Judaism was only law, Julius Guttmann points out, had already been propounded by Spinoza in his Tractatus Theologicus-Politicus, which served Mendelssohn as model for his Jerusalem. Spinoza drew the distinction between the contents of faith and political legislation within religion. Mendelssohn, on the other hand, contrasted the legal particularism of religion with the universal truths of the religion of reason. Cf. Julius Guttmann, Philosophies of Judaism, (Phila., J.P.S., 1964) pp. 299-300.

8. Mendelssohn, Jerusalem, op.cit., p. 78. (m.t.)
9. Ibid. , p. 80. Mendelssohn's argument is reminiscent of Saadia's point that general principles, entirely derived from reason, need to be supplemented by specific rules so that these general principles might become practically effective. These practical rules are furnished to us by prophecy. E.g. Reason demands gratitude to God, but does not specify how it is to be done. Or, fornication is rejected by reason, but how is a man to acquire a wife legally? Reason rejects theft, but how is one to exchange property ? etc. Prophecy reveals the application of these general principles. Or, we might say, prophecy reveals the "Halachah." Cf. Saadia, op.cit. p. 82 ff.

10. Jerusalem, pp.102 - 103.
11. Gesammelte Schriften, op.cit., Vol. VII, p.75.(m.t.)
12. M. Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, ed. by G.B. Mendelssohn (Leipzig, F.A.Brockhaus,1844) Vol. V. , p. 669. (m.t.)
13. Ibid. (m.t.)
14. Jerusalem, op.cit., p. 74. (m.t.)
15. "HE. B. (i.e. Herr Bonnett) sagt zwar, 'Die Vernunft könne nicht vollkommen sicher sein, das genau zu kennen, was in dem höchsten Wesen Gerechtigkeit und Güte sind.' Dieser Einwurf ist mir von HE. B. ganz unerwartet. Warum sollen wir nicht genau kennen, was bei Gott Gerechtigkeit und Güte sei? Es ist offenbar nichts anders, als was bei uns Gerechtigkeit und Güte sind."
- M. Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, ed. by Elbogen, Güttnann, Mittwoch, (Berlin, Akademie Verlag, 1930) Vol. VII, p. 72 (Gegenbetrachtungen über Bonnets Palingenesie)
16. Ibid., p. 74.
17. Immanuel Kant, Die Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, ed. by Karl Vorländer (Leipzig, Felix Meiner, 1922 - 5th edition), p. XIII.
18. Ibid., p. 144. (m.t.)
19. Ibid., pp.145-146.

20. Jewish as well as non-Jewish critics of Mendelssohn's combination of legalism and exclusiveness were apparently unimpressed by his suggestion that the special status conferred upon the Jews by their "revealed legislation" was a burden ("Last") rather than a divine favor as he took pains to point out:

"Nur diesem bestimmten Volke, hat der Schöpfer aus ganz besondern Absichten, für gut gefunden, besondere Gesetze zu offenbaren, nach welchen sie leben, regiert werden, und zur Glückseligkeit gelangen sollen..... dieser Last(sic!) darf sich niemand unterziehen, der nicht nach den mosaischen Gesetzen geboren ist."

M. Mendelssohn, Gesammelte Schriften, op. cit., Vol. VII, p. 75.

Formstecher

pp.25-33.

1. S.L. Steinheim, Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoge, ein Schiboleth, Vol. 1 (Frankfurt a.M., Siegmund Schmerber, 1835)
2. Bernard J. Bamberger, "Formstecher's History of Judaism," HUCA, Vol. XXIII (1950 - 1951 - Part 2), p. 1.

See also Schoeps' appreciation of Formstecher's significance in Jewish-Christian polemics. Formstecher skillfully countered the popular nineteenth century concept of Judaism as a superseded background for triumphant Christianity by simply reversing roles. Hegel had presented Judaism as a step below Christianity. Formstecher's response was that Christianity was an evolutionary phase in the unfolding of Judaism. It served to wean the non-Jewish world away from paganism toward ultimate religious perfection within a universalized Judaism.

Cf. Hans Joachim Schoeps, The Jewish-Christian Argument, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963) pp. 108 - 115.

3. S. Formstecher, Die Religion des Geistes, (Frankfurt a.M., Joh. Chr. Hermann'sche Buchhandlung, 1841)
Cf. pp. 20 - 21.
4. Ibid., p. 21. (m.t.)
5. Ibid., p. 49.
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Ibid., p. 32. (m.t.)
8. Ibid. p. 33. Cf. Steinheim's distinction between the unchanging contents of historical revelation and the changing degree of appreciation and understanding.
9. Ibid. p.33 /See pp.43-44.

10. Cf. Ibid. , p.54.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., Cf. pp. 54, 56,62, 73-76.
13. Ibid. , p.56 .
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., p.62 .
16. Ibid. , p. 80. (m.t.)
17. Ibid. ,pp. 90-91.
18. Ibid., p. 91 f.
19. Ibid., p. 94.
20. Ibid., p. 95. (m.t.)
21. Ibid., p. 75 ff.
22. Ibid., p. 89 footnote.
23. Ibid., p. 87.
24. "Die Offenbarung, als objective Position des Ussens,
hat keinen Entwicklungsgang..."
Ibid., p.33.

- 25. Ibid., p. 93. (m.t.)
- 26. Ibid., p. 87. *The Jewish Question in Judaism*. (New York, The Schocken Book Co., 1907) p. 480.
- 27. Ibid., p. 88. (m.t.)
- 28. Ibid., p. 88. (m.t.) *The Hegelian dialectic, Hirsch* follower of his philologic sense, is sharply refuted, e.g., Hegel's placement
- 29. Ibid., p. 56. inferior level in the scale of
- 30. Ibid., p. 19. *Will E. Doherty, "Hansel Hirsch and Hegel," Studies in Hegelianism and Kantianism*, ed. by Arnold J. Wolf, Harvard University Press, 1964, pp. 178 ff.
- 31. *Hansel Hirsch, Die religionsphilosophische Seite des Judentums*. (Leipzig, Verlag von Reischer Kugelberg, 1887), p. 27. (m.t.)
- 32. Ibid., p. 11.
- 33. Ibid., p. 11.
- 34. Ibid., p. 20.
- 35. Ibid., p. 47. (m.t.)
- 36. Ibid., pp. 48 - 49 ff.
- 37. Doherty points out how Hirsch revealed his affirmation of Kantian ethical-moral morality with a distorted faith in revelation. Hirsch viewed revelation as a necessary phase in the historic process:
 "Revelation here is a divine guidance the sole purpose of which is to emancipate man from the need for guidance, and hence from revelation itself."
Will E. Doherty, "The Revealed Morality of Judaism and Modern Thought, A Confrontation with Hegel," Religionsphilosophische Studien, ed. by Arnold J. Wolf, (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1964) See footnote # 4 on p. 274.

Hirsch

pp.34-39

1. David Philipson, The Reform Movement in Judaism, (New York, The Macmillan Co., 1907) p. 485.
2. Despite his mastery of the Hegelian dialectic, Hirsch was by no means a blind follower of his philosophic master. He sharply refuted, e.g., Hegel's placement of Judaism on an inferior level in the scale of Religion. Cf. Emil L. Fackenheim, "Samuel Hirsch and Hegel," Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History, ed. by Alexander Altmann, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964) pp.179 ff.
3. Samuel Hirsch, Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden, (Leipzig, Verlag von Heinrich Hunger, 1842), p. XV.(m.t.)
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 11.
5. Ibid., p. 13
6. Ibid., p. 30.
7. Ibid., p. 48. (m.t.)
8. Ibid., pp. 48 - 49 ff.
9. Fackenheim points out how Hirsch reconciled his affirmation of Kantian autonomous morality with a literal faith in revelation. Hirsch viewed revelation as a necessary phase in the historic process:
"Revelation here is a divine guidance the sole purpose of which is to emancipate man from the need for guidance, and hence from revelation itself."

Emil L. Fackenheim, "The Revealed Morality of Judaism and Modern Thought, A Confrontation with Kant," Rediscovering Judaism, ed. by Arnold J Wolf, (Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1965) See footnote # 6 on p. 274.

10. Hirsch, Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden, op.cit., p. 557. (m.t.)
11. Ibid., p. 580. (m.t.)
12. Ibid., p. 584. (m.t.)
13. Ibid. , p. 587.
14. Ibid., p. 593. (m.t.)
15. Ibid., p. 596. (m.t.)
16. Ibid., p. 597.
17. Ibid., p. 611. (m.t.)
18. Ibid., p. 612. (m.t.)
19. Ibid., p. 608.
20. Ibid., pp. 617 -618 . (m.t.)

Steinheim

pp.40-69

1. So designated by Schoeps in the sub-title of his book:
Hans Joachim Schoeps, Jüdischer Glaube in dieser Zeit: Prolegomena zur Grundlegung einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums, (Berlin, Vortrupp Verlag, 1934)
"Dem Gedenken Salomon Ludwig Steinheims des ersten jüdischen Theologen in der neuen Zeit"
2. See this thesis, pp. 54-55.
3. H.J. Schoeps, Vom Bleibenden und Vergänglichem im Judentum, ed. by H.J. Schoeps (Berlin, Vortrupp, 1935), pp.8-9
4. S.L. Steinheim, Die Offenbarung etc., Vol.II, pp.201-202.
(for full titles of Steinheim's major work, in 4 volumes, see below, footnote 7)
5. See WZJT ed. by Abraham Geiger (Frankfurt a.M., 1835)
Vol. 1.
6. Ibid., pp. 367 - 377.
7. S.L. Steinheim, Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriffe der Synagoga, ein Schiboleth
Vol.I (Frankfurt a.M., Siegmund Schmerber, 1835)
Vol.II (Leipzig, Leopold Schnauss, 1856)
Vol.III (Leipzig, Oskar Leiner, 1863)
Vol.IV (Altona, Gebrüder Bonn, 1865)
The above volumes will be referred to briefly in the notes below as Offenbarung, I, II, III or IV.
8. Offenbarung, I, pp. 5-6.
9. Ibid., pp. 7-9

10. Ibid., pp.9-11.
11. Ibid., pp. 22-24.
12. Ibid., pp. 28 - 29. Cf. Formstecher's distinction between the unchanging and changing aspects of revelation. See this thesis pp. 26 - 27.
13. Ibid., pp. 30 - 31.
14. Ibid., pp. 44-46.
15. Ibid., pp. 130 - 133.
16. Ibid., p. 146.
17. Ibid., pp. 147 - 149.
18. Ibid., p. 161.
19. Ibid., pp. 171 - 174.
20. Ibid., pp. 183 - 191.
21. Cf. Albert Lewkowitz, Das Judentum und die geistigen Strömungen des 19. Jahrhunderts (Breslau, M&H Marcus, 1935) p. 389.
22. Offenbarung, op. cit., II, p. 59. (m.t.)
23. Ibid., p. 43 ff.
24. Ibid., pp. 43 - 45.

25. Reason's failure, Steinheim explains, is due to the "hypostatizing" fallacy. Our thinking process generally employs concepts that have no corresponding reality. Examples of such "fictions" are the concepts of "the void," "the abyss," "the valley." These terms stand not for something but rather represent non-existence. (See Offenbarung II p. 48f.) Concepts of time and space are not identical with the realities and relationships of events in time or objects in space. Yet, human reason automatically applies these concepts, for which there is no commensurate reality, and compounds the confusion by the use of polarities (active-passive, straight-crooked etc.) which are likewise unreal. Elsewhere (Offenbarung, II, p. 80) Steinheim illustrates his thought with the example of space. Space is only where there is matter. By mental abstractions, however, we invent the infinite empty space which is as non-existent as the "hole" referred to in the dialogue: "How do you cast a brass cannon? -- You take a 'hole' and pour brass into it! "
- Cf. also the concept of logical "necessity" for which there is no corresponding reality. (Offenbarung I, pp. 246 - 253)
26. Offenbarung, II, p. 56.
27. Ibid., p. 74.
28. Offenbarung, I, pp. 310 - 318.
29. Offenbarung, II, pp. 143 - 144
30. Steinheim's point is that revelation is a postulate of logical reason. Reason cannot admit anything but the eternity of matter. The contrary, then, is inconceivable to reason. If nevertheless this doctrine, so contrary to reason, --- namely "creation out of nothing" --- must be upheld, how would we ever conceive of it? Steinheim's answer is: we must have gotten it through revelation! "The doctrine of the eternity of matter

is characteristic of speculative reason and cannot
be overcome without revelation." Offenbarung, I,
p. 318. (m.t.)

31. Offenbarung, II, p. 144.
32. Offenbarung, I, pp. 263 - 264. (m.t.)
33. Ibid. (m.t.)
34. Offenbarung, II, p. 141, (m.t.) Cf. IV, pp. 497-498.
35. Offenbarung, I, p. 285.
36. Offenbarung, II, p. 147.
37. Ibid., p. 149.
38. Ibid., p. 242. (m.t.)
39. Ibid., (m.t.) (Cf. II, p. 38.)
40. Ibid., (m.t.)
41. Ibid., p. 38 (m.t.)
42. Ibid., (m.t.) (Cf. II, p. 242)
43. See editorial footnote by Z. Frankel on p. 89 in
H. Grätz, "Die Construction der jüdischen Geschichte,"
ZRIJ, ed. by Z. Frankel (Leipzig, B.G. Teubner, 1846)
Vol. III, pp. 81 - 97, 361 - 381.

44. Abraham Geiger, "Salomon Ludwig Steinheim" JZWL, ed. by A. Geiger (Breslau, 1872) Vol. X, p. 292. (m.t.)
45. Offenbarung, II, p. 204. (m.t.)
46. Ibid., p. 205 (Cf. also pp. 37 -38)
47. Ibid., pp. 205 - 206. (m.t.)
48. Ibid. p. 209 (m.t.)
49. Ibid. (m.t.)
50. Ibid., pp. 221 -224.
51. Ibid., pp. 37 -38. (m.t.) (Cf. also p. 205)
52. S.L. Steinheim, "Weder zur Rechten noch zur Linken" Israelitischer Volkslehrer (1855) p. 58. (m.t.)
This article (photostat in possession of writer of this thesis) is a fine summary of Steinheim's basic tenets. It appeared in 5 installments pp. 54 - 62; 79 - 87; 119 - 125; 154 - 162; 182 - 189.
Cf. also Offenbarung, II, pp. 34 -35.
53. S.L. Steinheim, "Weder zur Rechten noch Zur Linken," op. cit. , p. 57. (m.t.)
54. Offenbarung, II, ch.22, "Der Sabbath mit seiner Symbolik"
Ibid., ch. 23, "Die leibliche Diätetik in höherer Bedeutung."
55. Ibid., pp. 390 - 391. (m.t.)
56. Ibid., pp. 393 - 394. (m.t.)

57. Offenbarung, II, p. 400. (m.t.)
58. Ibid., p. 410. (m.t.)
59. Ibid., p. 412. (m.t.)
60. Ibid., pp. 420 - 422.
61. Ibid., p. 423. (m.t.)
62. Ibid., pp. 198 - 199.
63. Ibid., p. 36.
64. Ibid., pp. 34 - 35.
65. Ibid., pp. 40, 205.
66. S.L. Steinheim, Vom Bleibenden und Vergänglichem im Judentum, ed. by H.J. Schoeps (Berlin, Vortrupp, 1935) pp. 27 - 28.
67. A. Geiger, JZWL, (Breslau, 1872) Vol. X, p. 291.
68. Offenbarung, II, p. 36.
69. Ibid., p. 44. (m.t.)
70. Heinz Moshe Graupe, "Steinheim and Kant," Y.B.-L.B.I., Vol. V, (1960), pp. 140 - 176.
71. Ibid., pp. 152-153.

72. Offenbarung, II, p. 112. (m.t.)
73. Ibid., I, pp. 237 - 238. Cf. also II, p. 365.
74. Offenbarung, I, p. 362. (m.t.)
75. E.g. Samuel Hirsch who published his major philosophic work 7 years after Steinheim's first volume of the "Offenbarung" had made its appearance, dismissed Steinheim with a mere footnote. See: Samuel Hirsch, Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden, op.cit., p. 554.
76. WZJT (Frankfurt a.M., 1836) Vol.2, p. 364. (Article signed by B.H.)
77. Elias Grünbaum in WZJT (1839) Vol.4, pp. 88 - 114. (See esp. p. 90)
78. Ibid., p. 94 f.
79. Heinz Moshe Graupe, "Steinheim and Kant," Y.B.-L.B.I. Vol. V, 1960, p. 153.
80. Offenbarung, II, pp. 19 - 20. (m.t.)
81. Geiger's charge that Steinheim was ignorant of Judaism's development before Mendelssohn (JZWL, Vol.10 (1872) -- p. 291) is contradicted by Steinheim's references to Bachia, Maimonides, Abravanel, Menasseh b. Israel, --- see Offenbarung, I, pp. 304, 320 - 323, 351. Cf. also Graupe's opinion that Steinheim's Jewish knowledge was not inconsiderable: H.M.Graupe, op.cit., p. 142.
82. H. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, (Leipzig, 1900) Vol. 11, p. 433.
83. Ibid., p. 436.

Krochmal

pp. 70 - 79

1. Meir Halevi Letteris, "תולדות אור" (חי' עכ"ט קרוכמל ז"ל) =
תולדות אור, ed. by Yehezkel Kaufmann, (Haifa, Beit
Hasefer Hareali Ha-ivri, ת"ש) pp. 21 - 33.
2. Cf. Meyer Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature,
(New York, Thomas Yoseloff, 1960. Vol. 3, p. 454.

Although the leading maskil of his generation, he
conducted himself with such piety "that even the
fanatics could not find fault with him."
3. Although a provisional title page bore the title
מורה נבוכים there is evidence that Krochmal
himself wanted the work to be known as מורה נבוכים
On Zunz's editorship and the question of the title
of Krochmal's book see Waxman, op.cit. p. 455: "we can
come to the conclusion that the name More Nebuke ha-Zeman
was the original title intended by the author"
Ibid. p. 456.
4. Ibid., p. 455.
5. Cf. J.L. Landau, Nachman Krochmal ein Hegelianer,
(Berlin, S. Calvary & Co., 1904), p. 6.
6. Y. Kaufmann and J. Klausner follow Landau's contention
that Krochmal was philosophically a Hegelian. Simon
Rawidowicz, "War Nachman Krochmal Hegelianer?"
(HUCA Vol. V, 1928) pp. 535 - 582, rejects Landau's
thesis. Julius Guttmann sees validity in both views.
Guttmann recognizes the predominant influence of
Schelling and Fichte until close to the end of Krochmal's
life when he leaned more on Hegel. Abraham I. Katsh
("Nachman Krochmal and the German Idealists," Jewish
Social Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 2) associates Krochmal
with Herder but then generalizes: "Krochmal stands
closer to the general run of German idealists thinking
than to the particular philosophy of Hegel."

7. Cf. Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, (Phila., J.P.S., 1964) footnotes # 37 and 54 (pp.445-446).

8. דע שכל אמונת דת היא גרוחתי, דע שאפילו בדת היוגה ארוזע של פכאים עמוקו מדבר ועצם לא תפי' יכאתר דבר אסעי אמה שבוא חשם פרטי בעל זקנו ואוהב, כ"א בכוח המעמידו, היינו בכוחו שלו שבוא בעדוהר עבדו קיים גשיוני תמורות גרמתי פילס' וגלי יהודי.

Nachmann Krochmal, מורה נבוכי הגילון, The Writings of Nachman Krochmal, ed. by Simon Rawidowicz, (Ararat Publishing Society, London, Waltham, Mass., 1961) 2nd edition, VI, p. 29.

9. ואנוני קהל ראשון מחזיקי היתוב על סדרת אמתה מאמיני מדעיים, של עברכניע היהשמיים חלפים ואורזים ואינם בלום עפי שאינם על אמתה במציאות, ושמה בכוחו החושש ענו בקשור עם כל היהשמיים ומתעלם יונג במין הכוסם ומאיב בסמולותיו - אין עמידתו ואמתה מצאמה כ"א בהשם יתעלם שבוא עבדו הצור בתמים, מעוז ענו גדור ודור, פיינו סבה כוללת ביחודה על מיני פסגות ואמתה מצואות כל עולם, שאין אמתה מצואותו ואמתה קיומו אלא זו. ושאלו פיה חוצה ממני אמתה מצואות וקיום עשום דבר בעצמו - פיה שבוא פאלטור.

Ibid.

10. ודע של מה שיהיוק פאלטריים פיסוד מוסד עסבג הכל את בשלם, ופ"א ואמו של פמצינות ואפילו בשכליות אינש אלא הגירות השם, ולשפכנה עפאמין בעע הוא נק מפני שיעלם אופן בטוהו עפני אפע, - כל זה בחזוק אינו אלא עקיים הפני פלאת, שאין אמת ו'סוד קיים כ"א עכבוכא ית'. -

Ibid.

11. ודע עוב כי הפנה הפירוש עשה שפחזיקו בה נחלם בייט בקהלת, ויא בעצמה אונת שנתקלו בה הדלי הכמי מחקק, פדע תגראב ופדע תגדלם לרם, ודלישו אליה אחר צומק העיון הפגוני ואחר שדברו דורות הרב וחקמיפם.

Ibid.

12. כי פציונים פתוכים הם אצלם כוב דגדלם מאנשי דדת ציוני תחלת פחחטבה, נעלים הובב מציוני פחולטם, ודד ציוני עשכל ואף כי מולטי ומחטבת הבינע דדן לא באו...
 ופנע נחמ שבציונים פתוכים האמת אחד בעצמו, הן עפי פחחטבה ופן עפי מולט הבינע, וכמו שבאנו בזה - פנע יהיו אצל פחחטבה אצל פלחמב צורות ודרכים שאנפ עצמיים לעשלה פחחטבת, כ"א עולכים יפדנע לעדיעז הול עכניסר הנפל: קצתם מיוסדיים בטבד פחחטבה וקצתם פחכימה אונתו בעט פתורג האלהית בעצות כוללות ונאמנות להדיע דהם אל פתבלים ופבדיות גדיעם ועבדו.

Krochmal, op. cit., VI, p. 30.

13. שפיא הפנע בעצמה ליעמוד עליה - אך לא גבינוכ שבני - כל געל דת יבא ושומנ מצור עשיל, עפ"י פדע אלוקים ענאודע גלבו וקלורג עת נפשו, ...
Ibid., VI, p. 29.

14. אונת פהשלות הולו פחמ שפן נאודות גלה כמו שאמנו, עט כל זאת עם ציונים עסבדע ולשמירב, היינו שיתדורו אליהם כחמ הנפל ע"י הלמוד בתורג והתוק במדעל פחצות וחורא ולחיות פחקבט וקבליים עוד הלחן הידוע, וכמו שפובכל בתורג פצוי אל הלמוד והשנין עבנים, ועתלובג אל שאלותיהם שנענה לעורכט אליהן.

Ibid., VI, p. 30.

15. מצד האמונה יבא לנו מדע האמונה התנוכית, ופוא מיותר
 דעת האמת פחותה - השם ג'ה - ודעת מה שיש לו
 קיום ודמיון לו - הכוחות - כפי מה שביא נטושה
 במדע וקנה כל איש כדול בקטל, בפתחונן כחות
 נפשו לאדם.

Ibid. VI, p. 30

16. - עי שבלעזת הדיונים האלה יגיע לפניהם, שאין
 בזוחני עצמותו דבר אחר ודמיון דבר אחר
 ונתודעו דבר שלישי, אלא שכל עיקר עצמותו
 ופארתו של הכוחות אינו כ"א לפתודע עצמו
 ולפתחונן הכוחות ולמה בפעולה אחת גדין.

Ibid. VI, p. 31.

17. כמו שם באור המשני מהם ומאין עצמו וסביבותיו בפעולה
 אחת מיוחדת.

Ibid.

18. וכמו כן חוק ואחף השם יתעלה קשה האומה בתנו לפעם
 בזמן נפלא ונעלה מאד תורות חקים ומשפטים צדיקים
 וכללים, משלימים לפדטי לקיבול באין פיות שם שאפשר.

Ibid., VIII, pp. 43 - 44.

19. ופי ובהן, שמעולם לא נמצאו טובי פאפטיים מלהם בין
 כללות הנבואה שלמה לעתיד קדוש זה כחוק נכבד
 וג'ן פדטיים שלא יפיו כי אם לקדוש; ודשו גלג
 בפירושים, פהם לא תמיד בדעת מבורך, וזה פרוג
 לתואם לפי פדטי באמתות פנטוש גני. ועצונן מביא

לגאור בגז מעט: סמון עולם לכל הנביאים הוא שלם תגא
 נבואתם הפרכי דברים נלתי כשתיפיר לזמן בית נחוק פוגב,
 אולם עינים רבים וטמטמדים בחוקים מחמד הנוכח יעניעם תצבינפ
 כן כלסות הצתיר לבוא, לא בהגללת זמן מיומד בדיוק ולסן
 בפרכי מעשים וקורותו ואף כי בשמות אנשים ומקומות
 נחמזים. הנביא צופה בשמן, עומד על מצבה פד קודש,
 נואר סביבותיו גצח אור, וכל עוד ירבה פדק בין מחמדו
 וזין צביתו כן ורבה חסרון הפגירות גרה אן גמדת,
 כאפע פנואר בקצב אופקו אן כלם פדבר הנכואר עון
 מכלי הפדיל והכיר בתסקיו.

Ibid., XI, p.117.

20. Cf. Krochmal, op. cit., VII, pp. 35 -37.

21. Ibid., pp. 38, 40 - 41.

פינו שבכל מעשה אומתנו וכל כוח נעלם וטוב פמתילעג וגא
 עמוך בקרבנו, נפד לזבגנו ונדפ בפינו כי אע חי בקרבנו
 ומידו פם עני, פיני שפם מושגשות בו ונאצלנות מכותו כלם
 פרותיות לזמם.

Ibid., p. 38.

(Cf. also: Guttman, Philosophies, op. cit., p 338 and footnote # 68 on p. 447.)

22. Cf. Guttman, op.cit., pp. 338 -339.

23. Rotenstreich points out that in Formstecher's and Hirsch's view the difference between Israel and other peoples corresponded to the dichotomy between Spirit and Nature. Krochmal, however, would recognize only a difference in degree, i.e. between Israel's total spiritual commitment and the partial spiritual commitment of other nations. Nathan Rotenstreich, "Krochmal in Retrospect," Jewish Spectator, (New York, Oct. 1963) pp. 23 -24.

24. Nahum Slouschz, The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature, (Phila., J.P.S., 1909) p. 63.

25. Ibid.

26. Krochmal, op. cit. VIII, p 40.

אולם באומותינו, פהם לביחס אל פוחמכי וחי' ציונות הכוליות נכונתו אס
אני לסדני הטעם הנלכדים, עם זאת הדבר כאמנם ז"ל: הלו
הגדל שכונת צמח, הלו עשילם שכונת צמח וכו'; הינו
שכונת עמלי אמוכו יין עמיו ויציולו מקין בן יין חלוף.

Ibid.

27. Krochmal's stress on the unique spiritual endowment of the Jewish people, retained throughout their long history in the diaspora as well as in Biblical times of nationhood, offers a fruitful basis for a theologically grounded concept of Jewish peoplehood which is needed in order to transcend the ever widening gap between Jewry in the present state of Israel and the Jewish communities of the dispersion. Krochmal, more directly than any other modern Jewish philosopher, addresses himself to the very issue to which Borowitz recently assigned priority on the agenda of contemporary Jewry:

"Jewish theology must bestow on Jewish peoplehood the dimension which sociology can never supply, its inimitable value and significance."

Eugene B. Borowitz, "Jewish Theology: Milton Steinberg and After", Reconstructionist, Vol. XXXI, No. 7, (May 14, 1965), p. 14.

28. Katsh rightly warns against a superficial identification of Krochmal with modern zionism:

"In his acceptance of a distinctive role for the Jews, there lies a certain amount of national pride.

This belief of Krochmal's had nothing in common with ordinary nationalism."

Abraham I. Katsh, "Nachman Krochmal and the German Idealists," Jewish Social Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 14.

Elsewhere Katsh discusses a certain correspondence of Krochmal's ideas with some of the thoughts of Moses Hess, Ahad Haam, Perez Smolenskin.

See: Abraham I. Katsh, "Krochmal's Philosophy and Zionist Thought," The Jewish Review, Vol IV, No. 3, pp. 16 - 24.

The theoretical work of Nachman Krochmal and other Jewish philosophers, especially, Nachman Krochmal's work, which is highly developed, is not only a part of the Jewish intellectual life but also a part of the general intellectual life of the Jewish people.

1. Abraham Katsh, "Nachman Krochmal and the German Idealists," Jewish Social Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 14.

2. See Katsh, pp. 1-6.

3. "Nachman Krochmal's Philosophy and Zionist Thought," The Jewish Review, Vol IV, No. 3, pp. 16 - 24.

The work of Nachman Krochmal is a part of the Jewish intellectual life and is highly developed. It is not only a part of the Jewish intellectual life but also a part of the general intellectual life of the Jewish people.

Geiger

pp. 89 - 91

1. Abraham Geiger, Das Judentum und seine Geschichte, 2nd edition, (Breslau, Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, H. Skutsch, 1865 (Parts I & II) and 1871 (Part III));

The first edition was published in 1864 and apparently enjoyed great popularity, necessitating a 2nd edition in short order.

The title page refers to the origin of the book's material as lecture notes in the sub-title: "In zwölf Vorlesungen." These were actually first published by Geiger in his periodical, JZWL, Vol. 2, in 1863, under the title "Vorlesungen über Judentum." Certain discrepancies between this first text and later editions are not without significance as we shall point out (see note 13).

The theological core of "Das Judentum und seine Geschichte", however, had been developed decades earlier by Geiger as is evident from his lectures to Jewish theological students in Breslau delivered in 1849. (See below)

2. Abraham Geiger, "Einleitung in das Studium der jüdischen Theologie: Vorlesungen gehalten in Breslau 1849 vor Studierenden der jüdischen Theologie", Nachgelassene Schriften, ed. by Ludwig Geiger, (Berlin, Louis Gerschel, 5 Vol., 1875 - 1878) Vol 2.

3. See: Ibid., pp. 5-6.

4. "Endlich ist die historische Religion nicht ein bei dem einmal gegebenes Stillstehendes, sondern ein aus dem gegebenen Kern sich Entwickelndes."

Ibid., p. 6.

Leo Baeck echoes Geiger's views on prophecy as a baffling historical phenomenon, mysterious in its sudden emergence. Baeck calls it a revolution rather than evolution. (See this thesis, pp. 142-143.) Geiger, however, sees both: revolution and evolution. Once prophetic Judaism had made its revolutionary appearance, it became part of history's evolutionary process. The heart of the mystery is in its beginning, "the given core."

5. Cf. Ibid., pp. 10 - 11.
6. Cf. Geiger's three major periods of Jewish history as developed in Part III of his "Judaism and its History" (See this thesis, pp. 87-88.)
7. A. Geiger, Das Judentum und seine Geschichte, op.cit., Part I, p. 26 . (m.t.)
8. Ibid. (m.t.)
9. Cf. Julius Guttman, Philosophies etc, op.cit, pp.322, 325 - 327.
10. A. Geiger, Das Judentum, op.cit., p. 30. (m.t.)
11. Ibid. (m.t.)
12. Ibid. (m.t.)
13. "Es treten uns hier Persönlichkeiten entgegen von einer stillen Grösse die uns imponiert, die uns das Wehen eines höheren Geistes in ihnen erkennen lässt."
Ibid. p. 27.

We find an interesting variation in the parallel text, published earlier (in 1863), where Geiger used the phrase "durch sie hindurch" instead of "in ihnen". The sentence there reads:

"...die uns das Wehen eines höheren Geistes durch sie hindurch erkennen lässt."

Abraham Geiger, "Vorlesungen über Judentum", JZWL, (Breslau, 1863) Vol. 2, p. 185.

The change is not without significance. The original phraseology (1863) suggests that the prophets are, as it were, binoculars through whom we might recognize more clearly the divine Spirit beyond; the revised text

published only 2 years later (1865) credits the prophets with possessing the Spirit within themselves. The Spirit is to be perceived in them, not beyond them. The latter reading is more consistent with an immanent concept of revelation.

14. A. Geiger, Das Judenthum, op. cit., p. 27. (m.t.)
15. Ibid., p. 30. (m.t.)
16. Ibid., p. 31. (m.t.)
17. Ibid., p. 34. (m.t.)
18. Ibid., pp. 34 -35 . (m.t.)
19. Ibid., p. 35. (m.t.)
20. Ibid., p. 36. (m.t.)
21. Ibid. (m.t.)
22. Ibid. (m.t.)
23. Ibid. (m.t.)
24. Ibid., Part III (1871), pp. 158 - 159. (m.t.)
Compare these three periods with four periods outlined by Geiger in 1849. See this thesis p. 81.
25. A. Geiger, "Einleitung in das Studium der jüdischen Theologie etc." (1849) op. cit., pp. 10 - 11.

26. "So sind sie unter sich verschieden, aber doch alle einer grossen Idee huldigend, von einem und demselben höheren Geiste getragen."

A. Geiger, Das Judentum, op. cit.
Part I., p. 28.

27. All page references cited in this paragraph refer to

A. Geiger, op.cit., Part I.

(All references to this work will be to respective paragraphs instead of pages since the paragraphs of the original German and the English edition are identical.)

Leopold's characteristic phrase "Bericht an mein" which is found in the original German edition (see note 17) is translated in the English edition as "In English phrase."

ibid., p. 28.

ibid., p. 30.

Leopold

4. / was widely recognized as founder of ethnic psychology ("Völkpsychologie")

5. Leopold refers to various declarations by official Jewish groups reaffirming loyalty to the state and the duty of "promoting its national interest." He quotes a statement published in 1881 by the German Israelite Union of Congregations, entitled "Principles of Jewish Ethics" which he helps draft. Paragraph 14 reads:

"Jewish conscience that its adherents shall love the state, and willingly render its property and life for its honor, culture and liberty."

Leopold, op. cit., Part I, p. 28.

Lazarus

pp. 92 - 109.

1. Great Jewish Thinkers of the 20th Century, ed. by Simon Noveck, (B'nai B'rith Great Books Series, Vol. III, Clinton, Mass., Colonial Press, 1963), pp. 232-233.
2. "Kant's fundamental principle has met with general recognition....It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to examine and state more in detail the relation of the ethics of Judaism to Kant's principle..."

M. Lazarus, The Ethics of Judaism, (Phila., J.P.S., 1900) Part I, par. 90.

(All references to this work will be to respective paragraphs instead of pages since the paragraphs of the original German and the English edition are identical.)

Lazarus' characteristic phrase "Kantisch zu reden" which is found in the original German edition (see note 16) is translated in the English edition as "In Kantian phrase."

Ibid., par. 88.

3. Ibid., par. 90.

Lazarus

4. / was widely recognized as founder of ethnic psychology ("Völkerpsychologie")
5. Lazarus refers to various declarations by official Jewish groups reaffirming loyalty to the state and the duty of "promoting its national interest." He quotes a statement published in 1885 by the German Israelite Union of Congregations, entitled "Principles of Jewish Ethics" which he helped draft. Paragraph 14 reads:
"Judaism commands that its adherents shall love the state, and willingly sacrifice property and life for its honor, welfare and liberty."

Lazarus, op. cit. Part I, p. 234.

He also quotes, with apparent approval, a public declaration by the German Rabbinical Association issued July 6, 1897 which includes:

"Judaism imposes upon its adherents the duty of serving the state to which they belong with devotion, and promoting its national interests with all their heart and might."

Lazarus, op.cit., Part I, p. 235.

6. Cf. Albert Lewkowitz, Das Judentum und die geistigen Strömungen des 19. Jahrhunderts, (Breslau, M.&H.Marcus, 1935) pp. 113-114.
7. Lazarus, op. cit., par. 157.
8. Ibid., par. 159.
9. Ibid., par. 32.
10. Ibid., par. 36.
11. Ibid., par. 66 and 74.
12. Ibid., par. 66.
13. Ibid., par. 74.
14. Ibid. , par. 159.
15. Lazarus' insistence that his work was created purely out of the spirit of Judaism ("I will not advance a thought in this work which I do not conscientiously believe was born of the spirit of Judaism." Ibid., par.74) seems almost ironical in view of his constant references

to Kant. A major portion of his work is devoted to the demonstration of the congruence between Jewish ethical principles and the Kantian good. The Kantian principle of ethical autonomy, he argues, is duplicated in Judaism and is the core of its ethics. (Cf. op. cit. , par. 86 - 119)

16. Moritz Lazarus, Die Ethik des Judentums, (Frankfurt a. M., J. Kauffmann, 1898; Vol.2 appeared posthumously in 1911)

The work (i.e. Vol. 1) was very soon translated into English by Henrietta Szold and appeared in 1900 (Part I) and 1901 (Part II) as a publication of the Jewish Publications Society of America in Phila:

M. Lazarus, The Ethics of Judaism, (Phila., J.P.S. 1900 (Part I) and 1901 (Part II)).

17. Hermann Cohen, "Das Problem der jüdischen Sittenlehre," Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften, Vol.III (ed. by Brune Strauss, Berlin, C.A.Schwetschke & Sohn, 1924) pp. 1-35. (The essay is sub-titled: "Eine Kritik von Lazarus' Ethik des Judentums.")

18. Lazarus felt that Cohen's criticism matched the virulence of antisemites. In his preface to the posthumously published 2nd Vol. of his work, Lazarus compares Cohen's criticism with that of an antisemite and adds: "Both gentlemen might differ very much, , but with reference to my work they are entirely *par nobile fratrum*."

Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften, op.cit. ,Vol.III p. 373.

19. Ibid. p. 35.

20. Cf. Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, (Phila, J.P.S., 1964) p. 350. With reference to the relationship between Cohen and Lazarus see also Fritz Bamberger, "Julius Guttman Philosopher of Judaism", Y.B.-L.B.I., Vol. V., 1960, pp. 4-6.

21. Lazarus, op.cit. Part I., par. 1 - 22.

22. Ibid., par. 23 - 31.
23. Ibid., par. 32 - 33.
24. Ibid., par. 36 - 37.
25. Ibid., par. 38 - 50.
26. Ibid., par. 51 ff.
27. Ibid., par. 60 - 74.
28. Ibid., par. 9.
29. Ibid., par. 10.
30. Ibid., par. 8
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., par. 74.
34. Ibid.
35. Cf. Hermann Cohen, op.cit. pp. 8-9.
36. Lazarus, op.cit. , par. 66.
37. Cf. Hermann Cohen, op.cit., pp.20-21.
38. Lazarus, op.cit., par. 77.
39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.
41. The English translation here and in several other places is not as precise as one should like it. The full passage in the original German edition is:
"Nicht aus einem göttlichen Willensakt, nicht durch einen göttlichen Machtspruch, entsteht das Sittengesetz, sondern aus dem ureigenen Wesen Gottes selbst, aus seiner unbedingt und unendlich sittlichen Natur fließt es."
Die Ethik des Judentums, op. cit., par. 80.
42. Ibid. , par. 81.
43. The Ethics of Judaism, op. cit., par. 81.
44. Ibid., par. 83.
45. Ibid.
46. The parallel passage in the English translation of op.cit. , par. 83, mistranslates "Gott...als Urbild aller Sittlichkeit", rendering it "God the ideal of all morality." It should, of course, read : "God, the prototype of all morality."
47. Ibid. , par. 84.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid. , par. 85.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., par. 85 and 86.

52. Ibid., par. 85.
53. Another tautology. The question is, how does man know what is good? Lazarus answers, man's "moral" nature tells him so. But how do we know which part of man's nature is moral and which is not? How do we recognize that part of man's nature which may be called "moral"? "Moral" remains undefined.
54. Ibid., par. 89.
55. Cf. Lazarus, op.cit., par. 120. A very similar evaluation of the significance of the event at Sinai was offered by Martin Buber. See this thesis, pp. 169 ff.
56. Lazarus, op.cit., par. 101.
57. Ibid., par. 90
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., par. 86 - 119.
61. Ibid., par. 77.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., par. 101

65. Ibid., par. 85.
66. Ibid., par. 89.
67. Lewkowitz indicates a difference of which Lazarus was not aware:

"Die Autonomie bedeutet bei Kant nicht nur, wie Lazarus meint, die Selbständigkeit des Guten, sondern in grundlegender Weise die Selbstgesetzgebung des menschlichen Willens. In diese Freiheit des Menschen darf darum nach der Kantischen Lehre auch Gott nicht eingreifen. Ja die Existenz Gottes ist dem Menschen erst durch seine eigene sittliche Vernunft gewiss. Im Judentum hingegen ist Gott nicht ein Postulat der sittlichen Vernunft. Sondern in der Intuition der Propheten offenbart sich ihnen Gott als Grund und Quell der Welt, des Menschen und seiner Erkenntnis des Guten."

Albert Lewkowitz, op. cit., p. 111.

68. Ibid. , pp. 114 - 115.
69. Julius Guttman, op.cit. , p. 352.(The point to which Guttman refers is most clearly stated by Lazarus, op.cit, par. 112)
70. Lazarus, op. cit., par. 112.
71. Cf., op. cit., par. 118 and 132.
72. Ibid., par. 9. Also cf. Lewkowitz, op. cit. , p. 100.

Cohen

pp. 110 - 137.

1. Cohen was born July 4, 1842 in Coswig, Germany. For biographical sketch see: Hermann L. Goldschmidt, Hermann Cohen and Martin Buber (Geneve, Editions Migdal, 1946) p. 22 and Great Jewish Thinkers of the 20th Century (B'Nai B'rith Great Books Series, Vol. III) ed. by Simon Noveck, (Clinton, Mass. Colonial Press, 1963) p. 106

2. Although Cohen remained pathetically loyal to the German nation and culture to the very end of his life (Cf. Franz Rosenzweig, "Einleitung", in Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften, ed. by Bruno Strauss, (Berlin, C.A.Schwetschke & Sohn, 1924) , Vol I, p.LVIII), he was deeply and painfully aware of the growing menace of German antisemitism. Certainly by 1907 he no longer indulged the illusion that it was a passing phenomenon. With prophetic foresight he recognized it as a profound spiritual sickness of an entire era:

"Der Judenhass ist mehr als ein Symptom in der Krankheit dieser Zeit. Und man täusche sich nicht; die Zeit ist krank, auch wenn ihre äusseren Erfolge grösser wären, als sie sind. Es gibt keine Gesundheit in einer Zeit, welche den Menschenhass duldet; ..."

Jüdische Schriften, op.cit., Vol.III
"Religion und Sittlichkeit" (1907) p. 99.

With reference to the so-called "emancipation", Cohen now expressed a sense of despair in a caustic comment on the Jew's theoretical rights of citizenship which are denied to him in practice .
Cf. Ibid.

3. Hermann L. Goldschmidt, op.cit. p. 22.

4. He was actually enrolled at the Seminary at the age of 17. (Cf. Great Jewish Thinkers etc, op.cit. , p. 107)

Two years later he withdrew. (Ibid.)

Cohen

5. /began study of philosophy at university of Breslau in 1861
Won prize for philosophic essay in 1863.
Doctorate in philosophy at university of Berlin in 1865.
Published first signed essay, "Platonic Theory of Ideas"
in 1866.
Received call to Marburg in 1873 and full professorship
in 1876.
Retired from Marburg in 1912.

Ibid., pp. 108 - 110

6. In his early Marburg years Hermann Cohen looked upon
Judaism as a matter of sentiment, merely a bond of
filial piety.

Cf. Rosenzweig in Jüdische Schriften, op.cit.
Vol. I, p. XXII.

7. Jüdische Schriften, Vol. II, p. 73 ff.

8. Rosenzweig in Jüdische Schriften, Vol. I, pp. XX - XXI.

9. The publication of his philosophic system consumed fully
a generation, from 1883 - 1912 and included notably his

"Logik der reinen Erkenntnis" (1902)
"Ethik des reinen Willens" (1904)
"Aesthetik des reinen Gefühls" (1912)

10. The numerical increase of his Jewish essays in the latter
years of his life is by itself evidence of a profound
change of Cohen's attitude toward Judaism:

Prior to 1880 Cohen produced only 3 Jewish essays.
From 1880 to 1911, 30.
From 1912 to 1918, 35 !

11. Cf. A. Lichtigfeld, Philosophy and Revelation, (London,
M.L. Cailingold, 1937), pp.5-6 and footnote # 11.

12. Cf. F.H. Heinemann, "Jewish Contribution to German Philosophy", Y.B.-L.B.I. IX, 1964, p. 163.
13. See also Immanuel Kant, Die Religion Innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft, ed. by Karl Vorländer, (Leipzig, Felix Meiner, 1922, 5th edition) p179.

"Religion ist (subjektiv betrachtet) die Erkenntnis aller unserer Pflichten als göttliche Gebote"
14. The work was completed in 1792 and published in 1793. All subsequent references to this work are to the above stated edition.
15. Ibid., chapters V. and VI. (pp. 117 - 131)
16. Ibid., pp. 118 - 119.
17. Ibid., p. 119.
18. Ibid., p. 119. (m.t.)
19. Ibid. (m.t.)
20. Ibid., p. 120.
21. Ibid., p. 122.
22. Ibid., p. 123.
23. Ibid., p. 128.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 132.
26. Ibid. (m.t.)
27. Ibid., p. 140.

28. Ibid., p. 140.
29. Ibid. pp. 140 - 141.
30. Ibid. p. 161. (m.t.)
31. Ibid., p. 162.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 196.
34. Hermann Cohens Jüdische Schriften, op.cit. ,
"Heine und das Judentum" (1867) -- Vol. II , pp. 2 ff
"Der Sabbat in seiner kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung"
(1869) Vol. II, pp. 45 ff.
Cf. Rosenzweig, "Einleitung, " Ibid., Vol. I, p. XXIV.
35. Rosenzweig, Ibid., p. XXV.
36. Full title: "Das Problem der jüdischen Sittenlehre,
Eine Kritik von Lazarus' Ethik des Judentums" (1899)
in Jüdische Schriften, op.cit., Vol. III, p.1-35.
37. Ibid., p. 18.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., (m.t.)
40. Jüdische Schriften, Vol. I, pp.XXXII - XXXIII.
41. Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, (Phila.,J.P.S.,
1964) , p. 357.

42. Hermann Cohen, Ethik des Reinen Willens, p. 13
43. Ibid. , p. 405.
44. Ibid. , p. 466.
45. Hermann Cohen, "Religiöse Postulate" (1907) in Jüdische Schriften, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 2.
46. Ibid.
47. Hermann Cohen, "Religion und Sittlichkeit, Eine Betrachtung zur Grundlegung der Religionsphilosophie" (1907) in Jüdische Schriften , Vol.III, p. 131.
48. Ibid.
49. In his response to congratulations extended to him by B'nai B'rith on the occasion of the publication of his "Ethik" (1904). See : Jüdische Schriften, Vol. I, p. 333.
50. Ibid.
51. Hermann Cohen, "Über den ästhetischen Wert unserer religiösen Bildung" (1914 ?) in Jüdische Schriften, Vol. I, p. 213.
52. Ibid. , p. 222. (m.t.)
53. Hermann Cohen, "Der heilige Geist," (1915) in Jüdische Schriften, Vol. III, p. 176 ff.
54. Ibid., p. 176. (m.t.)
55. Ibid., p. 177. (m.t.)

56. Hermann Cohen, Der Begriff der Religion im System der Philosophie, (Giessen, Töpelmann, 1915), p. 47.
57. Ibid. (m.t.)
58. Ibid., pp. 47 - 48.
59. Ibid., pp. 50 -51.
60. Cf. Ibid., p. 63.
61. Ibid. , p. 65. (m.t.)
62. Ibid. , p. 66. (m.t.)
63. Ibid. , p. 116.
64. Hermann Cohen, Religion der Vernunft, (Köln, Joseph Melzer, 1959, -- reprint of 2nd edition publ. in 1928), p. 82.
65. See: op.cit., chapter III , "Die Schöpfung," pp. 68-81.
66. Ibid., (m.t.)
67. Ibid., (m.t.)
68. Ibid., (m.t.)
69. Ibid.,p. 83. (m.t.)
70. Ibid., p.84. (m.t.)
71. Ibid., p. 87. (m.t.)

72. Ibid., pp. 87 - 88.
73. Ibid., p. 88. (m.t.)
74. Ibid. (m.t.)
75. Ibid., p. 89. (m.t.)
76. Ibid., p. 90. (m.t.)
77. Ibid., p. 91.
78. Ibid. (m.t.)
79. Ibid., p. 92. (M.t.)
80. Ibid., p. 94. (m.t.)
81. Ibid., p. 95. (m.t.)
82. Ibid., p. 96. (m.t.)
83. Ibid., p. 97. (m.t.)
84. Ibid., p. 98. (m.t.)
85. Ibid., p. 98. (m.t.)
86. Cf. Samuel Hugo Bergman, "hermann Cohen," Between East and West, Essays dedicated to the memory of Bela Horovitz, ed. by A. Altmann, (London, East and West Library, 1958), pp. 37 - 38.
87. For Cohen's most explicit statement of the concept of correlation as the core principle of Judaism see Religion der Vernunft, op.cit., pp. 102 - 103.

86. "Denn was sich wechselseitig aufeinander bezieht, das ist nicht in Gefahr, sich einander die Wirklichkeit stritig zu machen, wie es der idealistische Erzeugerbegriff seinem Erzeugnis gegenüber fast notwendig muss; In der Wechselseitigkeit dieser Beziehung hat es den Schutz gegen eine Auflösung seines eigenen Seins in das 'noch eigentlichere' Sein des andern. So wird für beide Glieder der korrelativen Beziehung die Tatsächlichkeit gerettet."
- Franz Rosenzweig, "Einleitung" in Jüdische Schriften, op.cit. , Vol. 1, p. XLIX.
89. Albert Lewkowitz, Das Judentum und die geistigen Strömungen des 19. Jahrhunderts, (Breslau, M & H Marcus, 1935), p. 146. (m.t.)
90. Ibid., p. 161 . (m.t.)
91. Ibid., (m.t.)
92. Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, op.cit., p. 366.
93. Henry Slonimsky, "Hermann Cohen," Historia Judaica, Vol. 4, No. 2, (New York, October 1942), pp. 82 - 83.
94. Ibid., p. 92.
95. Ibid., p. 93.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid.

98. Samuel H. Bergman, Faith and Reason: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought, ed. by Alfred Jospe, (Washington, B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1961), p. 49.
99. Ibid., p. 51
100. Alexander Altmann, "Hermann Cohens Begriff der Korrelation," In Zwei Welten, Siegfried Moses Festschrift, (Tel Aviv, Verlag Bitan, 1962) pp. 397 - 398. (m.t.)
101. Ibid. (m.t.)
102. F. H. Heinemann, "Jewish Contributions to German Philosophy," Y.B.-L.B.I., Vol. IX (1964), p. 169.

Baeck

pp. 138 - 153

1. Cf. Theodore Wiener, "The Writings of Leo Baeck", Studies in Bibliography and Booklore, Vol. I, No. 3, June 1954 (Cincinnati, H.U.C.-J.I.R.); available also as a special reprint issued by the Library of the HUC-JIR.
2. ^{A.} Arthur Cohen, The Natural and the Supernatural Jew, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1962), p. 104.
3. Ibid., pp. 117 - 118.
4. Ibid. , p. 104.
5. Leo Baeck, The Essence of Judaism, (New York, Schocken, 1948) pp. 15-16.
6. Ibid., p. 129.
7. Ibid. , p. 96.
8. Ibid., Cf. pp. 129, 148.
9. This is not to suggest that the idea is completely original with Baeck. Geiger, and long before him, Judah Halevi, had characterized the Jewish people as a people uniquely endowed with prophetic genius. Geiger's thinking no doubt influenced Baeck considerably. But, while Geiger somewhat compromised the uniqueness of Israel by applying to Jewish history patterns of general historical evolution, Baeck emphasized the incompatibility of the phenomenon of Israel with the ordinary processes of historical evolution. Baeck, it seems to us, went beyond Geiger in stressing the mystifying uniqueness of Israel. (See footnote # 4 of p. 263 in this thesis)

10. The Essence of Judaism, op. cit., p. 84.
11. Ibid., p. 84.
12. Ibid. p. 96.
13. Ibid., pp. 96 - 97.
14. Ibid., p. 97.
15. Ibid., p. 129.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 147.
18. Ibid., p. 148.
19. Ibid., 59.
20. Ibid., p. 60.
21. Ibid. , p. 34.
22. Ibid., p. 32.
23. Ibid., p. 32. (Cf. note # 9 and our discussion of Geiger's view of Israel's inexplicable genius for religion on pp. 81, 84-85.)
24. The Essence of Judaism, op. cit., p. 33.

25. "God and Man in Judaism" was originally (1927) contributed by Baeck to a collection of essays edited by Carl C. Clemen of Bonn University, under the general title "Religionen der Erde." These essays were translated by A.K. Dallas and issued by Harcourt Brace in 1931, entitled Religions of the World. Baeck's essay was entitled "The Religion of the Hebrews." It was reissued by the UAHC as "God and Man in Judaism," in 1958.
26. E.g. Hans Joachim Schoeps, Jüdischer Glaube in dieser Zeit: Prolegomena zur Grundlegung einer systematischen Theologie des Judentums, (Berlin, Vortrupp, 1934), pp. 26 - 28.
27. "God and Man in Judaism", op. cit., p. 9.
28. The Essence of Judaism, op. cit., pp. 59 - 60.
29. "God and Man in Judaism", op. cit., p. 10
30. Ibid., p. 10
31. Ibid., p. 11.
32. Ibid., p. 12.
33. Leo Baeck, This People Israel, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 62.
34. Ibid., pp. 63 - 64.
35. Ibid., p. 64.
36. Ibid., p. 76.

37. Ibid., p. 76.
38. Ibid., p. 82.
39. Ibid., p. 100.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Arthur A. Cohen, The Natural and the Supernatural Jew,
op. cit.,
43. Ibid., p. 104.
44. Ibid.
45. "God and Man in Judaism", op. cit., pp. 24 - 25.
46. Arthur A. Cohen, op. cit., p. 109.
47. Ibid., p. 118.
48. Ibid., p. 118.
49. The Essence of Judaism, op. cit., p. 35.
50. Cf. Hans Joachim Schoeps, op.cit. , pp. 57 -59.

Buber

pp. 154 - 175.

1. He actually attempted the translation of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" into Polish. (See: Martin Buber, "Autobiographische Fragmente," in Martin Buber, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp and Maurice Friedman, (Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 1963) p. 34, note # 3.)

Ernst Simon reminds us of Buber's persistent identification with German culture. In his two most acute spiritual crises, Simon points out, Martin Buber found the answer in Kant and Dürer! Prior to his study of Hasidism he was absorbed in German mysticism, esp. Meister Eckhardt.

See: Ernst Simon, "Martin Buber and German Jewry," Y.B.-L.B.I., Vol III, (1958), pp. 3 - 39.

2. Walter Kaufmann, "Buber's Religiöse Bedeutung," in Martin Buber, ed. by Schilpp and Friedman, op cit., p. 587.

3. "א"ר-101" תשכ"ד No. 'ה (May 1964) pp. 1-3. The editor's note on p. 92 refers to the origin of the article in the year 1925 and its first translation into Hebrew by Pnina Nave, in cooperation with Martin Buber, for publication in this journal in 1964.

The writer of this thesis checked further on the origin of this material and obtained an interview with Martin Buber at his home in Jerusalem in June 1964. To the request for this material in the original German, Martin Buber replied that it had recently been selected for publication, as his contribution to a Festschrift for Margarete Susman, from material which he had gathered over many years on this topic. It was to be published also, he said, in the periodical "Neue Sammlung."

4. Martin Buber, "Autobiographische Fragmente," op. cit., p. 29.
5. Ibid., p. 29.

6. Ibid., pp. 29 - 30.
7. Ibid., p. 30.
8. Ibid.
9. Martin Buber, "Ich und Du," in Werke, (3 vol.) München, Kösel Verlag, 1963, Vol. 1, p. 128. (m.t.)
All subsequent quotations from Ich und Du are rendered by the writer of this thesis in his own English translation.
10. Ibid. (On Buber's thought that all revelations are essentially identical throughout all time and place, see this thesis p. 162. Cf. also Krochmal's view of the universal core of religious truth in all religions, referred to on p. 73 of this thesis)
11. Ibid. , p. 129.
12. Ibid., pp. 130 - 131.
13. Ibid., p. 131.
14. Ibid., p. 132.
15. Ibid. , p. 145.
16. Ibid., p. 148.
17. Ibid., p. 152.
18. Ibid.

19. Ibid. , pp. 152 - 3.
Cf. Steinheim's view -- the exact opposite of Buber -- that the appearance of the Divine being , or the experience of the Divine Presence by itself, was not revelation unless it was accompanied by the communication of content which man could not obtain on his own. (See this thesis pp. 44-45.)
20. Ich und Du, op.cit., p. 153.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 154.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 155.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 156.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 157.
34. Ibid., p. 158.

35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., pp. 159 - 160.
37. Ibid., p. 160.
38. Martin Buber, Israel and the World, Schocken Books, first paperback edition, 1963, New York, Cf. p. 199.
Also: "In the historical hour in which its tribes grew together to form a people, it became the carrier of a revelation." Ibid., p. 248.
39. Ibid. p. 186.
40. Ibid., p. 169.
41. Ich und Du, op. cit., p. 148.
42. Cf. this thesis pp. 161 - 162. Cf. also Ich und Du, op. cit., p. 153.
43. Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, New York and Evanston, Harper Torchbooks, 1960, p. 54.
44. Israel and the World, op. cit., p. 89.
45. Ibid., p. 91.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 94.
48. Martin Buber, Moses; The Revelation and the Covenant, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1958; first published in 1946 under the title: Moses.

- N.
49. Cf. Nachum Glatzer, " Buber Als Interpret der Bibel," Martin Buber, ed. Schilpp and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 354, 360.
- A similar interpretation of the significance of Sinai was offered by Lazarus (see this thesis, p. 105) and Formstecher (see p. 29 ff) although each from a different philosophic standpoint.
50. Martin Buber, Moses, op. cit., p. 55.
51. Ibid., p. 130.
52. Ibid. p. 135.
53. Ibid., p. 139.
54. transl. by Maurice Friedman. See : Maurice S. Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue, p. 262. (New York and Evanston, Harper Torchbooks, 1960)
55. Martin Buber, Moses, op. cit., p. 187.
56. Ibid., p. 188.
57. A fine summation of Buber's view of Halachah and its critique by Franz Rosenzweig and Ernst Simon may be found in Malcolm L. Diamond, Martin Buber: Jewish Existentialist, (New York, Oxford University Press,, 1960) pp. 164-169.
58. Ironically, one of Buber's oldest friends is probably his severest critic. Ernst Simon strikes at the very heart of Buber's philosophy by questioning his dialogical structure. Why limit it to I-THOU ? Why not extend it to I-WE ? The I-THOU structure fosters the illusion that man really exists as an autonomous individual. But is not man a social creature? How can the "individual" be detached from his community, its sancta, laws and customary practices ? Simon pleads with Buber to accept

62. Martin Buber, "Autobiographische Fragmente", Martin Buber, ed. by Schilpp and Friedman, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
63. Ibid.
64. Eliezer Berkovits, A Jewish Critique of the Philosophy of Martin Buber, (New York, Yeshiva University, 1962) p. 34.
65. Cf. op. cit., pp. 56 - 59.
66. Ibid., pp. 66- 67.
67. Arthur A. Cohen, The Natural and the Supernatural Jew, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1962) p. 169.
68. Ibid., p. 171.
69. See p. 156 and note # 3.
70. Arthur A. Cohen points out that a revelation devoid of content will not only make Halachah impossible but can not even lead to the realization of the threefold reality which, according to Buber, the Presence of God is supposed to confirm:

"The reality of relation, 'the inexpressible confirmation of meaning,' and finally the assurance that this meaning is one to be released into this life, are, Buber believes, contained within the meeting with God. It is noteworthy, however, that with the exception of the meeting itself, each of the other two aspects is possible only on the assumption that there is something verifiable in faith or experience about the content of God's revelation. Presence as Power will yield neither meaning nor 'worldliness,' unless what God says is acknowledged as a primary reality. To derive meaning and relevance from the content-bare Presence of God is difficult, if not impossible.."

Arthur A. Cohen, "Revelation and Law: Reflections on Martin Buber's Views on Halakah", Judaism, Vol I, No. 3, (July 1952), p. 252.

The lack of objective content in the encounter with God and in the divine-human dialogue has been pointed out as the chief problem in Martin Buber's Existentialism by the writer of this thesis in his paper before the CCAR in 1952. (Joshua O. Haberman, "Martin Buber's Existentialism" Yearbook of CCAR, Vol LXII (1952), pp.430 - 434):

"If you ask Buber, how can you tell that you have achieved this connection or relationship? he will answer you, I just know when it happens. There is no criterion other than I know."

Ibid. p.433

A religion whose mandates must gain all validity by a strictly personal consent will be severely limited in its power and authority. Isaac Bashevis Singer is not alone in deploring the amorphous nature and vacuity of Buber's dialogical concept:

"He never really points to any means of entering into the I-Thou relationship; he simply maintains that its achievement is an instance of grace, the bliss of such unity being its own reward. The reader never learns whether men have any real duties toward the Thou, or whether the I-Thou relationship is anything more than a kind of spiritual indulgence."

Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Rootless Mysticism", Commentary, Vol. 39, No. 1 (Jan. 1965) p.77.

How can disciples be raised up when there is nothing to pass on to them? Singer's strictures may be harsh, but are not invalid:

"A disciple of Buber need not serve God by action and sacrifice. He is free to do as he pleases."

Ibid., p. 78

This highly personal approach to religion, which negates all objective content in revelation, is certainly a significant factor why it is so difficult to build a

true religious commitment on the basis of Buber's approach. Arthur Hertzberg, from the point of view of the rabbinate's struggle to build up a vital religious life, gives voice to disenchantment with Buber precisely because his philosophy does not commit the modern Jew to Judaism:

"For a few years the most contemporary voices in the rabbinate looked for a sense of purpose in a revival of theological thinking. Martin Buber, who had been almost unknown in America, suddenly came to occupy the center of the stage, as many of the younger Jewish intellectuals flirted with religious existentialism. But it became clear almost immediately, at least to rabbis, that modernist Jewish theology simply could not sustain the burden they were trying to put on it. The most that one could derive from Jewish religious existentialism was a highly personal sense of encounter with God and with other men. Hassidic texts especially could be an intriguing source for such emotions, but they were not necessarily the only ones, for many of the young could, and did, wander around among Buber, Zen and even Catholic mysticism."

Arthur Hertzberg, "The Changing American Rabbinate," Midstream, January 1966. p. 28.

71.

תבניות שנתונים כאן, בדרך כלל הם נסתרים וניכרים, כן
כדיבור זמן רב. אך תעודות באנושיות פן זה המקור, אשכ כ
סמכות איתות ח"בת לחזור וספירטל, באישיפתה לפרוהין
את פסיגים באנושיים שתבררו כסיגים. חובה על כל אדם
מאחין פסיגים לסקן בקו, באש הוא מלפכק. גם כלל,
נתוצאות פסיגים נודעות כן בתקופות מאוחרות יותר

Martin Buber "על הנהגות" - No. ח', פברואר 1964
(May 1964 (ניסן-אייר תשכ"ד) p. 2.

Rosenzweig

pp. 176 - 207

1. See Nahum N. Glatzer's essay in Great Jewish Thinkers of the 20th Century, (B'nai B'rith Great Books Series, Vol. III, Clinton Mass., Colonial Press, 1963), pp. 159 ff.

Biographical chronologies in considerable detail are found in : Franz Rosenzweig, Briefe, selected and ed. by Edith Rosenzweig in cooperation with Ernst Simon, (Berlin, Schocken, 1935) pp. 724 - 725, and Nahum N. Glatzer, Franz Rosenzweig His Life and Thought, (Phila., J.P.S., 1953) , pp. 364 - 367.

2. Letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg (Berlin, 31. 10. 1913) in Briefe, op. cit., p. 73. (m.t.)
3. Franz Rosenzweig, "Zeit Ists ... Gedanken über das jüdische Bildungsproblem des Augenblicks," (addressed to Hermann Cohen in 1917), Kleinere Schriften, ed. by Edith Rosenzweig, (Berlin, Schocken, 1937) pp.56 - 78.
4. Franz Rosenzweig, Der Stern der Erlösung, (Frankfurt A.M., J. Kauffmann, 1921)
5. See "Franz Rosenzweig und Eugen Rosenstock: Judentum und Christentum" in Briefe, op. cit., pp.637 - 720, and the analysis of this correspondence by Hans Joachim Schopes, The Jewish-Christian Argument, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963) p.128 ff.
6. The fact that Franz Rosenzweig himself was not anxious for the label "existentialist" is clearly stated in: Franz Rosenzweig, "Das Neue Denken: Einige nachträgliche Bemerkungen zum 'Stern der Erlösung'" (1925), Kleinere Schriften, op. cit., p. 392. Rosenzweig's preferred designation for his philosophic approach was "absoluter Empirismus." (Ibid., p. 398)

Schwarzschild points out why we are, nevertheless,

justified in regarding Rosenzweig as an existentialist. Particularly cogent is the distinction Schwarzschild draws between Rosenzweig and the French existentialists as well Christian existentialism. See: Steven S. Schwarzschild, "Franz Rosenzweig and Existentialism," Yearbook of CCAR, Vol. IXII, 1953, pp. 410 - 429.

7. Cf. Ignaz Maybaum, "Franz Rosenzweig and the Existentialist Philosophers", Jewish Philosophy and Philosophers, ed. by Raymond Goldwater, (London, The Hillel Foundation, 1962), pp. 175 - 200, esp. pp. 175-186.
8. Rosenzweig points out that his "Star" was not meant to be a "Jewish book" in the popular sense nor does it claim to be a philosophy of religion, "but merely a system of philosophy."
Das Neue Denken, op. cit., p. 374.
9. Included under the heading of "Urzelle des Stern der Erlösung" in Kleinere Schriften, op. cit., pp. 357 - 372.
10. Ibid., p. 357.
11. Ibid. p. 364.
12. Ibid., p. 365.
13. Ibid., p. 366.
14. Ibid., p. 367. (m.t.)
15. Ibid., (m.t.)
16. Ibid., p. 367.
17. Ibid., p. 367/8.

18. Ibid., p. 368.
19. Ibid., (m.t.)
20. Nahum N. Glatzer, Franz Rosenzweig His Life and Thought, (Phila., J.P.S., 1953) p. 365.
21. Cf. Stern der Erlösung, op. cit. , pp. 167 - 171.
22. "Das Chaos ist in, nicht vor der Schöpfung" --Ibid.,p.171.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., pp. 174-175.
25. Ibid., p. 184
26. Ibid., pp. 184-185. (m.t.)
27. Ibid., p. 177.
28. Ibid., p. 198. (m.t.)
29. Ibid., p. 200. (m.t.)
30. Ibid., p. 204.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid. , p. 205.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid. , p. 206.

35. Ibid., p. 209. (m.t.)
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid. p. 210. (m.t.)
38. Ibid., pp. 224 - 225.
39. Ibid., p. 225.
40. Cf. Steinheim's distinction between law and command.
See this thesis pp. 55- 56.
41. Der Stern der Erlösung, op. cit., p. 226.
42. Ibid., p. 226. (m.t.)
43. Ibid., p. 227.
44. Ibid., p. 252. (m.t.)
45. Ibid., p. 231.
46. Ibid., p. 232.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid. (m.t.)
49. Letter to Joseph Prager, (Frankfurt, Jan. 1922)
in Briefe , op. cit., p. 421.

50. Franz Rosenzweig, "Das Neue Denken", Kleinere Schriften, op. cit., p. 397. (as translated in Nahum N. Glatzer, Franz Rosenzweig, op. cit., p. XXX.
51. Der Stern der Erlösung, pp. 237 - 238.
52. Ibid., p. 237.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p. 238.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 239.
58. See his letter to Gertrud Oppenheim, dated 14.3.22 in which reference is made to Margarete Susman's review of the "Star." Franz Rosenzweig applauded her judgment in selecting as its core-sentence and motto: "Denn Name ist nicht Schall und Rauch, sondern Wort und Beuer. Den Namen gilt es zu nennen und zu bekennen: Ich glaub' ihn".

Briefe, op. cit., p. 423.
59. Franz Rosenzweig, "Die Bauleute: Über das Gesetz" (1923), addressed to Martin Buber, Kleinere Schriften, op. cit., pp. 106 - 121. (Cf. English translation of same: "The Builders: Concerning the Law", On Jewish Learning, ed. by. N.N. Glatzer, (New York, Schocken Books, 1955), pp. 72 - 92.
60. Briefe, op. cit., pp. 424 - 431.
61. See letter to Martin Buber, dated. 19.8.22., Ibid. p. 440.

62. Letter to Rudolf Hallo, dated 27. 3. 1922, Briefe,
op. cit., p. 425.
63. Ibid. (m.t.)
64. Ibid., p. 426.
65. Cf. Petuchowski's discussion of the "common landscape" :
Jakob J. Petuchowski, Ever Since Sinai, (New York,
Scribe Publications, 1961) , pp. 111 - 114.
66. Cf. Franz Rosenzweig, "Die Bauleute", op. cit. , p. 112.
67. Ibid., p. 116.
68. Ibid., p. 117.
69. See; "Revelation and Law: Martin Buber and Franz Rosen-
zweig" (their correspondence) in On Jewish Learning,
ed. by N.N. Glatzer, op. cit. , pp. 108 - 124.
70. Buber (June 24, 1924), Ibid., pp. 111 - 112.
71. Rosenzweig (June 29, 1924), Ibid., p. 113.
72. Buber (July 1, 1924) , Ibid., p. 114.
73. Buber (July 13, 1924) , Ibid., p. 115.
74. Rosenzweig (July 16, 1924) , Ibid. p. 116.
- Cf. Steinheim's point that what is revealed to us
(in the Bible) is a doctrine about God not a law.
See this thesis pp. 56-57, 60.
75. On Jewish Learning, op. cit., Martin Buber to Franz Rosen-
zweig, (June 3, 1925), p. 117.

76. Rosenzweig (June 5, 1925), Ibid., p. 118.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid. (Cf. note # 74 r#ference to Steinheim)
79. Ibid.
80. Rosenzweig's letter was addressed to Martin Goldner, Nahum Glatzer, Hans Epstein and Lotte F#rth. It was dated Nov. 1924.
- Ibid. , pp. 119 - 124. (German original in Briefe, op . cit. pp. 518 - 521)
81. Ibid., p. 120.
82. Ibid. , p. 121.
83. Ibid., p. 122.
84. I have preferred to quote this passage in my own translation because Glatzer's, in this instance, does not seem to me precisely faithful to the original.
- The original German reads:
- "Was wissen wir im Tun ? ...in diesem Augenblick wissen wir gar nichts andres als eben diesen Augenblick, ihn aber in der ganzen gott-menschlichen Wirklichkeit des Gebots, aus der wir sagen d#rfen: Gelobt seist Du."
- Briefe, op. cit., p. 520.
85. Ibid., p. 520., (m.t.)
86. On Jewish Learning, op. cit. , p. 122.
87. Ibid. , p. 18.

88. Franz Rosenzweig to Rudolf Hallo, letter dated 27. 3. 1922, Briefe, op. cit., p. 428.
89. Julius Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, (Phila, J.P.S., p. 1964), p. 376.

Guttman suggests that some of Rosenzweig's ideas seem to be dogmatically established rather than inferred from experience:

"The elements of experience in Rosenzweig's world view are never clearly delineated. They disappear behind the curtain of the constructively developed ideas, and thus it seems that on more than one occasion the ideas have been established dogmatically, and not inferred from experience."

Ibid.

Conclusion

pp. 208 - 216

1. Leo Baeck, Von Moses Mendelssohn zu Franz Rosenzweig, Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, 1958, p. 43.

2. Ernst Simon reports a revealing encounter between Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig. The incident took place at the time of Cohen's controversy with Buber on Zionism:

"To Cohen's disappointment, Rosenzweig, though not a Zionist, sided with Buber rather than with Cohen. When Rosenzweig visited Cohen one day, his host asked him, "What do you find in Buber that you do not find in me?" Rosenzweig answered, "You have only Adonai echad --- 'our God is one and a unique God'. In Buber I also find the Sh'ma Yisrael, the call to the people." For a moment, Cohen was silent. Then he rose, opened his file cabinet and took out the manuscript of what was to be his last book, The Religion of Reason from the Sources of Judaism (which was published posthumously) and read a passage to Rosenzweig which revealed that Cohen, too, had finally discovered, in the Sh'ma Yisrael, both the call to a particular people, Israel, and the declaration of the oneness and universality of God."

Ernst Simon, "The Dimension of Piety: Prayer And Worship in Jewish Experience", Dimensions of Jewish Existence Today, (Washington, B'Nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, 1965) pp. 74-75.

3. On the prevalence of the same approach to revelation in certain circles of modern Christian theology see: John Baillie, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought, New York, Columbia University Press, 1961, Cf. especially pp. 33 ff.
4. Modern Jewish theology cannot but reflect some of the contradictions and paradoxes inherent in Jewish tradition as pointed out by Lou H. Silberman, "The Theologian's Task", Yearbook of CCAR, Vol. LIII, 1963, pp. 173 - 182. See espec. p. 175.

5. Cf. Fackenheim's argument that a "proof" in support of a faith is convincing only for those who already share that faith:

"No conceivable datum -- neither a natural fact, nor an inner experience, nor an existing scripture -- can serve as an authority authenticating a religious truth except for those already prepared to accept that truth on faith. Faith may base itself on authority; but the authority is an authority only where faith can be presupposed."

He concludes: "The Psalmist in extremis could rest in the irrefutability of faith. The modern believer in extremis must endure the full impact of its being undemonstrable as well; "

Emil L. Fackenheim, "On the Eclipse of God," Commentary, Vol. 37, No. 6, (June 1964) pp. 55-60.

Among representative spokesmen of liberal Judaism Felix Goldmann was perhaps most forthright in acknowledging the impossibility of providing rational validation for faith, particularly revelation. Revelation, he argued, involves belief in divine intervention in history. This excludes the possibility of applying the principle of causation in a scientific exploration of the origin of revelation. The only possible confirmation of our view of God and the ethics derived therefrom is faith. There is no other authority which can validate its truth.

See: Felix Goldmann, "Die Grenzen Des Liberalismus," Festgabe für Claude G. Montefiore, (Berlin, Philo, 1928) pp. 50 - 57.

6. Cf. Fackenheim's argument that in this age of de-personalization a God, conceptualized in attributes of ultimate reason and timelessness, would not be relevant to man's need. Modern man seeks to recover the aspect of Personal Being in a God who acts in specific time and place.

Emil L. Fackenheim, "Two Types of Reform: Reflections Occasioned by Hasidism," Yearbook of CCAR, Vol. LXXI (1961), pp. 208 -228. See espec. pp.212-216, 219 - 220.

Fackenheim had taken a somewhat similar approach in his

article, "An Outline of a Modern Jewish Theology," which centers on the problem of revelation. The concept of revelation as a divine incursion in the here and now redeems the individual from his crushing sense of insignificance: "Revelation establishes the significance of the here and now as unique; it is the religious category of existentiality as such."

Emil L. Fackenheim, "An Outline of a Modern Jewish Theology," Judaism, Vol. 3, No. 3, Summer 1954, pp. 240 - 250. See espec. p. 247 ff.

7. The dominant trend in Jewish theology of the present era has been the abandonment of the premises of philosophic idealism. It parallels a similar movement within Protestant theology. See: Alexander Altmann, "Zur Auseinandersetzung mit der 'Dialektischen Theologie'", MGWJ, Vol. 79 (1935) Espec. pp. 345 ff.

Cf. also Petuchowski:

"Ours is an Age when the immanentist view of God, predominant in the nineteenth century, has given way to the recognition that God is God, and man is man. No longer is man himself a part of an impersonal Absolute, a proud manifestation of Universal Spirit."

Jakob J. Petuchowski, "Dialectics of Reason and Revelation," Rediscovering Judaism: Reflections on a New Theology, Chicago, Quadrangle Books, 1965, p. 29. /ed. by Arnold J. Wolf,