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For Rachel and Ari

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Acknowledgments

I wish to acknowledge the many friends and colleagues who supported me in the writing of this book. The book began to come together in my mind as I grew frustrated with certain fanciful and nihilistic trends in philosophical postmodernism that had preoccupied me in a book I edited entitled *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age*. I became attracted to the postliberal model for religion offered by George Lindbeck and the Yale School, and I worked to refine this model for Jewish thought while at the Hartman Institute for Advanced Jewish Study in Jerusalem. This returned me to earlier hermeneutical models of philosophy and theology that I learned from Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy at the University of Chicago, and through my work on Martin Buber with Paul Mendes-Flohr at the Hebrew University. Yet the germ of the idea for the book goes back some twenty-five years to when I first read a November 1924 letter that Franz Rosenzweig wrote to members of the German Jewish adult-education center called the *Lehrhaus*. Allow me to confess that I have been transfixed by this letter since reading it and have continually returned to its words as one of the most significant portraits of the power of liturgy.

> All the days of the year Balaam's talking ass may be a mere fairy tale, but not on the Sabbath wherein this portion is read in the synagogue, when it speaks to me out of the open Torah. But if not a fairy tale, what then? I cannot say right now; if I should think about it today, when it is past, and try to say what it is, I should probably only utter the platitude

> that it is a fairy tale. But on that day, in that very hour, it is—well, certainly not a fairy tale, but that which is communicated to me, provided I am able to fulfill the command of the hour, namely, to open my ears.[1]

Here, Rosenzweig acknowledges what all of us as heirs to the Enlightenment know to be true: that we can no longer simply take the Torah as God's revelation to Moses from Sinai. As most people walk and work in the secularized world, they cannot help but think of a story of a talking ass as a nice story, as a fairy tale. But then Rosenzweig opens up another possibility. While Jews are in the synagogue, on Shabbat, and in the context of the communal and liturgical reading of the Torah, another avenue, a unique order of reality is opened wherein suddenly, yes, some Jews cannot only imagine the ass speaking but even hear her speak. And she is speaking not only to Balaam but also to them!

This book is an attempt to explain and illuminate the power of liturgy for our understanding of God, time, space, community, and ethics. The book argues that liturgy is an underappreciated semiotic form for reasoning. Liturgical reasoning enables humans to "perform" communal acts of thinking and behaving that bring them to certain fundamental truths. Liturgical reasoning takes advantage of the multiform character of liturgy to engage the body, mind, and soul in acts of spiritual transformation through which they are renewed and motivated toward acts of healing the world.

I am especially indebted to Peter Ochs, who has read chapters in various stages of my writing. I also want to thank Zachary Braiterman, Michael Zank, and Robert Gibbs, who commented on sections of the manuscript. I have benefited greatly from insights into Christian liturgies given to me by David Ford, Dan Hardy, Ben Quash, and Nick Adams, and by insights into Islamic prayer from Omid Safi, Muhammad Suheyl Umar, Basit Koshul, and Annabel Keeler, which I received in the liturgy group of the Scriptural Reasoning Theory Conferences at Cambridge University in 2004 and 2005.

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Randi Rashkover and C. C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 34–56.

Finally, I must thank my wonderful family. My wife, Arlene Kanter, continues to be the love of my life and a constant source of support and wisdom. My children, to whom I dedicate the book, have truly been God's gifts to me.

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Abbreviations

Btal	Babylonian Talmud.
J	Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem; Or, On Religious Power and Judaism*, trans. Allan Arkush, with introduction and commentary by Alexander Altmann (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983).
Jtal	Palestinian Talmud.
MJ	Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum. Gesammelte Schriten Jubiläumsausgabe* (Stuttgart: F. Frommann Verlag, 1983), 8:99–204.
ND	Franz Rosenzweig, "Das neue Denken," in *Der Mensch und sein Werke: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Reinhold and Annemarie Mayer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984), 3:139–63.
NT	Franz Rosenzweig, *The New Thinking*, ed. and trans. Alan Udoff and Barbara Gallie (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999).
RDV	Hermann Cohen, *Religion der Vernunft*: *Aus den Quellen des Judentum* (2nd edition, 1928; Darmstadt: Joseph Melzer Verlag, 1966).
RR	Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*, trans. Simon Kaplan (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).
Star	Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. Barbara Gallie (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005).

Star, 1985 Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, trans. William Hallie (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

Stern Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Stern Der Erlösung* [2nd edition, 1930], in *Der Mensch und sein Werke*: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, ed. Reinhold Mayer (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976).

Jewish Liturgical Reasoning

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Introduction

After Postmodernism to Liturgical Reasoning

This book asks you to consider the practice of synagogue liturgy as the focal point for contemporary Jewish philosophy. When we begin with liturgy, we begin in a collective activity, an activity of the present moment that was nevertheless performed in the past and will be performed in the future. Beginning with liturgy, we begin with a communal performance of word, text, and song, in a space set apart, in a "sacred space." In this book I argue that, in liturgy, the communal body becomes the organ of the reasoning of Judaism; or, as Hermann Cohen puts it, liturgy is "the language of reason of the congregation." For me, this means that liturgy is not a passive recipient or mere vessel of reason but that, in liturgy, the white light of universal reason fans out into a spectrum of colors and hues so that its concepts and ideals are clothed in particular images and displayed in ritual actions. In liturgy, the clarion call of reason becomes a melody that is varied, repeated, submerged, and revealed anew as in a musical fugue. As every liturgical event is dependent upon the time and place and players who enact it, the reason of liturgy is temporal and spatial. Because liturgy is performed by a specific group at a specific time and place, it is never the same. Because liturgy is a living performance that is dependent upon the skill and attitude of its players, it always varies from its script. Thus, liturgical reasoning is always new. It is neither preexistent nor static; it is discovered and revealed in every liturgical performance.

In developing my notion of liturgical reasoning, I begin with the great modern German Jewish philosophers, Moses Mendelssohn, Hermann Cohen, and Franz Rosenzweig.[1] As both philosophical and

religious thinkers, these figures necessarily bring us into dialogue with Continental Philosophy in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.[2] We will see that each of these philosophers read the philosophical issues of his day in a unique way and developed uniquely Jewish solutions to the problems he encountered. It is a somewhat overlooked fact that synagogue liturgy is an important theme of the work of each of these figures. Of the three, Rosenzweig was most explicit about the philosophical and theological power of Jewish liturgy. In part 3 of the *Star of Redemption* (1921), Rosenzweig refers to liturgy as an *Organonstellung*, a "logic" or "system of reasoning" for Judaism; and he suggests that, in and through liturgy, the Jewish community finds its proper destiny and unique role in the historical drama of redemption. Given that Rosenzweig took liturgy most seriously, this book can be broadly construed as a Rosenzweigian project. Yet this book is not intended as work in intellectual history or as a detailed explication of the writings of Mendelssohn, Cohen, and Rosenzweig in their historical and philosophical contexts. This book is not an exercise in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the "science of Judaism." Rather, the book is intended as an interpretive and constructive endeavor that uses the modern Jewish philosophers as a springboard to articulate a new form of Jewish philosophy for the twenty-first century. The constructive aim of this project is to engage contemporary discussions of liturgy[3] in postliberal theology, in ritual and performance theory, in hermeneutic and semiotic theory, and in the emerging interfaith movement of Jews, Christians, and Muslims called Scriptural Reasoning. The study, however, is less a systematic philosophy of liturgy than a display of the possibilities of liturgical reasoning for addressing select issues in Jewish thought.[4] The issues I focus on are enlightenment semiotics and the representation of God (chapter 1), the ethics of the self and other (chapter 2), sacred time (chapter 3), sacred space (chapter 4), and the semiotics and theology of the preparatory morning prayers (chapter 5). Because liturgical reasoning is most properly seen as a group performance, a book on liturgical reasoning by one author is necessarily limited. Writing on liturgy occurs either before the liturgical event, as preparation, or after the event, as recapitulation and analysis. Yet even with these limitations, a book on liturgical reasoning can reorient Jewish philosophy and provide it with new tools, new terms of discourse and analysis, and a new sensibility.

Liturgical reasoning follows the modern Jewish philosophers in their claim that the elements of liturgy—word, symbol, music, costume, action—have a rational, ethical, and theological importance. This view is clearly opposed to views of liturgical actions as secondary to beliefs, or liturgy as hardened "institutional" expressions of religious charisma.[5] It is also different from various psychological views of liturgy as a vehicle of unconscious feelings and thoughts that have only individual and not collective meaning. The approach I take in this book is indebted to sociological theories of religion that present ritual as the heart of religion and as the primary vehicle of socializing the young and

reminding the old of the leading values and overarching worldview of a religion. Yet it goes beyond sociological views of ritual by suggesting that liturgy does not function merely to indoctrinate and recall set values and beliefs but also to create a space in which constructive thinking occurs. Liturgy is, thus, not merely a vehicle of indoctrination; it is a sphere in which thinking about primary existential, metaphysical, and theological issues occurs. In addition, as a form of communal action, liturgy helps mediate between certain philosophical and existential dichotomies such as belief and behavior, thought and action, mind and body. Liturgy, is not only a tool of socialization, it is a normative philosophical enterprise that enters individuals into the quest for the true, the good, and the ethical. If the last statement holds, then this book ventures to make an additional claim for liturgy, and that is that liturgy provides a model for all Jewish and even non-Jewish thinking! Thus, I will take the communal process and "event" quality of liturgy and, moving beyond the sphere of the synagogue (and church), I will suggest that we look at philosophy as a ritualized communal process and a social event. I then conclude, in the epilogue, with the suggestion that truth, itself, is liturgical!

This view of philosophy as a kind of liturgical logic finds its original form in liturgy but also resonates with central themes in modern Jewish philosophy and in varieties of semiotic, hermeneutic, and pragmatist thought. All these philosophical movements begin with a critique of various forms of idealism and of rational foundational claims of modern Western philosophy. This critique focuses on the inadequacies of the Cartesian cogito and the Kantian autonomous rational self as the origin and criterion of philosophy and offers alternative models for philosophy based on the powers of language. The turn to language involves not only the recognition that all thinking is done in language but that language is not merely a vehicle for thought: it contributes unique qualities to thinking.

On the one hand, reason enters language and is refracted like light through a prism. One the other hand, language, in its structure, semantics, and various rhetorical forms, displays and creates thinking. Adapting a famous expression of Paul Ricoeur, we could say that "language gives rise to thought." Language is seen as a particularly agile and fruitful source and model for thought, for it is a communal form that displays systematic "synchronic" features yet also changes through time and thus can be understood diachronically or historically as well. Language is a universal feature of human societies, yet language is always particular to a specific people and geographic region. And language takes concrete form in texts that fix and preserve thought in writing.

Despite Derrida's claims for the superiority of writing over speech, I follow Martin Buber, who argues that the greatest power of language is its ability to put thought in dynamic play in speech and dialogue where thinking becomes a social event. Here, in the social and event quality of language, the liturgical quality of thinking becomes most evident. Philosophy, on the model of liturgy,

finds its origins in a moment of communal dialogue when the community of inquiry meets to interpret and discuss the texts of the philosophical tradition and the pressing ethical issues of the day. Philosophy, on the model of liturgy, is integrated with religious thought and theology but also works in and through linguistic, musical, and theatrical forms to embrace the human sciences.

However, to say that philosophy works in and through the language and logic of liturgy is not to say that philosophy is totally delivered over to these forms. Indeed, one of the advantages of working with the modern Jewish philosophers is that, despite their awareness of the limitations of philosophy and its primary tool of reason, they remain committed to maintaining the integrity of philosophy and asserting the liberating role of reason in modern culture. It is this commitment to both the integrity of philosophy and its liberating role in culture that separates modern Jewish philosophers from many contemporary postmodern thinkers who have given up on Western philosophy as hopelessly "logocentric."

Modernity, Postmodernity, and the Postcritical Response

In addition to entering into current discussions of the nature and purposes of liturgy, this book brings readers into the heart of debates about the nature of modernity and the relationship of Judaism and Jewish philosophy to modernity. This involves us in issues of the distinctiveness of modern philosophy and culture and the critique of modern philosophy in its Cartesian, Kantian, and Hegelian forms. This allows us to explore other issues such as tolerance and interfaith dialogue, the place of the "other" in Jewish and modern identity, and the necessity for Jews to commit themselves to ethical engagement with the disenfranchised other. Yet, while these typical modern issues remain important, cultural critics have argued—successfully, in my view—that we have already passed through the modern to a "postmodern era." The postmodern era has been described as a cultural situation in which the Western world has moved beyond the great revolutionary modern meta-narratives of Universal Rational Enlightenment or the Socialist Utopia.[6] The disillusionment with these failed modern ideologies has led to a series of radical critiques and equally radical cures, from a return to authoritarian and fundamentalist forms of religion, to an irrational faith in technology and economic capital, and finally to a multiplicity of systems of secular psychotherapy and self-help cures.

Intellectually, the postmodern situation has unleashed a withering series of critiques of Western philosophy and religion that is built upon the already substantial variety of hermeneutics of suspicion originated in modernity by Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche. These critiques have culminated in an ideological postmodernism that has declared the end of philosophy, the death of the subject, the impossibility of meaning, and the apotheosis of a culture of absence,

deferral, difference, discontinuity, indeterminacy, and excess. This has led to a situation in which intellectuals cultivate their own marginalization and cease to be taken seriously in any public sphere beyond the narrow confines of elite academia. The consequences of an ideology that deliberately asserts the impossibility of human subjectivity and ethical agency is existential numbness and moral drift. The endless pursuit of "difference" and indeterminacy means that no form of philosophical normativity can be established and all assertions of human identity, value, and meaning appear, at best, naive, and, at worst, expressions of violence. This has led to a widening of the gap between academia and the world, between elite knowledge and the systems of everyday wisdom that we already saw in modernity. Thus, instead of leading to a cure for the modern dichotomies of science and human value, thought and action, universal reason and particular cultures, postmodernism has exacerbated these divisions and delivered a postmodern situation that is full of radical confusion if not nihilism.

This situation has made it clear to some that we are sorely in need of what Paul Ricoeur calls a "hermeneutics of retrieval" of philosophy, human subjectivity, and meaning. This has led to the development of a variety of "postcritical" (sometimes called "postliberal") attempts to sift through the history of Western philosophy and religion, reevaluate older systems of thought and wisdom, reassess crucial turns, pick up threads that were suggested but not fully developed, and follow possible fruitful leads that could help us refashion and reconstruct philosophies of truth and wisdom for a new twenty-first century. The postcritical move is not anti-critical, and it is not neo-conservative. It is aware of the necessity of criticism for the development of knowledge and as an antidote to ignorance, complacency, and abuse of power. Representatives of the postcritical move in philosophical and religious thought therefore see a continuing need for criticism and therefore for the tools of criticism offered by philosophy and the social sciences, and even for the variety of methods developed in postmodernism. However, those associated with the postcritical move would argue that criticism is most productive when it is combined with constructive and creative meaning making. Thus, Paul Ricoeur has tried to construct a hermeneutic method in which a hermeneutics of suspicion is enveloped by a larger hermeneutics of retrieval.[7] This larger hermeneutic is then applied to the manifold textual traditions of Western philosophy and religion, which can be seen as one great meaning-making enterprise in which the "presence" of truth—the good, the way, wisdom, God—is cultivated and sought.

Derrida and the Era of Destruction

With regard to the need for a constructive search for "presence" in relation to the deconstructive moment of absence, it is instructive to look back at the originating essays of the father of postmodernism and deconstruction, Jacques

Derrida. In his *De la Grammatologie* (1967) Derrida refers to the signified, the word, the face of God in medieval theology, and tells us "of course, it is not a question of rejecting these notions; they are necessary . . . nothing is conceivable for us without them."[8] I take this to be an admission of the simple fact that deconstruction needs for there to be structure, presence, and Being in order for it to perform deconstruction.

In another early essay, in the very first line of the first essay of the collection *L'écriture et la différence* (1967), Derrida casts a prophetic look to the end of poststructuralism. "If it recedes one day," Derrida states, "the structuralist invasion might become a question for the historian of ideas."[9] In an attempt to preempt this history, Derrida attempts to write his own description, his own eulogy: "The structuralist consciousness is a catastrophic consciousness, simultaneously destroyed and destructive, *destructuring*, . . . [it is] the moment of decadence."[10]

If structuralism, poststructuralism, and philosophical postmodernism is the "moment of destructuring and decadence, and if we are finally seeing this movement recede, it is clear that the next moment must be a moment of rebuilding and constructing, and a movement of decorum and civility. Paul Ricoeur already labeled this moment as a search for a "second naïveté," and this is an apt phrase for the postcritical moment. Although postmodernism declared war on the semantic chain—presence, word, meaning—in favor of a forgotten absence, an overlooked and unfillable gap, and asked us to be satisfied with fragments and traces, the moment after criticism looks back at the destruction and wonders how a new presence, a new word, a new meaning will ever be found. Indeed, despite all the wrangling about how solid the Western tradition of value and meaning was and how fragile the forgotten absence, it now appears that Western civilization, as an enterprise in civility, was the far more fragile thing. So now we face a truly Promethean task to rebuild, to reconstitute, Western civilization as a regime of truth and wisdom.

Certainly, this is true in the case of Judaism and Jewish civilization. As the victims of a horrible genocide that destroyed, in just four years, a European Jewish civilization that took almost fifteen hundred years to build, Jews are all too well aware of how difficult it is to rebuild a civilization that cultivates and preserves civility and dialogue, human value, and the presence of God. At this time after destruction and in the grip of violence and greed, I will ask us to turn to liturgy—perhaps the oldest and greatest tool of human civilization.

Liturgy is the endlessly repeated act of meaning making, of courting the presence of God, love, hope. The very fact that liturgy must be repeated every day—morning, noon, and night—is a declaration that "presence" is much harder to find than its detractors may think. So precisely in opposition to Derrida's lament for a forgotten absence, what is truly lamentable is a forgotten presence. It is the thing we overlook daily and therefore must endlessly seek when we lie down and when we rise up; when we walk along our way.

Therefore, liturgical reasoning is a postcritical attempt to rebuild after postmodernity. Liturgical reasoning, like the movements of Jewish Textual Reasoning[11] and Jewish-Christian-Muslim Scriptural Reasoning,[12] is a revival movement within Western philosophical and religious traditions. Like all revivals, liturgical reasoning is at once an attempt to return to the old sources and to blaze a new path. But the revival that liturgical reasoning intends attempts to take note of the unintended consequences of the plethora of attempts to blaze new paths in modernity. Modernity was and continues to be, in its transformed postmodern stage, an age of revolutions with promised utopias. One could argue that all these revolutions failed precisely because they were built on a rejection of that which came before them. And so we see the dialectic of rejection or repression of the past followed by the return of the repressed, in which the revolution is denied and the past reinstated. The clearest historical example of this is the reign of terror after the French Revolution, but we see similar patterns in philosophy and culture, where there is a movement from rationalism to romanticism or from positivistic science to existentialism. The lesson of the political and philosophical revolutions of modernity and postmodernity is that it is impossible to move forward without taking the past with you. Taking the past into the future for the sake of the future, however, requires creative strategies—strategies of repetition, interpretation, and mediation—that sublimate and re-present the past as a usable past. So postcritical thought after postmodernity cannot be the simple quest for presence over absence, for identity over difference, for meaning over absence. This will only reinstate the problematic imperialisms of modernity from which the postmoderns attempted to liberate us. Thinking after postmodernity then involves the cultivation of what Peter Ochs has called a "logics of relation" instead of a dialectic or dichotomous logic. Postcritical thinking looks to what Buber called "the between," what Cohen called "reconciliation," what Rosenzweig called "configuration," and what C. S. Peirce called "thirdness." The "between" that postcritical philosophy and religion seeks is between a modern foundationalism of reason and a postmodern anti-foundationalism. It is a space between modernity and tradition, between secularism and religious fundamentalism. Part of the argument of this book is that the search for mediation will find particularly fruitful ground in liturgy precisely because liturgy opens a space and time in which opposed realities—heaven and earth, God and human, individual and community, thought and action—are ritually brought together.

The End of the Theological Sign

In another one of his early sweeping prophetic statements, Derrida said that "the age of the sign is essentially theological" and that with the era of deconstruction this age has found the outline of "its historical closure."[13] This is a rather cryptic remark, but I see it as a statement of the end of the relation

God–word–world. Through this relationship, the word of scripture is seen as both the blueprint for creation and the map to redemption.[14] Through this relationship, all the created world "declares the glory of God," everyday life has its meaning and purpose, and human history has its providential protector and guide. This relationship was not only charted out in scripture but assumed, celebrated, and enacted in Christian and Jewish liturgy. It did not take Derrida for us to recognize the shattering of this relationship in the West, and certainly we can trace the breakup to way before the twentieth century, back to two or three centuries earlier, with the dawn of modern philosophy, science, and politics. But Derrida is pointing to the last vestige of this relationship that was contained in faith in the sign as a reliable pointer to God and mediator between God and world. This is the belief in the system of signs, in language itself, as a vehicle of meaning and a system to signify things and ideas—a way to reliably represent the world. God and humanity were radically challenged by Nietzsche and by Freud. Poststructuralism challenged the integrity of the medium of meaning, the integrity of language as a vehicle of relation and communication and connection. This is the final stage, the cutting of the last chord, the end of the sign that, as Derrida suggests, is the end of the "theological sign."

Although, Derrida's notion of the "theological sign" is not meant to refer directly to religious language but to language more broadly conceived, we can also find insight in the term if we see it as a reference to religious language. The end of the language of theology would then refer to another phenomenon of postmodernity, and that is the general ignorance of theological language, what we could call, in turning Derrida's phrase, the "signs of theology." Thus, what we are seeing now is the ignorance of the signs of theology in the broader secular and popular culture of the West. This helps explain why so few people find meaning in Christian and Jewish liturgy. The shattering of the relationship God–word–world means that the presupposition and framework—the larger worldview—of liturgy is lost. Moreover, not only is the larger worldview absent but the death of the signs of theology means that the particular terms and symbols of liturgy are also unknown or foreign or even nonsensical to many Christians and Jews. This is the case even for those who come to church or synagogue to use the signs and participate in liturgical celebrations.[15]

A clear portrait of the problem that many have with liturgy today can be seen if we consider a parallel to how we understand literature. Jonathan Culler explains that reading and enjoying literature is something like using a language. "Just as the speaker of a language has assimilated a complex grammar which enables him to read a series of sounds or letters as sequences with meaning, so the reader of literature has acquired, through his encounters with literary works, implicit mastery of various semiotic conventions which enable him to read a series of sentences as poems."[16] By analogy, we can say that liturgy, too, is like a language with semiotic conventions that have to be mastered. If the conventions are unknown or unassimilated by individuals, they will

not be able to understand what the liturgy is trying to say and accomplish. With the confusion and befuddlement that contemporary individuals find in church and synagogue liturgy, we have perhaps the clearest portrait of a dead sign, a sign whose meaning and referent is unknown to those who use attempt to use it. Thus, ameliorating this situation will require attention to the systems of language and discourse that underlie and are used within monotheistic liturgies.

Poststructuralism, German Hermeneutics, and Pragmatist Semiotics

Profound thinking about liturgy in religion as a form of discourse requires a semiotic theory. This thinking could indeed employ a poststructural theory, and there are many who are currently involved in creating such a theory.[17] Yet, in this book, I want to engage in the reconstruction of liturgy and not the deconstruction of it. Thus, this project requires a different semiotic than that offered in poststructuralism. I have already articulated some problems with the conclusions and ideology of postmodernism that poststructuralism initiated. One quick way to articulate the problems with the semiotics of poststructuralism is through an analysis of its reliance upon the structural linguistic model of Ferdinand de Saussure.[18] This is a dyadic model based on the relationship between the sign and the signified. The model suggests that linguistic markers refer to objects in the world. But Saussure under-theorized the role that users and speakers play in the semiotic process. Saussure did supply the distinction *langue* and *parole*, language and speech, but he thought that parole was so dynamic and unique to the moment of use that it could not be adequately and productively theorized. Instead, he focused on the structures of langue—the system of signs, grammar, and semantics that could be subjected to scientific analysis. The poststructuralists who came after Saussure followed his lead and focused largely on the structures that underlie language instead of on the moment of utterance. By deliberately ignoring that moment of utterance and the role of the user of language and by focusing on signs and their inner linguistic relations, the poststructuralists easily argued that linguistic signifiers refer only to other signifiers. Thus, all that the poststructuralist could see was a string of signifiers that remain hermetically sealed off from any reference to the things, concepts, or people in the world to which they supposedly point. Starting with structural linguists' preference for langue over parole, we can see how Derrida came to favor "writing" over speech. And since the connection between the structure of language and its utterance or use was also undermined, the relation between language and subject was undermined. After Freud had shown all the ways in which the unconscious overwhelmed and controlled the ego, and Marx had displayed the ways in which the subject was only a function of "class consciousness" and the social being, the poststructuralists further

undermined the subject by claiming that she or he was really produced, or "generated," by the dynamics of language. The focus on language as a system that generates sentences, paragraphs, and poems led poststructuralist theorists to claim that it was language itself that determined literature. And if that were the case, Roland Barthes could claim that the subject who uttered and wrote had not only disappeared but, indeed, was dead![19]

In *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) Jonathan Culler says that structuralism is neither interested in nor capable of producing "meaning." The meaning-giving project, which he calls "hermeneutics," is the domain of other nonstructuralist forms of semiotics and interpretation. At a time when literary critics regarded themselves as less important than literary artists, Culler openly spoke of the limits of structuralist semiotics. He certainly argued that structuralism had great promise for literary criticism, but he was also clear that it does not preclude or negate other semiotic theories and modes of interpretation. Indeed, he seemed to allow that meaning giving is an important facet of the understanding of language and literature. We could extend Culler's remarks about the limitations of poststructuralism by saying that the theory is not capable of producing a philosophy of reference, subjectivity, and ethical agency. And this is not because these things are impossible, but because structuralism does not provide adequate resources to articulate them. For this articulation we need other semiotic and hermeneutical resources. In contrast to Saussure's dyadic model, the triadic semiotic model of Charles Sanders Peirce and the *Verstehen* hermeneutic theory of Hans-Georg Gadamer are used here. Both these theories manage to thematize and support the referential capacity of language and the existence of the subject and ethical agency by building extra-linguistic elements into the structure of their semiotic and hermeneutic models.

Peirce's triadic semiotic theory suggests that semiosis is a dynamic process that involves (1) signs, (2) referents, or objects to which the signs refer, and (3) interpretants, or the interpreting human agents who determine the meaning of a sign through its use in a particular community. Peirce's theory recognizes, from the outset, that language has a pragmatic function in human life as a tool of social communication. His theory suggests that the referent, or meaning, of signs is not fixed but is dependent upon its interpretants. This means that there is a changing, fluid series of meanings for signs, but changing meaning is not nonexistent meaning! Peirce's theory retains language's mimetic function, as identified by Aristotle, as a representation of life through signs for an audience. Peirce also thematizes a direct connection between semiosis and philosophical truth. The truth values of sign are seen in their ability to generate ethical fruits through the social use of the sign in the world.

The mimetic function and the philosophical and ethical value of signs are also preserved in Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic theory. Gadamer's theory can be traced back through Heidegger to Wilhelm Dilthey to Johann Georg Hamann. It follows upon the European humanistic tradition that looks to lan-

guage as the wellspring of European *Bildung* and high culture. Gadamer augments this tradition with phenomenological notions of the "life-world" and the Heideggerian notion of works of art as disclosive of ontological truth. In Gadamer's hermeneutic theory, as in Peirce's theory, the interpreter has a central place. Gadamer tends to work not with individual signs but with large units of language, like full-blown texts. His view is that a text comes out of and mimetically reflects an entire life-world that extends outward to form a horizon of meaning. At a first level, the text can be seen as a representation of the life-world of the person and culture that produced it. However, the surplus of meaning associated with every literary work means that its meaning is never finally determined by its original author and audience. Rather, the meaning of the text is determined by the interpreter and community of interpreters that receives the text and makes its meaning in their reception of it. However, unlike various forms of reception or reading-response theory that place all the weight of meaning on the moment of reception,[20] Gadamer's model preserves the integrity of the text. This is seen in his famous formulation where interpretation is seen as a "fusion of horizons" between the horizon of the text and the horizon of the interpreter who receives and interpreters it. In his notion of the fusion of horizons, Gadamer shows that texts have a mediating role between worlds and also serve to open up new perspectives on the world. But Gadamer's theory does not end with disclosure. In a final state of interpretation, which he calls "application," he describes how a text can change its interpreters and lead them to take ethical action for the sake of the world. Here, Gadamer says that texts move us to apply what we have learned from texts to life. Gadamerian hermeneutics will be evident throughout this book as it informs my attempt to reinterpret modern Jewish philosophy for the postmodern situation. Most specifically, I will present liturgy, on the model of an expanded text, as a mediating structure between multiple life-worlds that continually discloses new dimensions of religious and philosophical truth and leads to ethical action.

Postliberalism and the Cultural–Linguistic Model

Another resource that I will utilize to reconstruct liturgy as a form of language and reasoning is the cultural–linguistic theory of religion developed by George Lindbeck.[21] As a prominent thinker in the "Yale School" of "postliberal" religious thought,[22] Lindbeck has had an important effect on North American and British Protestantism. But his significant work in Jewish–Christian relations has also made him an important figure in contemporary American Jewish philosophy.

Lindbeck's analysis is built on a critique of those liberal forms of Christian religion that have been most affected by modern philosophical critiques and have attempted to conform to modern philosophical modes of knowing. In

relation to our broader issue of the dissolution of the pattern God–word–world and the dissipation of liturgical language, Lindbeck would say that liberal religion brought a lot of this upon itself. Lindbeck argues that in an attempt to meet modern philosophical challenges, liberal Christianity attempted to translate its scriptural and liturgical terms into the epistemologies of modern philosophy.

I would summarize the postliberal critique of modern philosophy and liberal religion by first identifying three themes of modern liberalism. Modern liberalism has been unitary, dichotomous, and overly focused on the individual. The unitary character of modern liberal approaches to religion is exhibited in the attempt to identify one overarching concept or idea or one underlying experience that serves as the origin or "essence" of all religions. This follows the age-old philosophical quest for the "one" and the "universal," which was initiated by the pre-Socratics and culminates in Hegelian Idealism. The search for the "one" in modern philosophy and religion has been somewhat opposed by a different tendency to establish dichotomies and polarities. Thus, we have the polarities: universal/particular, objective/subjective, belief/behavior, individual/society, identity/difference, male/female, mind/body, modernity/tradition, and so on. Dichotomous thinking, however, often exists under the Greek philosophical tendency toward hierarchization, which favors one pole, usually the first, over the second (e.g., the universal over the particular). The hierarchy that favored the individual over the social in liberal religion followed the Cartesian and Kantian turn to the rational subject for epistemological and ethical certainty. This focus was intensified with the increased priority given to the nonlinguistic, mystical religious experience of the individual in the Western fascination with various forms of mysticism. The continued rise of Protestant Christianity, the separation of Church and State, and the privatization of religion also favored the move to individual experience over religious institutions.

Lindbeck argues that liberal Christian thought adopted two different strategies in adapting to modern philosophy: one is the cognitivist strategy, and the other the existentialist. The cognitivist approach required that Christianity be translated into a series of propositional truth claims that could be verified or falsified. The existential position required a reinterpretation of Christianity as the expression of common human experiences like love, friendship, guilt, forgiveness, and so on. In the cognitivist interpretation, Christianity is understood with the criteria of universality, propositional truth-claims, and coherence required by modern philosophy. In the second interpretation, Christianity is adapted to the psychological and existential needs of the modern individual. In both cases, human reasoning or need becomes the criteria of Christian norms and doctrines. With these modern liberal moves, Christianity becomes an auxiliary to modern culture and follows the liberal tendency for inclusiveness and universality. Christianity's uniqueness is downplayed in favor of universal aspects that make Christianity "just like" all the other world religions (or, more

often, liberal Christianity becomes the norm to which all other religions must conform). This move to inclusiveness and universality is not unique to liberal Christianity; liberal forms of Judaism have made similar adaptations to modernity.

To remedy this situation in which the uniqueness of particular religions is lost in a quest to meet "lowest common dominator" standards, Lindbeck turns to the models provided by language and culture. He then argues that Christianity, and by extension, all religions, has unique cultural–linguistic frameworks that shape the entirety of life and thought.[23] In Lindbeck's view, religion is not a common, or sui generis, experience that all humans naturally have by virtue of their humanity, but rather, religions are like languages that have signs and grammars that must be learned. Religions are like Wittgenstein's "language-games," which require that players master skills and rules.

Applying Lindbeck's terms to Judaism, we could say that Judaism is a complex symbolic and legal system that is, from the outset, socially and linguistically bound. Judaism is not based on spontaneous insights and personal "religious" experiences. Judaism is not invented anew by every Jew but is already there, a given, objective system that individual Jews need to internalize. Lindbeck's notion of religion as a language suggests there is a "vocabulary" of relatively fixed elements—narratives, terms, concepts—and then a grammar or series of "rules" that determines how the fixed elements are employed in changing situations. From this perspective, we can see the Torah as the fixed elements, and *halakah* or law as the rules that determine the Torah's application to life. Another way to view the dynamic of Judaism is to imagine that the "written Torah" provides the basic vocabulary units and the "oral Torah" the hermeneutical rules through which the written Torah is understood and adapted to changing circumstances in life.[24]

Liberal religion certainly helped break down barriers between religious communities, aided in the creation of a common civil society, and helped unleash the creative resources of the autonomous individual. But religious liberalism also erased the unique differences between religious communities and served to cast doubt on the value and necessity of religious institutions, texts, and authority.

The postliberal approach to religion can be characterized as an attempt to secure the gains for the autonomous individual, human rights, civil society, and inter-religious dialogue that liberal religion helped foster as it works to solve the problems and excesses that religious liberalism brought with it. Thus, as postliberalism aims to return to the particularities of the texts, rituals, and liturgies of religious traditions, it should not be confused with a neo-conservative or fundamentalist return to the uncontested authority of tradition. Rather, postliberalism could just as easily be called "postconservativism." Fundamentalist and neo-conservative movements have merely sought to reverse the hierarchies of religious liberalism to, for example, reinstate the power of the

particular over the universal, the traditional over the modern, the institutional over the individual. The anti-modern or fundamentalist move can easily be shown to still function under the logics of unitary and dichotomous thinking and therefore fails to really move beyond the problematics of modernity.

A movement in Christian thought that is close to Lindbeck's postliberalism is the "radical orthodoxy" of John Milbank, Graham Ward, and Catherine Pickstock. My book may be seen as a counterpart to Pickstock's *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*.[25] I share with Pickstock her sense that liturgy is a form that can help restore theology to its central role in contemporary Western culture after postmodernism. Yet I am far more sanguine about modernity and about philosophy than she is, and thus I attempt to preserve the advances for human culture that were made through modern culture and philosophy as I formulate my critique of it. What I see in Pickstock's book is not only a radical critique of postmodernism but an equally radical critique of modernism that offers the premodern Latin Christian liturgical rite as the only antidote. Although Pickstock helps us see how Christian liturgy helps overcome and resolves many of the dichotomies of modern and postmodern philosophy, she does not show what the continuing role of philosophy could be after entering into and being cured by Christian liturgy. Indeed, as the title of her book suggests, it seems that philosophy is consumed by premodern Christian liturgy. Thus, my unease about Pickstock's book and about Radical Orthodoxy in general is that, in its zeal for Christian theology and its desire to return to Christian liturgy, it fails to secure the advances for humanity contained in modernity and ends up being a form of anti-modern Christianity that is closed off from the wider world, from philosophy, and from dialogue with the other religions of the world.

Textual and Scriptural Reasoning

One might say that the referential, mimetic, and ethical capacities of language that Gadamer and Peirce assign to it cannot be established with absolute certainty. I would argue that there is an element of trust and faith that is behind any attempt to communicate, to know, and to act on behalf of good in the world. This might mean that the quest for knowledge and the good in and through language must ultimately be supported by religious faith. Certainly, the claim that the power of language is underscored by faith is supported by the biblical tradition. Here, we see that in the very beginning, God creates through language and ensures His continued presence to human beings through the revelation of His word in scripture. Thus, God stands behind the spoken word and written word of scripture as its foundation and continued source of guidance and trust. Scripture then, becomes a model in the West for the revelatory and redemptive capacity of all writing and literature. I would argue that there is a

coincidence between the rise of skepticism about the referential, mimetic, and ethical capacities of language and literature and the continued advance of secularism. I would also suggest that recapturing the mimetic capacities for language and literature requires a move to recapture and reestablish a relation to scripture.

This enterprise to embrace scripture as an impetus to revive language, literature, philosophy, and theology is what is behind the interfaith movement called "Scriptural Reasoning." Scriptural Reasoning grew out of a smaller movement of Jewish philosophers who called themselves "Textual Reasoners." The original founders of Textual Reasoning, Peter Ochs, Robert Gibbs, Yudit Greenberg, Laurie Zoloth, and I, argued that modern Jewish philosophers were trying to follow foundational models of thinking taken from modern Western philosophy. Textual Reasoning offered rabbinic models of interpretation, argument, and dialogue as alternative forms of rationality. Scriptural Reasoning has multiplied the textual resources for contemporary religious thought by including Islamic, Christian, and Jewish scriptures and traditions of interpretation and by developing models for triadic discussions of scriptural interpretation. Scriptural Reasoning suggests that rebuilding the theological sign and new notions of the God–word–world relationship in the contemporary world is an enterprise that requires that the three monotheistic traditions work together. Scriptural Reasoning is a practice of group reading of the scriptures of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that builds sociality among its practitioners and releases sources of reason, compassion, and divine spirit for healing and repair of the world. Through the performance of Scriptural Reasoning, the languages of theology are revived and refashioned and made serviceable for thought, ritual, and liturgy.

Performance Theory

A final methodological resource I employ in this book comes from performance theory of speech and ritual. As structural linguists and poststructuralist theorists were abandoning the moment of utterance in favor of a focus on linguistic structures and writing, other theorists were convinced that it was precisely the moment of utterance—the speech event, the "speech act" in language—that had to be addressed. We can trace a focus on the moment of utterance back to the diverse philosophical traditions of Jewish existentialism and analytic philosophy. Martin Buber refers to the ontological capacities of the spoken word in the opening chapter of *I and Thou*, and Buber goes on to build an entire philosophy based on the principle of dialogue. For Buber, the event of dialogue brings with it a special sort of knowing that comes from grasping a total picture or "gestalt" of another human being. In the analytic tradition, John Searle and J. L. Austin focused on the ways in which "speech acts" have the

power to perform actions and establish new realities and social situations for humans.[26] Thus, saying "I do" in a marriage ceremony or giving verbal assent to a contract institutes fundamental changes for human life.

The intellectual areas, however, where speech acts and performances have received the most attention are in art and anthropology. In the area of aesthetics, we may say that there has been a traditional prejudice against the performance of a musical score or a theatrical production as a kind of second order and necessarily flawed version of the ideal. This ideal exists either in the text or score itself or in the mind of the author. As Henry Sayre says, "Traditionally, the work of art itself possesses an a priori status in relation to its manifestations, and performance is, itself, an event of the second rank."[27] Yet, in the twentieth century, a variety of performance artists argued that the text, score, or work of art really exists for the sake of the performance and for the audience, and therefore the meaning and power of the work of art properly lies in its enactment and viewing. Recognizing this, performance artists in the twentieth century came to focus on creating situations in which art was performed and in which responses from an audience were solicited and incorporated into the performance.

Performance art and theory has obvious implications for the study of ritual because ritual is precisely that human activity in which humans enact a pregiven script of behaviors in a social arena. Indeed, religious ritual predates artistic performances and may be seen as providing their initial models. Anthropologists of religion have devoted a great deal of time to studying rituals, and we owe them a great deal for helping us understand rituals' meaning-giving power and social function. One of the pioneering anthropologists, Arnold van Gennep, provided us with the understanding of ritual as a process that moves individuals through a path from separation, through transition, to incorporation.[28] The classic ritual process was taken from tribal initiation rites, which proceed in stages in which neophytes are set apart from their former, low social status; educated into new knowledge and social roles; and then brought back into society at a higher social status. The social transformation and initiation of the young into the knowledge of the social values and responsibilities of the old can take place only through the ritual performance. Therefore, ritual is the primary tool of education, socialization, and identity in society. The ritual is so powerful that it literally makes a person into another person!

Richard Schechner and Victor Turner[29] augment ritual theory by bringing together the insights of ritual practice and theater. Schechner and Turner attempt to show the social and ritual function of theater and the theatrical aspects of ritual. Schechner develops a sophisticated and detailed theory of performance that enlarges the scope of van Gennep's theory to include details of the pre-stages of training, rehearsals, and warm-up to the post-stages of cool-down and aftermath.[30] When liturgical performance is compared to theatrical performance, the aesthetic dimensions of staging, costume, music, and drama

are highlighted. When theatrical performance is compared to liturgical performance, the transformative, pedagogical, and social effects of theater are seen. Schechner makes the interesting point that the transformations that happen to performers who play parts in theater are temporary. After playing their parts in the performance, the actors "get their old selves back."[31] Liturgical and ritual performances like initiation rites and marriage attempt to transform people permanently. I will play with this distinction to suggest that religious liturgy in Judaism often uses performances as temporary forms of transformation. So that, for example, the Jew can momentarily experience redemption in the Passover Seder or "eternity" in the Shabbat liturgy. These experiences must be temporary precisely because full redemption and eternal life have not yet come.

Revival of the Dead

Having presented problematics of liturgy today as a problem of language and discourse and having outlined philosophical, linguistic, and anthropological resources to address these issues, I now address the specific issue of the practice and understanding of liturgy in liberal Judaism. In relation to liturgical celebration in the Jewish community in America and other diaspora communities, the problematics of liturgy are exaggerated by the fact that Jewish liturgy occurs in Hebrew, or largely in Hebrew, and that most diaspora Jews have little or no knowledge of this language. This ensures that people are literally saying words they do not understand and performing liturgical actions whose meaning is largely unintelligible to them. In this environment, it is understandable that liturgy is understood as being mainly about feelings, emotions, and sentimentalized family memories.

Given that liturgy suffers from a deficiency in discourse, liturgical reasoning can be seen as a form of language or discourse cure. In light of the plethora of dead signs that now litter the sacred spaces of synagogues, liturgical reasoning is an act of breathing new life into old signs. In Jewish liturgical terms, this can be referred to as an act of *Mehiat ha Matim*, reviving the dead.[32] To accomplish this project of linguistic cure and revival, I look to a combination of postcritical and postliberal theories together with the writings of the German Jewish philosophers. Despite the fact that these thinkers wrote in a modern Germany that was vastly different from the America and Europe of today, I look to these figures because they are among the most profound philosophical and religious thinkers I know. Also, their deep involvement with the Jewish textual, interpretive, and liturgical traditions allowed them to anticipate some of the moves we associate with hermeneutic and semiotic theory.

In Mendelssohn's work, we have the first attempt to articulate a modern Jewish semiotics as an overarching framework to re-vision the nature and

purpose of liturgy. This re-visioning involved thinking of Jewish liturgy as a mode of Jewish philosophy and a vehicle for representing God. What this means is that liturgy performs an essential philosophical and theological function. In Cohen's writings, we have an attempt to retrieve the weekly festival of Shabbat as a vehicle of social ethics that is not available in modern culture or ethics. In addition, Cohen attempts to breathe new life into the notion of "*Teshuvah*" or "repentance" and to present the liturgical form of the Yom Kippur service as a series of "speech acts" that rehabilitate the exhausted modern subject as a moral responsible individual. Having been rejuvenated and inspired, the individual can fulfill its role in the world as a force for social justice. Finally, in Franz Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*, we find the most ambitious objective of all, the attempt to refurbish, redefine, and reconstruct the central features of the cultural–linguistic system of Jewish liturgy so that the old relationship God–word–world can be conceived and reconstructed anew. This large-scale reconstruction project not only requires a new understanding of the terms "God," "word," and "world" but also requires new understandings of the theological terms creation, revelation, redemption, and miracle. Through our review of the work of Mendelssohn, Cohen, and Rosenzweig, the reader will see that the attempt to revive liturgy is not only about liturgy itself but also necessarily involves the enterprise of reviving language, scripture, philosophy, and theology.

As the reader moves through each of the chapters on Mendelssohn, Cohen, and Rosenzweig, she will find that I attempt to place these figures in dialogue with contemporary figures and issues. Therefore, I highlight the issue of the semiotics of liturgy and the representation of God in chapter 1. In chapter 2, I place Cohen in relation to Levinas's philosophy of the other and also present Cohen's philosophy of liturgy as a resource and vehicle to save and revive the dead postmodern subject. In chapter 3, I place Rosenzweig in relation to both classical and contemporary discussions of temporality. I attempt to highlight Rosenzweig's liturgical temporality by placing him in relation to Augustinian and Heideggerian notions of time.

Because all three philosophers that I focus on predate the most significant Jewish events since the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE—the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel—their thought is necessarily limited in its ability to address the challenging issues that these events present. In chapter 4, I use the issues of the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel as something of test cases for liturgical reasoning and attempt to show how liturgy can provide constructive responses to the host of issues that the Shoah and Israel pose for Jewish thought. I address these issues under the general rubric of "liturgical space." A third issue that has arisen in the twentieth century is the role of women and issues of gender in Judaism. Liturgy is a particularly rich area for the creation of new forms of Judaism that are more responsive to women's experience. Given the work of feminist scholars like Rachel Adler, Blu

Greenberg, Susannah Heschel, Tikvah Frymer-Kensky, Vanessa Ochs, Laura Levitt, Daniel Boyarin, and many others, I will not attempt to add to this considerable body of scholarship. I try however, to make my theoretical approach to liturgy broad enough to include this work as a necessary part of any contemporary theory of liturgy. In chapter 5, I make use of some of the liturgical additions of feminist scholars and suggest that the opening section of the morning service is a particularly flexible liturgical moment that feminists could employ to add more material on the matriarchs and on women's spiritual experience.

Chapter 5 represents an attempt to move away from the German Jewish philosophers by analyzing a larger piece of Jewish liturgy with semiotic theory. As I have already suggested, C. S. Peirce supplies us with an extremely sophisticated tool to analyze semiotic systems. Therefore, I apply his theory to an analysis of the daily morning liturgy with a focus on the preparatory service, the *Birkhot Hashahar*. It is clear that God is the main object of worship in this and, indeed, in all Jewish liturgy. Thus, this chapter could be considered a contribution to an explicitly liturgical theology. In the epilogue, I describe, in some detail, what is entailed in Scriptural Reasoning. I use this description to conclude the argument of the book, which is that both religious thinkers and philosophers ought to take notice of liturgy since truth is to be conceived neither as objectivity nor (in Kierkegaard's terms) as subjectivity, but as liturgical.

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I

Liturgical Semiotics

Moses Mendelssohn's "Jerusalem"

One of the central assertions of this book is that liturgy has philosophical, theological, and ethical meaning. I have chosen to begin the book with the great Jewish *Haskalah*, or Enlightenment, figure, Moses Mendelssohn (1729–86), because he developed a semiotic theory in which signs are presented as vessels of rationality. Humans are seen as both rational and signifying animals, and Mendelssohn sees rationality and signs as intertwined. However, just as Mendelssohn has a broad notion of the nature of the sign, so has he an equally broad conception of rationality. Mendelssohn's reason is located in the human soul and, as a function of that soul, reason is mixed with feeling, intuition, and desire for the good, the beautiful, and God. As an eighteenth-century rationalist, Mendelssohn is close enough to the Renaissance and to the classics of Western philosophy and religion to have a wide and holistic notion of rationality. Signs give expression to the fullness of reason, which Mendelssohn often refers to as *Empfindung*—a word that we translate as "sentiment" but that must be understood as a combination of emotion and cognition. Mendelssohn sees the expression and development and refinement of sentiment in the sign as crucial to the process of human "Enlightenment" and citizenship in modern culture. In the Enlightenment process, philosophy and art surely have a role, but religion is also highly valued. Because Mendelssohn sees Enlightenment as a kind of rational transformation of the individual and the collective, all the signs of Enlightenment culture have a liturgical quality to them. Indeed, it is not too far-fetched to think of the European Enlightenment as an attempt to turn all of Europe into a stage in which universal

Enlightenment could be liturgically acted out. This involves a revised interpretation of the chain God–word–world and an expansion of the word of scripture into Enlightenment aesthetics and philosophy. The problem, however, for Mendelssohn and the Jews of Europe, is that most Enlightenment thinkers envisioned the "stage" on which Enlightenment takes place as a kind of secularized Church altar. This meant that they could not find a place on that stage for the Jew and Judaism. It was therefore one of the major tasks of Mendelssohn and other Jewish thinkers to formulate a larger vision of the Enlightenment, in which the Jews would not only participate, but, eventually, take the lead.

In his most important statement on the Jewish religion, in *Jerusalem; or, on Religious Power and Judaism* (Berlin, 1783), Mendelssohn presents Jewish laws and liturgies as particularly sophisticated forms of rational and theological semiosis. Jewish semiotics needs to be sophisticated because the second commandment, the prohibition against idolatry, presents a challenge to simple attempts to signify God. This challenge, according to Mendelssohn, leads Judaism to focus on the performance of actions to stimulate the free discovery of God instead of reliance on fixed signs or static beliefs and dogmas. The group performance of Jewish liturgies is presented as a signifying event in which the dynamism of God's spirit and the living wisdom and guidance of God's Torah is represented. Thus, liturgical semiosis is especially important to Judaism because it defeats all idolatrous attempts to fix spirit and wisdom in concrete forms. The semiosis of liturgy then is, in itself, a commentary on the nature of idolatry and its connection to signs. The very issue of idolatry is wrapped up in issues of "good" and "bad" forms of signification; the prohibition against idolatrous images may be considered the first principle of a biblical semiotics. A focus on Mendelssohn's liturgical semiotics affords us insight into Mendelssohn's approach not only to synagogue rituals but to all Jewish commandments and laws. Mendelssohn's view is that all commandments and laws provide scripts for countless behavioral performances. Therefore, the observance of each of the *mitsvot*, commandments, has a liturgical quality. Given this view, we can see the novelty of Mendelssohn's modern interpretation of Judaism. Mendelssohn attempts to move Jewish commandments out of the realm of civil and criminal law into a philosophical, theological, and aesthetic arena that is led by signs and the signifying function. This is not to say Mendelssohn thinks religion, specifically, Judaism, has nothing to do with law and politics. Indeed, precisely through moving Jewish law, or what he called "revealed legislation" into the sphere of philosophy and semiosis, he means to turn civil and criminal matters over to the judicial system of the modern state. This, in turn, serves to open up a public, civic sphere for free intellectual discourse on jurisprudential, philosophical, theological, and political matters.

Although most studies of Mendelssohn approach him from either the perspective of his relation to the central philosophical figures of the German Enlightenment or to Jewish philosophy, a focus on Mendelssohn's semiotics

allows for both a fresh approach to his work and a beginning point for our study of liturgical reasoning in modern Jewish thought. This chapter will proceed by outlining Mendelssohn's semiotics and aesthetics. I then use Mendelssohn's semiotics and aesthetics to understand his philosophy of Jewish liturgy as we find it in *Jerusalem*.

Mendelssohn's Semiotics and Aesthetics

The main themes in Mendelssohn's semiotics and aesthetics can be seen in his *Philosophische Schriften* (1771). Mendelssohn stands in the tradition of the German Enlightenment aesthetics of Alexander Baumgarten (1714–62) and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81). This aesthetic tradition sits in the larger rationalist tradition represented by the German Enlightenment that was initiated in Germany by Christian Wolff and Gottfried Leibniz. Enlightenment aesthetics is opposed by Kant's "aesthetics of feeling" as it is presented in the *Critique of Judgment* but is reconstituted in the aesthetics of Friedrich Schiller[1] and the German Idealists, where aesthetics returns as an agent of rationality and mediation.

In his fine study, *Lessing's Laocoon*, David Wellbery explains that for Enlightenment philosophers like Wolff and Leibniz, "representation is the essential activity of the soul."[2] The soul is a *vis repraesentativa* that mediates all thought, memory, desire, and matters of the will through representations. Mental representations are seen as duplicates of things, duplicates that take the form of images that can be "seen" by the soul as "objects of vision." The consistent use of perceptual metaphors for representations is characteristic of Enlightenment semiotics. The very world "Enlightenment" suggests a kind of seeing. The enlightened one sees with the light of reason. And seeing with this light means a direct apprehension of that which the sign signifies.

The focus on direct apprehension gives us something of a sense of ambivalence toward the sign in German Enlightenment semiotics. For these figures, signs are often presented as vehicles for ideas, and the best signs are the most transparent to ideas. Still, the Enlightenment thinkers present full transparency, what we might call the nonsemiotic representation of ideas, as a capacity that only God fully possesses. These thinkers regard humans as essentially signifying animals. Following the Enlightenment preference for abstract concepts and rational thinking, German Enlightenment aesthetics favor the more-abstract and most-subtle artistic forms, and those are generally deemed to be literary, or, for some, musical.

The most crucial aesthetic category in Baumgarten's aesthetics is taken from Descartes' notion of "clear and distinct ideas," which are correlated with the notions of whole and part in aesthetic representations. When the whole comes together directly and harmoniously, the idea that it signified is clear.

A sign that presents the order and relation of parts to the whole is "distinct." The expression of the whole is associated with "inferior" human capacities such as intuition, sensation, emotion, and imagination; the expression of the distinct parts is seen as a function of the higher cognitive capacities of abstraction and analysis. Although Baumgarten accepts the Enlightenment portrait of aesthetic expressions as representations of the lower cognitive capacities, he argues that aesthetics has universal power and significance precisely because it issues from the lower and more common human capacities. Aesthetics engages the "whole person" and not just the abstract intellect, and it therefore must retain a central place in all discussions of human representations and signs. However, despite its argument for the importance of artistic signs, Enlightenment aesthetics does follow the general assumption of the Enlightenment that places rational thought at the pinnacle of human culture.

Wellbery argues that all of German Enlightenment aesthetics can be explained as having two objectives: first, an attempt to show how art gives expression to the human predicament of "straddling the border between clear and distinct," between "nature and culture," between "sensation and thought";[3] and second, to present art as the major vehicle in the larger Enlightenment project of moving Europeans "across the line" from clear to distinct, from sensing to thinking. In this movement, we see the transformative and liturgical aspect of Enlightenment aesthetics, as the sign becomes the tool for the transformation of the individual and collective soul toward a higher level of culture, a rational culture in which all the parts of culture harmoniously contribute to the greater good.

Moses Mendelssohn displays some typical marks of Enlightenment aesthetics in his semiotics. However, it is interesting to see how he negotiates the typical Enlightenment prejudice against sense and for thinking. At times, he seems to want to maintain the position of "straddling the line" between sense and rational thought, and at other times he even attempts to reverse the direction of the Enlightenment movement from pure thought back toward the imagination and sensations. This is particularly the case when he applies his aesthetic theories to the Bible and develops his semiotics of Judaism. Here, we see a reversal in his preferences for semiotic transparency to ideas and literary expression, and a move to the performative and behavioral form of liturgy. Without totally abandoning the Enlightenment preference for the communication of ideas and eternal truths, Mendelssohn develops an alternative system of values that complicates the notion of the sign and opens up a place for Jews and Judaism with the larger Enlightenment project.

"On Sentiments"

The first essay in his *Philosophical Writings*, "On Sentiments,"[4] is a wonderful display of Mendelssohn's interpretation of Enlightenment aesthetics. The essay

is written as a series of letters that pass between a wise enlightened philosopher and an inquiring student after they meet for a series of face-to-face philosophical conversations. This model brings to light an important theme in Mendelssohn's thought, that wisdom cannot be learned from books alone but needs to be transmitted, in the manner of a tradition, from master to disciple. This suggests that Mendelssohn's Enlightenment culture is like a religious discipline and system of rituals that must be learned and then cultivated. Mendelssohn's theory of the relation of knowledge and signs can be seen as following rationalist and foundational philosophical lines in the following description: "Concepts reside in our soul. But they reside there as being felt themselves, as intuitive knowledge of the matter, enclosed in general boundaries and transformed into knowledge possessed by means of signs."[5]

When the student Euphranor proposes that philosophical analysis ruins the artistic pleasure, the wise philosopher Theocles attempts to convince him that philosophical analysis and aesthetic pleasure go hand in hand. Mendelssohn is thus arguing, in the terminology of Enlightenment aesthetics, that artistic representations should be both clear and distinct, multiplicity of parts should shine through and come together in a clear unity.

> All concepts of beauty must be comprised within the boundaries of clarity if we are to perceive a multiplicity without tedious reflecting. . . . The expansively clearer the representation of a beautiful object, the more ardent the pleasure that springs from it. An expansively clear representation contains a richer multiplicity, more relations opposite one another. Sheer sources of gratification.[6]

Theocles then instructs Euphranor in the way in which he must prepare himself and approach art so that he is properly enlightened by it. These directions can be understood as the preparatory stage for the ritual process, what Van Gennep calls "separation." "Listen now, my noble young man, to how I prepare myself to enjoy something pleasurable. I contemplate the object of pleasure, I reflect upon all sides of it, and strive to grasp them distinctly. Then I direct my attention to the general connection among them; I swing from the parts to the whole."

After the stage of preparation, Theocles describes the stage of "transformation," in which the work of art moves the viewer toward a kind of Enlightenment, but for Theocles it is the dimension of clarity that comes to rule over the element of distinctness. He writes, "The particular concepts recede as it were back into the shadows. They all work on me, but they work in such a state of equilibrium and proportion to one another that the whole alone radiates from them, and my thinking about it has not broken up the manifold, but only make it easier to grasp."[7]

After describing the work of art as the unity of distinct multiplicity in a clear whole, Theocles moves on to draw an analogy between the work of art and the natural world. Again, he suggests a contemplative movement in knowledge. This knowledge does not deny the new science of the laws of nature discovered by Copernicus and other scientists. At the same time, these laws are limited and "cannot fulfill" the "entire soul." The contemplative philosopher must then move beyond science to appreciate the harmonious whole of the universe through the aesthetic principle of the harmonious whole. The culmination of this ritualized contemplation that moves from observation of the world, to the laws of nature, to the expansion of the part–whole relation as a window into the universe is a combined aesthetic, philosophical, and theological Enlightenment that Mendelssohn's Theocles describes as "heavenly rapture." This insight confirms that the laws of nature are also God's laws and that the world is a world created by God and guided by His providence.

> Consider the lifeless stone, the nature of which appears to be weight and color, and the plant, in the structure of which there is a detectable order and purpose; consider the worm whose entire world is a leaf and the human being whom the entire earth encloses in all too narrow spaces; in short think of all that the eyes alone, the telescope, reason, and the senses have made known about the world. Weigh the reasons why the conjecture becomes more than probable that all heavenly bodies have a similar constitution, the reasons that cause us to see our system of world multiplied in myriads of fixed stars and our habitations here below multiplied in countless spheres . . . ascend the chain that binds all entities to the throne of divinity; then in bold flight swing over to the universal proportion of all these parts of the immeasurable whole. What heavenly rapture will suddenly surprise you![8]

What Mendelssohn is describing here is the religio-philosophical reception of modern science and reason as a way to reread the old relation God–word–world through the new signs of Enlightenment rationality and art. The word is not limited to scripture but is expanded to include modern science and aesthetics, and neither of these contradicts or nullifies the medieval signs of theology. Indeed, these new signs confirm the theological notions of Creation, the Soul, God, and Providence.[9]

Thus, Mendelssohn joins the German Enlightenment thinkers in their harmonious vision, and his graceful and well-argued treatises make him a leading exponent and interpreter of the new vision. Yet, of course, there is a catch, and the catch is that Mendelssohn is a Jew. And Mendelssohn is not only a Jew by birth, he is a fully observant religious Jew and a leading figure in his Jewish community.

Mendelssohn as Philosopher of Judaism

As both an observant Jew and avatar of the Enlightenment, Mendelssohn was a curious and even controversial figure, who drew attention from politicians, philosophers, and theologians. If he was such a convincing figure of the German Enlightenment, which, after all, was articulated by Christians and forged out of Christian culture, why and how could he remain a Jew? In his *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Immanuel Kant expressed what most Enlightenment figures thought of Judaism: Judaism was too legalistic, too particularistic, and too materialistic to serve the universal, rational, and spiritual vision of the Enlightenment. After many calls for Mendelssohn to convert to Christianity and following a number of challenges calling on him to defend his Judaism[10] and, in particular, his Jewish observance, Mendelssohn finally took up the challenge in his book *Jerusalem*.

Jerusalem manages to concisely present both a defense of freedom of thought and speech and a new philosophy of Judaism. But, unfortunately, the book did not quiet his critics but rather increased them when leading Jewish thinkers of his day joined the fray. Since its publication, *Jerusalem* has confounded philosophers and theologians alike because it appears to be arguing for contradictory positions. The book is divided in two parts, with the first arguing against state and ecclesiastical interference in the development of individual thought and belief, and the second arguing for the contribution of Judaism and, specifically, Jewish law, to the development of free thought and speech. Thus, Mendelssohn simultaneously appears to be arguing that religion both distorts and supports freedom of thought and speech. Mendelssohn was therefore alternately called a "sophist" and an "arch-Jew," a "naturalist" and a "sacralist."[11] Mendelssohn himself admitted, "My notions of Judaism can, really, justify neither the orthodox nor the heterodox."[12] Yet, he persistently and confidently adhered to his position.

The seeming contradictions in his thought led scholars of his day to suggest either that Mendelssohn was confused or that he secretly favored the more classic Enlightenment animus against religious traditions (and supported an abstracted "natural religion").[13] These scholars argued that Mendelssohn spoke positively about Jewish law and liturgy to placate the Jewish community and eventually bring Jews over to the Enlightenment position.[14] The confused view of Mendelssohn has been carried into more recent scholarship. Certainly, the most extensive twentieth-century work on Mendelssohn was done by Alexander Altmann. In Altmann's monumental *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study*,[15] he identifies numerous contradictions in Mendelssohn's thought and life. Fritz Bamberger, in a classic early-twentieth-century essay entitled "Mendelssohn's Concept of Judaism," describes Mendelssohn's Judaism as

"paradoxical and strange if not erroneous."[16] In his study on the relation of Mendelssohn to Enlightenment thinkers, Allan Arkush relentlessly surfaces logical inconsistencies and vagaries.[17] However, I believe that a reading of *Jerusalem* that focuses on his semiotics and his view of Jewish law and liturgy helps overcome at least some of the inconsistencies that perplexed many of Mendelssohn's interpreters in the past, and helps make him a significant resource for a Jewish liturgical reasoning for the present. My interpretation of Mendelssohn may be considered something of a supplement to the work of David Sorkin, who has focused on Mendelssohn's exegetical and Hebrew writings to present Mendelssohn less as a philosopher of German Enlightenment and more as a Jewish philosopher of "practical knowledge."[18]

The Dual Revelations of Judaism

As readers of *Jerusalem* well know, Mendelssohn's interpretation of Judaism relies on dividing Jewish revelation into two parts—"revealed religion" or "eternal truths," and "divine" or "revealed legislation" (*J*, 97) (*geoffenbarte Gesetzgebung* [*MJ*, 164]). Mendelssohn's notion of eternal truths is close to a variety of deistic views that attempt to reconcile biblical revelation with modern philosophy and science. Mendelssohn appears to be following the famous move by Baruch Spinoza to divide Judaism into what he called "philosophy" and "faith."[19] But where Spinoza denigrates the latter in favor of the former, Mendelssohn will argue that the law and "faith" support rational truth.

Mendelssohn's rational truths are consistent with the views presented in "On Sentiments." Although here, science and logic and not aesthetics take center stage. Eternal truths like the existence of God, Providence, and the immortality of the soul are available to all humans through observation of nature and pure rational contemplation. "Revealed legislation," on the other hand, includes the laws that are particular to the Jews and that were given at one historical moment and revealed through the miracle of God's speech to Israel. Rational truths are "eternal and immutable" (*J*, 90); they are revealed through "nature and thing"(90) ("*Natur und Sache*" [*MJ*, 157]). Revealed legislation is temporally determined since it was given by God in history (*J*, 93). It is known through the authority of witnesses and their testimonies recorded in the "word and script" (*J*, 90) ("*Wort und Schriftzeichen*" [*MJ*, 157]) of the Torah.[20]

Mendelssohn argues that it is precisely the splitting of revealed truths from revealed legislation that makes Judaism appropriate for Enlightenment culture. Judaism, for him, is primarily a quest for free commerce between the mind, soul, and body of the Jew and God. Judaism is a dynamic process of discovery dependent on the freedom of the searching mind. Mendelssohn uses the rabbinic focus on law over theology to argue that Judaism has not sought to coerce Jews to accept a fixed series of doctrines and beliefs. Mendelssohn argues that "Judaism has no symbolic books, no articles of faith, [and] no one

has to swear to symbols and subscribe by oath to certain articles of faith" (*J*, 100). In Mendelssohn's hands, Jewish law and ritual becomes a kind of channeling and inspiration toward the dynamic quest for God and felicity (*J*, 94) ("*Glückseligkeit*" [*MJ*, 161]), rather than a "burdensome" (*J*, 86) and constricting yoke. Performance of law and ritual are required in Judaism, but this is done in the service of religious inquiry. In Mendelssohn's words, the Torah follows an ingenious dictum: "Men must be impelled to perform actions and only induced to engage in reflection" (*J*, 119).

One could say that stressing the division between eternal truths and revealed laws reenacts the traditional Western philosophical dichotomy between thought and action and reestablishes the Christian theological hierarchy of belief over behavior. Mendelssohn appears, at least in his first articulation of the difference between revealed truth and revealed legislation, to be establishing a dichotomy between revelation as eternal, natural, and universal, and Jewish legislation as historical, particular, and dependent upon the signs of the Torah. He tells us that the former are "necessary and immutable" and known through "pure mathematics and the art of logic" (*J*, 90). The latter are known and "*must* be verified by authority and *can* be confirmed by miracles" (*J*, 90). This description can certainly serve to reinforce rather than overcome prejudices against Jewish law. If the universal religion of rational truths is available through human logic, mathematics, and observation of nature, why bother following the particularistic words, signs, and laws given to the Jews? Here, Mendelssohn appears not only to be presenting the dichotomies of liberal modernism but also to be reinscribing the modern hierarchy that favors the universal over the particular. However, a careful investigation of *Jerusalem* shows that Mendelssohn sees thought and action, belief and ritual, and theological doctrines and law to be intricately related. This becomes clear as we investigate his theories of sign and liturgy.

The Semiotics of Judaism

In the center of the second section of *Jerusalem*, Mendelssohn "digresses" into a discussion of semiotics that many who read him ignore as insignificant or out of date.[21] However, Mendelssohn explains that he enters into this digression for an important reason. He is troubled by the growing cult of the written word and the gap between what he calls "teaching and life," "contemplation and action," wise elders and the young (*J*, 104). What this assessment suggests is that even as Mendelssohn is a spokesperson for the Enlightenment, he is also a critic of it. For the Enlightenment clearly contributed to an elevation of the status of the "literati, men of letters" and writers of books (*J*, 104). This led to a gap between scientific knowledge and everyday wisdom, between thought and action, even between "eternal truths" and "revealed legislation."

Mendelssohn states that he believes the problem finds its deepest roots in the use and development of language.

As he begins his analysis, he makes the point that is fundamental to all philosophies of language: that the use of signs is "a very important part in the revolutions of human knowledge" (*J*, 104). Mendelssohn discusses the move from natural signs to hieroglyphs, which attempt to represent things mimetically; to artificial signs and alphabetical scripts, which are representations of sounds for words. He clearly sees the advantage of alphabetical signs and scripts, for they allow for the creation of abstract concepts. He describes how the acts of creating new words like "nature" are simultaneously semiotic and philosophical "events of great importance" (*J*, 106). The importance of new concepts and words is that they allow humans to understand their world. The discovery that "air has weight" and the notion of gravity and other scientific laws render the world as ordered and not merely subject to "arbitrary causes" (*J*, 106). Alphabetical scripts allow us to preserve and communicate the sophisticated forms of knowledge. In the sphere of religion and, in particular, in the service of monotheism, the movement from hieroglyphs to alphabetic script helped move people away from idolatry. For idolatry, as Mendelssohn sees it, is the process of taking the sign itself for "the things themselves" (*J*, 111). The idolater takes the graven image not as a sign pointing to God but as God himself.

The advanced semiotics of alphabetic signs and written script thus helps advance both scientific and religious knowledge. However, the advancement through alphabetic signs and script brings with it a series of problems, and as Mendelssohn says, "what wisdom builds up in one place, folly readily seeks to tear down in another" (*J*, 110). The folly that Mendelssohn first points out is something I already referred to, and it specifically relates to the written word. First, writing gives the false sense of comprehensiveness of knowledge and a sense that knowledge is easily accessible. One need only check a book or consult one of the coterie of experts who have mastered the book and hold themselves out as wise. However, once having arrived at the "station or office" of "pundit" or "polymath," the supposedly wise man finds it impossible to say the words of the truly wise person, the words of Socrates, "I do not know." The expert in books thus constantly overreaches in his claims to knowledge and spews out falsehoods along with truths.

Mendelssohn clearly favors the dynamic search for truth that occurs in the spoken word of dialogue. His view of truth seems to be that truth is both an epistemological and a social reality. The bookworm, however, spends her time seeking knowledge by reading books in quiet libraries, divorced from social intercourse. If knowledge is social, if it is found in dialogue, then one of the central tasks of the written word must be to preserve the presence of truth as it appears in dialogue. But here again books are insufficient and give a false sense of conserving truth. The written word is too regular; it is monochromatic

and *eintöniger*, "monotonous." It lacks the ability to capture the subtleties of the spoken word. Mendelssohn provides a simple example. Imagine all the multiplicity of dialects used to speak one of the well-known languages. Mendelssohn laments that the consonants and vowels of written language can hope to capture only a fraction of the dialects and variations of dialects of a language. Written language is thus a crude representation of oral speech bound to miss important subtleties and nuances.

Mendelssohn, then, questions whether or not the abstractions given by words are adequate to preserving and communicating concepts. He suggests that plastic images and pictures may relate the concept more quickly, and he even entertains the idea that pictographs of animals, birds, plants, stones, and so on, in their very concreteness and distinctiveness, have advantages over the vagaries of words and the abstractions of numbers in relating concepts. We can sum up Mendelssohn's critique of written signs with his assertion that these signs make people "too speculative." Here, we see Mendelssohn moving away from the preferred semiotics of the Enlightenment, the signs of mathematics and philosophical logic, toward the more basic and "primitive" semiotics of artists and of concrete sensed materials.

However, when we put Mendelssohn's strong critique of the alphabetic script and books together with his critique of hieroglyphs and concrete images as idolatrous, we might think that he has painted himself into a corner. Indeed, one could easily say Mendelssohn is confused and befuddled, as many critics have charged. However, he does find a way out of his corner, a path of mediation, and that path is found in Jewish law, liturgy, and scripture. These terms, which after all are equivalent to his notion of "revealed legislation," not only solve Mendelssohn's semiotic problem but also solve the problem of the Jew and Judaism in Enlightenment culture. His solution not only serves to carve out a place for Judaism in the German and larger European Enlightenment but serves to reinvigorate Judaism for the Jews.

Mendelssohn's Liturgical Reasoning

Given his own warnings to those who would see themselves as wise, Mendelssohn begins to describe his way out of his own conundrum with requisite humility. He tells us that "the modest searcher is permitted to form conjectures and to draw conclusions . . . so long as he always remembers that he *can* but surmise" (*J*, 118). Mendelssohn puts his *Vermuthung* (*MJ*, 183), his surmise, in the following way.

> We have seen how difficult it is to preserve the abstract ideas of religion among men by means of permanent signs. Images and hieroglyphics lead to superstition and idolatry, and our alphabetical

> script makes man too speculative. It displays the symbolic knowledge of things and their relations too openly on the surface; it spares us the effort of penetrating and searching, and creates too wide a division between doctrine and life. In order to remedy these defects[,] the lawgiver of this nation gave the *ceremonial law*. Religious and moral teachings were to be connected with man's everyday activities. The law, to be sure, did not impel them to engage in reflection; it prescribed only actions, only doing and not doing. The great maxim of this constitution seems to have been: *Men must be impelled to perform actions and only induced to engage in reflection*. (118–19; italics in original)

Here, in this text, Mendelssohn places the greatest prophet of Judaism and his namesake, Moses, precisely at the point where he, as Jewish Enlightenment figure, stands—between the rock of an idolatry of signs that are too concrete and the hard place of words that are too abstract. Like any good hermeneut, Mendelssohn has put himself in the text with its central protagonist and wrestles and searches out meaning for the contemporary situation. In his description of the "defect" of alphabetic script, a critique of Enlightenment semiotics is obvious, as Mendelssohn complains that in this script, knowledge of relations of things is displayed too distinctly and a sense of the whole is rendered too clearly. This then delivers only "surface" knowledge. The Enlightenment goal of distinct representations is thus challenged with a new goal that involves an action of "penetrating and searching," which serves to connect "doctrine and life." Then the brilliant innovation comes, and that is the prescription for specific actions, ceremonial actions. Not only do these actions serve to guide the philosophical action of penetrating and searching for a truth that connects thought and life, but the actions, themselves, serve to stimulate free philosophical and theological searching into the dynamics of true knowledge. This explains why rituals and liturgies are full of behaviors, prayers, and symbols whose meanings are not, on the surface, clear and distinct. Ceremonies are necessarily opaque so that they can serve as questions and opportunities for theological and ethical thinking and can push participants to interact with wise elders who will help them figure out the meaning of the ceremonies. Mendelssohn travels further down the semiotic chain from distinct ideas, to sensuous representations of the whole, to behaviors whose meanings are necessarily unclear. He writes, "Therefore, each of these prescribed actions, each practice, each ceremony had its meaning, its valid significance; each was closely related to speculative knowledge of religion and the teaching of morality, and was an occasion for a man in search of truth to reflect on these sacred matters or to seek instruction from wise men" (*J*, 119).

Mendelssohn's text then moves on to his most difficult problem, the problem of idolatrous signs and the problem of representation of the divine. Here,

Mendelssohn develops a novel interpretation of the advantage of Jewish laws in general and Jewish liturgical practices in particular. Mendelssohn suggests that liturgical practices are uniquely suited to avoid idolatry and represent the divine because they are at once transitory and embodied, social and enacted. Ceremonial actions are tied to the temporal moment, communal participants, and the liturgical space in which they are performed. They, therefore, are enacted in a fleeting moment of confluence among ritual form, human cognition, and action. After being performed, the liturgical act cannot be repeated in the exact same manner in which it just occurred. In a sense, it "disappears." The momentary nature of a ceremonial action means that it can avoid the problem of fixed material representations of the divine! Mendelssohn writes,

> The truths useful for the felicity of the nation as well as of each of its individual members were to be utterly removed from all imagery; for this was the main purpose and fundamental law of the constitution. They were to be connected with actions and practices[,] and these were to serve them in place of signs, without which they cannot be preserved. Man's actions are transitory; there is nothing lasting, nothing enduring about them that, like hieroglyphic script, could lead to idolatry through abuse or misunderstanding. (*J*, 119)

Mendelssohn develops, here, a penetrating philosophical answer as to why Judaism relies so heavily on ceremonial actions. These actions, which are transitory and unfixed, are tools in the fight against idolatry. At the same time, these actions follow a form, a script, and are therefore identifiable in a structure that can persist over time. Ceremonial actions thus can fulfill the function that Mendelssohn gives to all signs, the function of preserving and communicating knowledge—in this case, knowledge of the dynamic, unseen nature of God. Ceremonial actions must be considered as signs, what Mendelssohn calls "living script" (*J*, 102). Perhaps the closest analogy for these actions would be dance. Mendelssohn suggests that the dance of ceremonial actions is itself a form of representation of the divine—perhaps the best representation we have.

But ceremonial representations seem to hold knowledge in a vague, multiform, and incipient way. They are a kind of crystallization of many images, ideas, emotions, memories, and hopes. They therefore also bring about questions and a desire for more knowledge. Thus, Mendelssohn says that ceremonies lead to or "induce" further reflection. But the knowledge that is contained in the ceremonial action has a social dynamic, and this form gives rise to social, "living instruction." Therefore, ceremonial actions also help overcome the abstraction of writings because they "have the advantage over alphabetical signs of not isolating man, of not making him a solitary creature, poring over writings and books. They impel him rather to social intercourse, to imitation, and to oral, living instruction" (*J*, 119).

The Written Script and the Truth of Torah

Of course, there is a written script in Judaism, which is the written Torah. So, despite his preference for oral and liturgical expression, Mendelssohn has to address the scriptures. But here, too, Mendelssohn comes up with a novel interpretation that fits his model. The written Torah is inscribed in a purposefully brief, vague, and undetermined manner, with multiple inconsistencies. Therefore, Mendelssohn argues that the written Torah requires an "oral Torah" to clarify it. He writes, "There were but a few written laws, and even these were not entirely comprehensible without oral instruction and tradition. And it was forbidden to write more about them. But the unwritten laws, the oral tradition, the living instruction from man to man, from mouth to heart, were to explain, enlarge, limit, and define more precisely what, for wise intentions and with wide moderation, remain undetermined in the written law" (*J*, 119).

Because the written script is brief, it requires interpretation by the reader and calls out for elucidation by a teacher. The teacher can then interpret the script in accordance with the time, place, and abilities of the pupil. Mendelssohn tells us that the words of the written script "were entrusted to living spiritual instruction which can keep pace with all changes in time and circumstances, and can be varied and fashioned according to pupils' needs, abilities, [and] powers of comprehension" (*J*, 102). Mendelssohn also argues that, in order to unlock the meaning of the script of Torah, a certain kind of attitude is required: "The more closely you approach it, and the purer, the more innocent, the more loving and longing is the glance with which you look upon it, the more it will unfold its divine beauty" (*J*, 99).[22] Mendelssohn's semiotic model here recalls the hermeneutic theory of Martin Buber and Hans Georg Gadamer and the semiotic theories of C. S. Peirce. I have argued elsewhere that Buber developed a dialogic method of reading scripture, in which one needs to view the text with the attitude of the I–Thou relation.[23] Gadamer speaks of hermeneutics as a process of "play," where the interpreter enters the world of the text and is taken over by it as one is taken over by the dynamics of play in a game.[24]

Peter Ochs has argued for the productive sense of the "vague sign" in Peirce's semiotics. Indeed, for Peirce, the referent of all signs is vague until the interpretant gives it a pragmatic meaning through its use. This dynamic is clearly at work in Mendelssohn's Jewish semiotics as he views the meaning of both Torah and liturgy as initially vague, with its semantic, and practical, meaning emerging only in, through, and after a social process of interpretation and use.

In Mendelssohn's interpretation, Torah is full of *nützliche Wahrheiten* (*MJ*, 184) ("useful truths"). These are "truths useful for the felicity of the nation as well as of each of its individual members" (*J*, 119). The truth of the Torah is "useful" and pragmatic, not in a mere utilitarian sense, but in the way in which

it provides "prescriptions for actions and rules of life" (*J*, 128). These rules for living produce a meaningful, intellectually rich, and spiritual life of happiness, which Aristotle identified, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as the "perfect" life. The Torah is useful and eudemonistic, too, in the ways in which it provides for social cohesion and identity. And it is useful, finally, in producing human happiness.

For Mendelssohn, the truth of Torah is a good that the Jews must live in and through for the purpose of the expansion of life. Torah is not constrictive or coercive but seeks only to celebrate and increase that which is moral and good. This good is not an abstract good but an embodied social good. Mendelssohn summarizes his eudemonistic view this way: "God created man for his, that is, man's, felicity, and He gave him laws for his, that is, man's, felicity" (*J*, 123). This means that the laws exist not to punish Jews but to guide them (*J*, 121). God uses his power first and foremost for love, and this is illustrated by the famous attributes of *Hesed*, or "mercy," enumerated in Exodus 34: "The Lord (who is, was and will be) eternal being, all powerful, all-merciful and all-gracious; long-suffering, of great loving and truthfulness, who preserveth His loving kindness even to the thousandth generation; who forgiveth transgression, sin and rebellion, yet alloweth nothing to go unpunished."[25]

Ceremonial Law as Jewish Law

Before we leave Mendelssohn's semiotics of the "ceremonial law," we need to bring more clarity to what he means by it. The "ceremonial law" (*J*, 102) *Zeremonialgesetz* (*MJ*, 169) is an ambiguous term that sometimes seems to be used narrowly to refer to religious rituals and, at other times, refers to all of Jewish law taken together. Alexander Altmann tells us that Mendelssohn took this phrase from Spinoza, and Altmann points us to the Latin *caerimonia* and its meaning of "sacred rite."[26] Although Mendelssohn does declare that no Jewish "laws can be abridged" (*J*, 101), he also argues that the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 CE made a number of laws, like Jewish corporal and capital punishments, moot (*J*, 130). In addition, his advocacy for the authority and legitimacy of the civil and criminal law of the modern cultures in which Jews lived suggests that Mendelssohn's "ceremonial acts" referred mainly to Jewish liturgical practices. The term certainly covers what I mean by group liturgical actions performed in the synagogue, and thus Mendelssohn's ceremonies provide the initial description I use for my term "liturgical reasoning." At the same time, the ambiguity of Mendelssohn's term as a description of all Jewish law is suggestive of the broader liturgical, philosophical, and theological dimensions of observance of all Jewish law. If the modern state has indeed taken over most of the criminal and civic functions that Jewish law formerly filled, then the question of the function and purpose and nature of Jewish law becomes one of the central questions that modern and postmodern Jews need

to address. Spinoza had a rather simple solution, which was that Jewish law is essentially criminal and civil law and that Jewish law was abrogated when the ancient nation of Israel was destroyed. Reform Judaism believes that Jewish law remains in force until modernity, but with the modern state, the law is abrogated. In my interpretation, Mendelssohn suggests another path for modern Jews. The laws of the modern state have replaced many of the criminal and civic laws of Judaism; but laws regarding dress, food, prayer, ethics, and everyday life remain in force. And this is so because these laws have great philosophical, ethical, social, and theological importance.[27] In the face of the problematics of writing, the book, and speculative abstraction that modern Enlightenment culture brings with it, Jewish law becomes more and not less important. It becomes important not only for Jews, but as antidote to the weaknesses and abuses of Enlightenment thought, it also becomes important for Christians.

If we use Mendelssohn's notion of revealed legislation as a model for liturgical reasoning, we can say that liturgy provides a performative, dialogic, and social form for reasoning. Liturgy provides a model for a form of religious and philosophical thinking as a combination of "teaching and life, wisdom and activity, speculation and sociability" (*J*, 119). It thus provides a way out of some of the "defects" and weaknesses of classic Enlightenment thought without moving to an irrational mysticism or existentialism. It presents a mode of thinking that moves beyond and helps mediate some of the dichotomies of modern thought as it grounds thought and makes it serviceable to and for the social good.

In relation to Mendelssohn's Enlightenment aesthetics, his semiotics of liturgy does seem to make a case for the need for vagueness and opacity rather than for clarity and distinctiveness. However, the condition of opacity is certainly not the final stage in his view of liturgical reasoning. Rather, opacity and vagueness is only a moment in a larger process that starts with and moves to philosophical clarity and understanding. The participant in a liturgy comes to it with the expectation of understanding God, humanity, order, providence, and so on. The liturgy thrusts her into a state of liminality and questioning. But the questioning is a desire for understanding that is met by contemplation and by interaction with elders and other wise teachers who can help the participant reason toward sense and meaning. In this sense, the moment of nonunderstanding is a "part" in the process of making a whole that Van Gennep calls aggregation or incorporation back to society.

Although Mendelssohn does not use these terms, I would say that the sense of the whole that the liturgical process brings is built on the scriptural link God–word–world. Instead of grounding Judaism in an abstracted Enlightenment scientific–philosophical–aesthetic version of the God–word–world chain, Jewish liturgical reasoning returns Judaism to its grounding in its particular cultural–linguistic system. In doing so, it more securely grounds the God–word–world link of the Enlightenment in scripture. In doing this, liturgical reasoning

forces Enlightenment culture to accept Judaism on its own terms and in this sense allows the Jew a place on an enlarged and more fully enlightened *bimah*, or stage.

An Example: Liturgical Reasoning on the *Shema*

As Mendelssohn takes us through his liturgical reasoning on the performance of the ceremonial laws, we might well ask if he has a specific liturgy in mind. During his discussion of the ceremonial laws, he makes a reference to the *Shema* prayer, and I would suggest that it serves as one of the main examples for his liturgical reasoning. The Shema is one of the oldest prayers of Judaism, probably dating back to the Second Temple period. Part of its special character comes from the fact that it is derived directly from scripture, the central part being taken from Deuteronomy 6:4–9. The text contains the basic statement of Jewish monotheism together with the command to love God.

> Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.
> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.
> And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart;
> And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.
> And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.
> And you shall write them upon the door-posts of your house, and upon your gates.

Mendelssohn's reference to the recitation of these verses is as follows: "In everything a youth saw being done, in all public as well as private dealings, on all gates and on all doorposts, whatever he turned his eyes or ears to, he found occasion for inquiring and reflecting, occasion to follow an older and wiser man. . . . To inquire after the spirit and purpose of those doings" (*J*, 119). Mendelssohn's interpretation of the Shema suggests that it provided him with his central insight into the origin of the oral law in Judaism. For Mendelssohn interprets the ceremonial laws included in the Shema to be a series of opaque signs meant to give rise to inquiry, questioning, and reflecting on the words of the Shema—God's oneness and the command to love God—that takes place between neophyte and wise elder. The words and signs of the Shema taken directly from the written law are not fully clear or, as Mendelssohn says, "undetermined" (*J*, 119). They therefore require the oral law to explain and define them.

At the first level, the Shema instructs worshippers to plant markers on their bodies and on the transitional private/public spaces: Thus "you shall bind them on your arms," "on your doorposts," and at the transitional communal/noncommunal spaces of your cities—"on your gates." This suggests that all points of movement for all goings and comings are marked by the Shema. The first level of questioning that the Shema gives rise to might be summarized as follows: Why are these markers placed here and there? And Mendelssohn's answer might be: The markers are placed here and there on the body and at all points of transition, and in all private and public spaces "to provide occasion for inquiring and reflecting." ' But the deeper question must be, "How is the individual to fulfill the commandments of the Shema?" How does the worshipper both recognize God's oneness and love him with all his or her heart? Given that the Hebrew word for heart (*lav*) means both heart and mind, Mendelssohn seems to be suggesting that the fulfillment of the words of the Shema ultimately requires a process of taking the words and signs on the lips of worshippers and at all spatial points—private, public, and in between—so that the words can be brought inside the body, that is, internalized. Internalizing the Shema requires understanding its words so deeply that they become part of the Jew's very being. The fact that the words of the Shema are to be repeated at everywhere and always suggests that understanding the meaning of God's oneness and how to love him is a lifelong process.

Thus, unlike the "rational truths" that any individual can learn on her own, the truths of the Shema require relationship to a teacher. And they require not just any teacher but one with whom one has a relationship—a parent, a communal elder or rabbi. Mendelssohn again appears to be following the words of the Shema—"And you shall teach them diligently to your children"—in his insistence on the need for parental and communal teachers.

We may accordingly think of the series of rituals, liturgies, and prayers surrounding the Shema as a series of rituals of transition and mediation. The Shema demands at every point of transition—from private to public, from night to day, from generation to generation, from the body to the soul—that the fundamental truths of monotheism be articulated. At the points of transition, when the Jew may forget or become distracted, she is signaled to remember the truths of the Shema through a series of physical signs, on the arm and head (in *Tefillan*, or phylacteries), on doorposts (*Mezzuzot*, doorpost markers), and a special garment (*Tzitzit*, prayer shawls).

Mendelssohn on the Other Religions

Moses Mendelssohn is well known for his appeals for tolerance of a variety of religious faiths. He ends *Jerusalem* with the suggestion that diversity, freedom of thought and speech, and religious pluralism are part of God's providential plan.

> Brothers, if you care for true piety, let us not feign agreement where diversity is evidently the plan and purpose of Providence. None of us thinks and feels exactly like his fellowman. God has stamped everyone, not without reason, with his own facial features. . . . [To oppose diversity is] to resist Providence, to frustrate . . . the purpose of creation. . . . Our noblest treasure [is] the liberty to think. . . . For the sake of your felicity and ours, *a union of faiths is not tolerance*; it is diametrically opposed to true tolerance! For the sake of your felicity and ours, do not use your powerful authority to transform some *eternal truth* . . . into a law. . . . Leave us *thought and speech* which the Father of us all assigned to us as an inalienable heritage and granted to as an immutable right. (*J*, 138)

Mendelssohn is clearly echoing here the dignity given to humans through the creation of Adam—*b'tzelem elokim*—in the image of God. He also calls to mind the diversity of languages and peoples that God appears to have desired when he multiplied human languages and scattered people across the Earth at the end of the tower of Babel story. Mendelssohn's reference to God "stamping" humans with his facial features calls to mind the *Mishna in Sanhedrin* on human diversity, which tells us that "the Holy One, blessed be He, stamped every man with the die of Adam and yet no one exactly resembles his fellow" (BT: *Sanhedrin* 37a). At the same time, we hear clear echoes of the rights of man proclaimed by John Locke and other Enlightenment political liberals.

The model of tolerance that Mendelssohn suggests here is an appeal to the majority religion to accept a minority religion. The notion of "tolerance," taken from a medical model of tolerating a poison, has the advantage of allowing difference without expecting intimate relation.

The advantage here is that a tolerated Judaism may be one that is more intact and more fully in its own terms than a Judaism that must adapt to the expectations and truth-claims of the majority religion. However, we can easily see the drawback of the model of tolerance because it asks for no real understanding and no real relationship between Christianity and Judaism and between Judaism and other religions.

Beyond Tolerance: Liberal and Postliberal Models

Aside from the model of tolerance, Mendelssohn offers two other models for religious dialogue—one that leads to what Lindbeck would call a "liberal model" and another that is closer to Lindbeck's postliberal paradigm. The liberal model is found in Mendelssohn's statements about the religions when he first introduces his notions of "eternal truths" and "revealed legislation." Here he says that the "revealed legislation" of Judaism "points to or [is] based upon eternal truths of reason" (*J*, 99). This suggests a view of religion in which the Torah is

used as guarantor, legitimation source, and warrant for ideas developed in political liberalism. Thus, Torah is ultimately founded upon the eternal truths of reason that are propositional truths discovered by the observation of nature, by logic and mathematics, and by the inalienable "rights of man" of political liberalism. This model suggests that all the religions contain "historical truths" that are particular to a time and place and people. The notion that all religions are based upon and point to eternal truths suggests Lindbeck's "cognitivist model" (see the introduction) for truth in which all religious truth can be reduced to propositional truth. Interfaith dialogue would then be built upon a mutual reduction of the particular cultural–linguistic systems of religions to rational truths. In this model, the particular texts, rituals, and liturgies of Judaism, Christianity, and all other religions would appear as secondary and inferior to political and philosophical truths of modernity. Religions would then want to shed these particularities to more closely resemble what is true. This would mean that differences would be reduced and religions would come to look more and more the same. This is precisely the movement that we see in religious liberalism.

However, at the same time that Mendelssohn outlines a liberal model, it is clear that he values the real difference and the uniqueness of the cultural-linguistic system of Judaism. His own defense of Jewish particularity and his own lifestyle of observance suggest that he is not prepared to surrender Jewish particularity for universal propositions and eternal truths. Rather, he seems to argue that the only way that Jews can stand by and proclaim eternal truths is by celebrating their unique texts, laws, and liturgical practices.

In the discussion of revealed legislation that emerges from Mendelssohn's biblical semiotics he suggests another way of conceiving religious dialogue that has affinities with Lindbeck's postliberal model. To mine these parallels in *Jerusalem* we need to return to Mendelssohn's discussion of signs and idolatry. We will recall that idolatry, for Mendelssohn, involves a mistaken view of the sign in which the observer confuses the sign itself for the divine reality to which it points. In the midst of this discussion, Mendelssohn also describes the way in which outsiders tend to view other religions. Here he says that outsiders tend to view the signs of the religions of others idolatrously. "In judging the religious ideas of a nation that is otherwise still unknown, one must take care not to regard everything from one's parochial view, lest one should call idolatry, what, in reality is only script" (*J*, 114). Mendelssohn gives multiple examples of situations where foreigners view the practices of others as idolatrous. As one would expect, he speaks of the monotheist's view of the pagans. But he also includes the claims of the Romans who, in plundering the Temple in Jerusalem, found the *cherubim* or angels on the Holy of Holies and declared that the Jews were worshiping idols! Mendelssohn then turns to common Western views of Hinduism as a religion filled with multiple gods and statues and idols.

He defends Hinduism by saying that from the "eyes of the native Hindu" these statues are not idols but signs that point to the nature of God as creative, transformative, and wise (*J*, 115). I believe that this brings important insights into both the nature of religious signs themselves and into ways in which Mendelssohn thinks of other religions.

First, Mendelssohn is pointing out the importance of the role of the interpretant in religious semiosis. Almost any sign can be seen in an idolatrous way. Mendelssohn suggests that even black lines on a page or numbers have been turned into idols. He suggests that it is the attitude, training, and sensibility of the interpretant that is determinative of idolatry. Mendelssohn's view suggests that religious signs are culture specific—they have no "universal meaning" that any human can "get" without training and knowledge. Indeed, cultural specificity is what gives signs their social and communicative power. Therefore "natives" and insiders do hold a privileged position in the understanding of signs. Outsiders are more likely to get it wrong, to see the signs of others as idols. But Mendelssohn does not deny the possibility that outsiders could "get it right." He does not seal each cultural–linguistic system off from outsiders. But he warns the outsiders that "they must acquaint themselves very intimately with the thoughts and opinions" (*J*, 114) of the religion of others if they are to understand them.

Of course, "acquainting oneself intimately" with the signs system of another religion is very different from merely tolerating it. It suggests an intimate form of knowing that is born out of genuine patience and experience, and multiple human interactions. In offering this model for interfaith dialogue, Mendelssohn suggests that humans do have the capacity to transcend their own sign systems. This access is not won by translating cultural–linguistic systems into the universal abstract concepts; it leaves the cultural–linguistic system intact. The outsider must become a humble listener; he must become like a humble neophyte again, and then, by engaging the other as he would an expert in his own sign system, he can learn this new sign system.

Mendelssohn was trained and wrote within the discourse system of Christian Enlightenment. We therefore would expect him to be fairly open to Jewish–Christian dialogue. Yet, given longstanding Jewish philosophical opposition to pagan and idolatrous elements in Asian religions, it is remarkable how open he is to Hinduism. Perhaps it is his sensitivity to signs that leads him to define idolatry essentially in semiotic terms and not in terms of a particular ideology. Idolatry can occur in any semiotic system when individuals take the sign itself for the thing it represents. Thus, we have idolatry in the monotheisms, and even in the Enlightenment focus on the written word and the book. What Mendelssohn's semiotics suggests in relation to interfaith dialogue is that all religions are different cultural–linguistic systems. As Lindbeck has argued, these systems cannot be reduced or translated into universal

concepts without losing much of their philosophical, theological, and ethical power. A condition for the possibility of genuine interfaith dialogue requires that outsiders learn the cultural–linguistic systems of others. And this is possible because humans are capable of learning more than one language system.

2

Liturgical Selfhood

Hermann Cohen's "Religion of Reason"

Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*, which was published in Germany in 1919,[1] is one of the most important yet little-read books of modern Jewish philosophy. The book establishes groundbreaking ideas and methodologies such as the notion of correlation, an ethics of the other, and a scriptural hermeneutics that is both philosophical and traditionally exegetical. In addition, Cohen places liturgy at the crucial bridge points between the self and the community, the self and God, and the self and its growth into moral autonomy. I refer to this moral self as a "liturgical self." What Cohen's liturgical self explains and philosophical ethics does not is how the individual becomes at once autonomous and moral, at once for others, for itself, and for its community. This could be described as becoming responsible for the redemption of the world.

Although Cohen is usually presented as a rational foundationalist on the model of the typical modern Enlightenment philosophers, attention to his writings on liturgy and the dynamics of ethical self-development reveals a striking openness to the influences of texts, liturgies, and the human other as alternative "sources" of philosophical thought and ethics. This is part of Cohen's own movement away from Kant to critical idealism, but it also involves his deep commitment to Jewish theism and Jewish scriptures. Therefore, underlying Cohen's views of reason and ethics is a hermeneutics of scripture. If we are to understand Cohen's liturgical reasoning, we will first have to understand his exegetical writings on the "sources of Judaism." Using a phrase that I have developed with Peter

Ochs and Robert Gibbs, I will refer to these exegetical writings as a form of "Textual Reasoning."[2]

Between Idealism and Existentialism

A major scholarly debate on *Religion of Reason* was motivated by Franz Rosenzweig's claim in his famous 1924 introduction to Cohen's Jewish writings[3] that *Religion of Reason* represents a "lifting of the veil" of Cohen's pure Neo-Kantianism and a movement toward an existentialism of the sort that Rosenzweig and his older colleague, Martin Buber, embraced. Jewish philosophers like Emil Fackenheim, Natan Rotenstreich, and Samuel Hugo Bergmann developed this interpretation further to argue that Cohen's turn toward existentialism was more of a "return to Judaism."[4] Scholars like Leo Strauss, Alexander Altmann, and Steven Schwarzschild have opposed the idea of a turn to existentialism and attempted to defend the purely rational and idealist nature of Cohen's philosophy of religion.

If pushed, I suppose, I would side with the Rosenzweig group. Yet I would argue that Cohen is less of a proto-existentialist in *Religion of Reason* and more of an exegetical and liturgical philosopher, that is, Cohen is a proto-textual and liturgical reasoner. Here I follow a most illuminating piece of scholarship on Cohen and Judaism written by Michael Zank, *The Idea of Atonement in the Philosophy of Hermann Cohen*. Zank suggests that the positions of both Rosenzweig and Schwarzschild are exaggerated and that, in his later work, Cohen was attempting to "steer a course between the Scylla of idealistic ethics and the Charybdis of existentialism."[5] Zank also argues that Cohen could not "return to Judaism" since he never left it. He highlights early writings on the ideas of Atonement and Messianism that show that Cohen's concern with Judaism was not a late preoccupation of an aging scholar, but an abiding concern throughout his life[6] that affected his philosophical and ethical formulations from the start. Zank uses the liturgical notion of *Versöhnung* ("repentance," or, in his preferred translation, "reconciliation") as a leitmotif in Cohen's work. The preoccupation with Versöhnung reveals Cohen's overall attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion, ethics and religious morality, German culture and Judaism. Zank's use of a liturgical motif as a mediating element in Cohen's work is an important resource for me in my attempt to highlight Cohen's liturgical reasoning.[7]

"Religion of Reason" Out of the Sources of Judaism

In understanding Cohen as a textual and liturgical reasoner, more extensive attention must be given to the relation of reason and Jewish sources suggested

by the title of Cohen's book *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*. As Cohen scholars know well, to point to this title is not necessarily to gain clarity on Cohen's project. That the meaning of this title is somewhat unclear is attested by the fact that Cohen began his book with an extended introduction in which he attempts to explain the title. That that attempt was less than successful is evidenced by the fact that Steven Schwarzschild, the leading Jewish Cohen scholar of the last generation, wrote his own essay to explain Cohen's explanation! In some way, the title revisits Mendelssohn's division between "eternal truths" and "revealed legislation" and the issue of what takes priority. Schwarzschild tries to take a Kantian approach. Thus "reason has to extract a priori truth from [religion as a] historical reality by means of the transcendental method."[8] Reason, however, remains the "origin" of religion in the sense of the "transcendentally logical ground, the rational presuppositions which are the only conceptual basis from which the subsequent historical events [of religion] could transpire."[9] This is all good modern foundationalism, which Cohen succinctly summarizes in his assertion that "only thought itself can produce what can count as being."[10] Schwarzschild complicates the model a bit by adding Cohen's mathematical analogy to the origin as the "infinitesimal." The origin is an "infinitesimal zero which, though de facto zero, is a differentiated zero, with the potentials of all the various 'functions.' "[11]

However, in another attempt to explain Cohen's notion of origin, Schwarzschild calls upon theology. And here I would suggest there are some important implications that Schwarzschild does not seem to fully explore. Schwarzschild points to "the origin" as Christian scholasticism presents it in the doctrine of "creation ex nihilo." He then notes a parallel to the Jewish notion of *yesh me'ayin*, "the given comes from nothing." Schwarzschild explains that "for both [Jewish] rationalists and mystics, God himself is then often regarded as the *nihil*, the *'ayin*, the Nothing by which all is produced. This 'originating' (productive, 'constructionalist') power then also actually manifests itself in the concrete life of religion."[12] In his reference to God as the "Nothing" out of which all comes, we clearly have not a secondary but a competing "origin" to a priori reason. Although the history of Christian and Jewish scholasticism may be seen as an attempt to equate God with reason, the "Nothing" that is God will always escape beyond reason. As a theist, as a Jewish monotheist, Cohen is well aware of this. Some may point to Cohen's notion of "correlation" as his attempt to reconcile rationalism and theism. But the concept of correlation is not meant to make an equivalence between God and reason but to say that there is a conceptual correlation between that which is rational in God and that which is rational in humans (*RR*, 82, 100). Certainly, there is reason in God, but there is also more to God than reason. This Cohen makes clear in the first chapter of *Religion of Reason* when he re-describes the God of Jewish monotheism as "unique" and not "one." We see this also in

Cohen's discussion of God's love for the poor and in God's mercy for the repentant sinner.

I would join Zank and argue that it is Cohen's Jewish theism that is the first thing that separates him from the pure rational foundationalists.[13] That Cohen is a Jewish theist is not insignificant; for it is Cohen's theism that will set up his turn to a religious ethics to complete philosophical ethics. And it is Cohen's theism that will introduce terms like compassion, love, humanity, and Messianism to his philosophy and ethics.

Yet to say that Cohen is a Jewish theist is also to say that he is a scripturalist. For the Jewish God cannot be separated from his scripture, from Torah. Thus, as God is an alternative "origin" to a priori reason, Jewish scripture is also an alternative origin for knowledge, for ethics, for truth. Some scholars have tried to finesse the issue of priority by suggesting that, for Cohen, reason is "origin," and scripture is "source." Yet scripture, as we see it actually used (and not just addressed as a "concept" in *Religion of Reason*), is not a source that is "produced" or "generated" or "presupposed" or "constructed" by an a priori reason. Scripture, as source, stands on its own as the word and will of God.

However, to follow Cohen's notion of "correlation" in a more general than technical Cohenian sense, there is certainly continuity between reason and scripture. And thus there is a kind of "scriptural" or "textual" reason in Torah. This means that philosophy and scripture are not alien or opposed. It means, in Schwarzschild's own words, that scripture itself produces notions like "history" and "humanity" and that philosophy can come after scripture to "bring these notions to their fullest conceptual and social exfoliation."[14] Schwarzschild calls this form of scriptural reflection "second level philosophic discourse." The description of the relation of philosophy to scripture that Schwarzschild offers, though he himself would object, is not far from what I see rabbinic thought doing to scripture. This model suggests an even more radical relation of philosophy to scripture, in which the two are not correlative origins of knowledge, but scripture takes priority over philosophy. And then philosophy abdicates a first level of discourse and comes to be defined as a "second level discourse" after scripture, after "revelation." Coming after revelation, philosophy would then take the form that rabbinic Judaism gives it, and that is the form of commentary. Thus, what I am suggesting here is that Cohen's *Religion of Reason* includes a way of thinking after revelation that Peter Ochs, Robert Gibbs, and I have called "Textual Reasoning."

In making my suggestions about the co-priority of reason and scripture in Cohen, or even the priority of scripture to reason, I am not asserting that I have the "correct reading" of Cohen that the methods of the Wissenschaft des Judentums, the Science of Judaism, or a propositional philosophical approach to the Cohen opus would produce. But rather, I make the suggestion in the spirit of Mendelssohn's "surmise" or in Gadamer's hermeneutical sense of an interpretation that is made for the contemporary situation. While certainly

consulting the relevant scholarship and texts, I aim to read Cohen not in his historical context but in our own and for our own context. One reason this is possible is that Cohen himself did this kind of hermeneutical work when he read, in a way that served his particular context, both the philosophical and scriptural traditions that were bequeathed to him.

Cohen's Textual Reasoning

In the introduction, I offered that a way of reading the modern Jewish philosophers as textual and liturgical reasoners is to follow the suggestion of Franz Rosenzweig and read the books of these Jewish philosophers from back to front. To read Cohen as a textual reasoner I will not literally begin at the back of *Religion of Reason*, but, rather, I will start in the middle. I will begin with chapter 8, "*Die Entdeckung des Menschen als des Mitmenschen*" ("The Discovery of Man as Fellowman").[15] The preceding seven chapters of *Religion of Reason* may be seen as following the tradition of the Enlightenment, with an attempt to "translate" scripture into philosophical and ethical terms. Thus, Creation is the creation of man in reason, and Holy Spirit is moral spirit, and so on. However, when we get to chapter 8, scripture enters in its own terms. Chapter 8 is, therefore, at once exegetical and philosophical. Here, Cohen follows his principle (which is a nice summary of the way in which all "Textual Reasoning" should begin): "One has to square away one's philology before doing one's philosophy."[16] Cohen does this "squaring away" by paying close attention to the structure, the semantics, of the language (what the Jewish exegetes would call *pshat*) of the biblical text.

Chapter 8 begins with a discussion of the limitations of philosophical ethics that conceives of the modern person as an abstraction. From here, Cohen moves into an extended exegesis of scriptural passages on Israel and its relations to the non-Israelite "other." In the process, he seeks to tease out of scripture the philosophical notion of the *Mitmensch*, the "fellow-creature," or in Simon Kaplan's translation, the "fellowman." By doing this, Cohen is able to respond to a practical issue of social ethics of his day. This problem involves the status of ethnic relations in the modern world and the relative value of associations to one's family, one's people, the nation–state, and universal humanity (*Allheit*). This specifically concerns problems of Jewish relations to non-Jewish citizens in Germany.

Cohen refers to the problem of the attitude that the modern person has to the "next man," the *Nebenmensch*. Cohen tells us that the modern person interacts with the next man not as a "whole man" but as a non-individuated everyman (*RR*, 114). This everyday interaction "levels down" (*RR*, 115) the person we meet from her status as a person correlated with God. In denying this correlation, the relationship is robbed of its proper moral character. The

Bible, on the other hand, re-embodies the abstracted rational subject of Kantian ethics in the concrete human situation of the family, community, and nation and in a direct personal relation with God. The biblical person of Genesis and Exodus is the all-too-human father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister full of the desires, loves, and hates, the jealousies and the familial and communal loyalties of the common person. This is the person that most fervently feels the primary allegiance to the family and nation, and this is the person that is most in need of the moral pedagogy of a universal ethics. This person is both closer to and further from the modern German citizen than Kant's disembodied rational subject. The biblical person is closer in her human passions and predicaments, yet further away in her temporal distance. The distance, however, has distinct pedagogical advantages because the distance allows Cohen to set up a model that at once mirrors the contemporary problem and resolves it. The distance also provides a more-subtle and less-confrontational space to critique the deficiencies in the present social situation.

From the general problem of the Nebenmensch, Cohen moves to the specific problem of Jewish relations to non-Jews. Cohen summarizes the problematic of "Israel and the other" with a discussion of a number of antinomies that are specific to the Israelite. The Israelite is: 1) "son of Adam and a son of Abraham"; he is 2) the native born opposed by the "foreigner" (*RR*, 115); and he is 3) a monotheist faced by the paganism of his neighbors. To resolve these three antinomies, Cohen embarks on a exegetical journey through the books of Genesis and Exodus and the Jewish exegetes, examining figures like Adam, Noah, Abraham, and the notion of the "*Ger*," or stranger, to create a Jewish justification for ethical obligations to non-Jews.

Noah

The figure of Noah is an important one for Cohen because Noah pre-dates Abraham. He is not from the family of Abraham, not a son of Israel, not necessarily a believer in the one God; yet, still, God considers him to be righteous (Gen. 7:1). And because of his righteousness, God decides not to "destroy all flesh." Indeed, God makes a covenant with Noah, a "covenant with living things in general and in particular with the human soul" (*RR*, 117). Through Noah, God establishes an equivalence among all humans regardless of origins, social status, or group membership, referring to them as "*Ahot*" ("brothers," Gen. 9:5), and requiring that the murder of any one of them be answered with the taking of the murderer's life. The reason given comes from his creation: "For in His image did God make man" (Gen. 9:6). From this, Cohen draws the important and obvious conclusion: "According to the covenant with Noah, every man is already the brother of every other" (*RR*, 118). God brings nature into this covenant as well, and nature then "becomes a witness for this covenant in the form of the rainbow" (*RR*, 117). All this suggests that the Torah, from its

beginning, includes a rudimentary notion of the Mitmensch, or the "fellow-creature." Furthermore, Noah provides the basis for the later lofty rabbinic notions of the *B'nei Noah*, the children of Noah and the universal Jewish laws of humanism, the "Noachide laws."[17]

Abraham

From Noah, Cohen brings us to Abraham "through whom all the nations of the world are blessed" (Gen. 12:3). With Abraham, the dignity of the fellowman is increased because we see that humans deserve not only the Noachide covenant, which protects their lives and is sanctioned by nature, but also what Abraham demands for them—justice. A crucially important precedent is set when Abraham argues with God to act justly not in relation to his own family, but to those who are "outsiders," those who live in a horrible sinful society, those who live in Sodom and Gomorrah. Cohen summarizes the importance of Abraham in words that are particularly relevant for the different national entities and for Jews who work and live alongside non-Jews in the modern world.

> Thus, the blessing that Abraham shall bring "to all the nations of the earth" is based on law and justice. And the promise made to the great people whose father shall be Abraham, is connected to the blessing for all the families of the earth (families!). This promise at the very origin of the people of Israel connects this people with the peoples of the world and thus paves the way for the idea of the "fellowman." (*RR*, 119)

Note that Cohen underscores that the relationship between Abraham's descendants and the other nations is as close as a familial connection by repeating the word "families!" with an exclamation mark.

After his Textual Reasoning on Noah and Abraham, Cohen returns us to Adam and to the most fundamental statement of the value of every human life, "God created man in his image." One might ask why it is that Cohen does not start with Adam first, and perhaps this is because he wants to begin in history, with the real "fallen man," rather than the mythical personage of Adam. Whatever his reason, he does bring us back to Adam after Abraham, and he does so by presenting a well-known rabbinic discussion about which principle in the Torah is the greatest. Rabbi Akiba suggests it is: "You shall love thy neighbor (*reah*) as yourself" (Levit. 19:18), and Ben Azai suggests it is: "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God He made him (Gen. 5:1; Jtal: Ned, 9)." Cohen sides with Ben Azai for his principle establishes the "indispensable supposition, the general concept of man" (*RR*, 119). This supposition establishes the dignity of every human being on the principle of God's creation of humans in his image. This cardinal principle of monotheism, Cohen argues, has the effect on denying any essential partitions between

humans on the basis of family, country, or even religion. Cohen therefore echoes Mendelssohn's sentiments on tolerance, as he declares that "monotheism itself prevents any inner partition between believers in monotheism and all nonbelievers." On the basis of the creation of humans in God's image, Cohen then reestablishes the hierarchy of the Israelites' obligations to others, which starts with humanity through Adam and Noah and moves, only lastly, to Israel through Abraham: "The Israelite is a son of Noah before he is a son of Abraham. . . . But before he is a son of Abraham and a son of Noah, the Israelite is, just as every man is, God's creature and is created in his image" (*RR*, 119–20).

The Mediation of the "Stranger"

But the problem of the relation of Israel to the other is not overcome in Adam, or Noah, or Abraham. The theme of the distinction between Israelites and the other peoples continues to be underscored as monotheism develops and the identity of Israelites as people of God becomes clearer. Thus, the monotheistic Israelites are distinguished by Moses from the polytheists and the idol worshippers. When the people Israel forms out of slavery to freedom in the Exodus, she constantly faces the *Nokri*, the "foreigner." The figure of the foreigner, who is both idolater and enemy, threatens Israel both physically and spiritually—physically through war, and spiritually by leading Israel away from the one God. So Israel is commanded not only to fear and loathe the idolaters but also to destroy them.

Thus, as Israel develops in her relationship to God, and as that relationship is embedded in the primal narrative of the Exodus and the laws that are given at Sinai, she becomes more distinct and different from the people of other nations. Indeed, the very word *kadosh* means "set apart," and the notion of Israel as a *goy kadosh*, a "holy nation," is predicated on Israel's status as set apart. One could say, therefore, that as monotheism attempts to forge a solution to the problems of immorality that the Book of Genesis so clearly describes, it simultaneously creates another moral problem—that problem is the separation of humans into the categories "God-fearing" and "idolatrous." This problem is, of course, not unique to ancient Israel but may be regarded as the ubiquitous human problem of the "us versus them." But it has particularly strong resonance in modern Europe as the dawn of modernity represented a kind of Exodus from the medieval "dark ages" to a human rebirth fueled by vision of a universal humanity and a rational subject. And this new person and new universal culture was immediately set against the old, the traditional, the nonrational and the particular, represented, most significantly, in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe by the "Jew." Thus, the specter of anti-Semitism is an additional context for Cohen's notion of the stranger. In this context, the

partners switch in an ironic twist, and it is the Jew who is the strange "other," and the German Christian is Israel.

The Creation of the *Ger* as Fellow-creature

Cohen's creative response to the problem in ancient Israel of the elect monotheistic "us" and the idolatrous "them," the foreigner, or Nokri, is to search for some third term of "mediation" (*Schlichtung*) that would preserve the humanity of the non-Israelite. He, thus, is seen here in what Zank calls his focal preoccupation of seeking Versöhnung, or "reconciliation." Through this search, Cohen forges one of the most creative and important exegetical events of Textual Reasoning in all of modern Jewish philosophy. This is the development of the notion of the "Ger," or stranger. Cohen's rhetoric in describing this notion is jubilant, and perhaps this jubilance is a sign of the hermeneutical power of the biblical figure that he has discovered. Cohen tells us that the Ger is a "great step with which humanitarianism begins" (*RR*, 121). The power of this notion can be clearly seen in two biblical texts: "One law shall be unto him that is home-born and unto the Ger, 'the stranger' that lives among you (Ex. 12:49, see also Num 15:15, Lev. 24:22, Deut. 1:16)" and "Thou shall love him [the stranger] as yourself (Lev. 19:34)."

Cohen tells us that what is remarkable about the notion of the Ger is that it achieves its development as monotheism is codified in law and given political expression in the nation. Thus, the notion of the Ger is not developed as an afterthought but comes immediately with the formation of Israel and its law. Here, under the commandment of the Torah, the stranger must be treated equally, even though he is not a monotheist. This, for Cohen, displays the moral power of the divine law. Cohen speaks of human laws of Greece and Rome, where the "sojourner needs a patron to conduct a case in court" and juxtaposes it with the law of the Torah. In this law, "God gives to the stranger his share in the law of the land, even though he does not profess [belief] in the one God" (*RR*, 121).

Cohen does not ignore the biblical injunction to fight the idolater outside Israel; and he is obviously aware of the abuses in relation to the stranger that this can cause. One strategy he employs to address idolatry is to present it as a problem that all humans, including Israel, faces. Therefore "the worshippers of idols have to be fought no less in one's own people than in the alien peoples" (*RR*, 120). This recognition of the universal human tendency to idolatry forges a connection between the idolater and Israel that issues in a series of commandments prohibiting hatred of particular idolatrous nations: "Thou shall not hate an Edomite, for his is your brother. . . . Thou shall not hate an Egyptian" (Deut. 23:8).

Hermann Cohen picks up on and amplifies what we might call the indigenous "corrective moral reasoning" within Torah. Cohen suggests that Torah is "aware" of the problematic status of its command to destroy idolatry and the idolater, and it corrects itself with countervailing commands and with the figure of the Ger as the fellow creature. The textual reasoner, Peter Ochs, building on the work of John Dewey, speaks of a second order of Textual Reasoning that attempts to "repair" problems within a given text. Ochs argues that a primary responsibility of first order of Jewish texts, liturgies, and philosophies is to provide healing for human suffering. But written texts can become frozen and unable to respond to new forms of human suffering. At this point, textual reasoners often need to heal or fix the frozen text so that it is more able to respond to the new situation of suffering.[18] But what gives textual reasoners a warrant to do this healing is the fact the scriptures themselves display an intrinsic form of self-healing or self-correction. Cohen refers to the reparative dimension of Jewish texts with a number of terms, most notably, "monotheism," "religion of reason," or simply "religion." He uses the first term below:

> Monotheism was best able to correct its own teaching with respect to the strict commandment to destroy idol worship and the idolatrous peoples. Thus, man is also recognized in the non-Israelite, and this recognition is also confirmed by a political acknowledgement of him. The blemish of idol worship is thus separated, if not from the concept, at least from the representation of him. (*RR*, 121)

In this quotation, we see Cohen's own enlightenment humanism coming together with Torah. The corrected notion of humanity clears the idolater of the blemish of idolatry and Israel of the absolute command to destroy her. But along with the discovery of the humanity of the idolaters comes an added obligation, the obligation of the idolater to desist from idolatry: "Man need not be an Israelite in order not to have to be a worshipper of idols" (*RR*, 121). This is the normative dimension of monotheism that Cohen will not relinquish even in the face of the ethical obligation of Israel to the other.

You Shall Love the Stranger

In the Holiness Code of Leviticus, the principle of the Ger as fellowman is intensified to the commandment of love: "You shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:33). Where Kantian ethics develops the responsibility of the self for others on the basis of a universal rational law, the categorical imperative, and the recognition of a fundamental moral duty, Cohen recognizes that humans are not motivated by reason and duty alone. In turning to Leviticus, Cohen follows the lead of the Torah to add the emotions of love and compassion to the ethical relation: "Religion achieves

what morality fails to achieve. Love for man is brought forth" (*RR*, 146). The Torah accomplishes this achievement on the basis of Israel's own experience of slavery. Israel should be able to identify with the stranger and love her because she, too, went through the experience of being a stranger when she was in Egypt.

In chapter 9 of *Religion of Reason*, "The Problem of Religious Love," it becomes clear that the Ger is not only a notion that helps mediate between Israel and other nations. Cohen further develops the notion of the Ger by revisiting the figure as it appears in multiple scriptural contexts. Cohen searches out a level of ethical and theological meaning in the pshat of the figure until it becomes what Peirce would call a semiotic icon. The result is that the Ger is transformed from "the foreign one" and "the stranger" to the key to understanding the nature of humanity and to the touchstone for an understanding of love of God and God's love of humans.

The first thing to note about Cohen's stranger is that it is neither an abstract concept nor a Weberian "ideal type." Cohen is talking about the real-life person who suffers. The Torah gives us multiple images of the stranger: the foreign born, and the wanderer who lives among you; the widow, the orphan; Israel, herself, when she was enslaved in Egypt. Now Cohen takes all these biblical images and summarizes them with the concrete material and economic notion of *Armut* or poverty. In using this term, he accomplishes a subtle analogy between the suffering ones in the Bible and the suffering masses of the European poor.

Cohen's consistent use of contemporary terms, concepts, and institutions, like "the poor," "humanity," "ethics," and "the state" to describe biblical notions and institutions may strike the historically minded biblical scholar as anachronistic and ill founded. But by doing this, Cohen is performing the basic hermeneutical function of bringing the Bible in contact with his contemporary situation in order to bring to it its healing and wisdom. The desired effect of Cohen's use of the word "poverty" to describe the stranger seems to be calculated to bridge the vast temporal gap between the biblical and the contemporary person and elicit empathy for those who suffer poverty. Cohen is sensitive not only to the physical suffering of the poor but to the social status of the poor as outcasts: "Not only does the body suffer and hunger in poverty, but the entire man is torn out of the equilibrium of his culture. This kind of suffering exceeds all the suffering in a tragedy" (*RR*, 146). Sensitivity to suffering is important because Cohen argues that suffering brings us to knowledge not only of the particular man but of human nature in general! He writes, "If you wish to know what a man is, then get to know his suffering" (*RR*, 147) and "Suffering reveals itself to be the essence, as it were, of man" (*RR*, 146).

When the "essence of man" is revealed in the suffering of the stranger, Cohen tells us, "a miracle occurs," whose processes pose a riddle or a "problem" for the philosopher of religion. This miracle is that the I is moved to

Mitleid, to "compassion" (or in the unfortunate term of Simon Kaplan's translation, "pity") for the other. Cohen tells us that this compassion is mysterious because "it emerges from the head, or rather from the heart, of man" (*RR*, 146). In his description here, we see Cohen's philological sensitivity to the biblical word for heart (*lev*), which, indeed, means a combination of head and heart, the true center of the human being. As the sentiment and thought that emerges from this center for the sufferer develops, it becomes the basis of love for the stranger and love for the fellowman. Cohen defines this love for the stranger as a particular kind of love that he calls "religious love." Religious love is not erotic, aesthetic, or abstract metaphysical love. Beginning from relationship to the suffering stranger, I would call it love educated by suffering, or love-that-strives-to-heal.

Teaching Love

In addition to its healing function, Cohen speaks of religious love as love that teaches.

> This love first teaches man to love men. First it teaches man to recognize in poverty the suffering of man. First it teaches, therefore, in correspondence with this social insight into suffering, the kindling in man of the primeval feeling of *Mitleid* [compassion]. First it teaches, therefore, the establishment in compassion of the true meaning of religious love. . . . It teaches, therefore, the discovery in the next man of the fellowman. (*RR*, 147)

To say that religious love teaches is to say that it is a force that includes reason. Cohen believes that this is a force that runs through the Torah as a form of instruction, or as the instructor, *der Lehrer* of humans. The teaching love that runs through Torah is also identified by Cohen as the "share of reason in religion" (*RR*, 147). So if we use Cohen to articulate a notion of Textual Reasoning, it would not only be the healing and "fixing" potential of Torah but also a kind of love we can call "teaching love."

As Cohen follows this teaching love from the Torah to the prophetic books, another dimension of religious love is revealed. This involves a transformation whereby love for the stranger as fellow creature erodes the distinction between the self and the other. This insight comes to Cohen in following the reasoning of one of the most confusing and seemingly nonrational texts of Second Isaiah: "When you see the naked, that you cover him, and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh [*umibsareka lo titalam*]" (Isa. 58:7). In the most graphic and real terms, Cohen suggests that this text means that in loving the Ger as fellowman, the flesh of the Ger becomes "my" flesh and her suffering becomes "my" suffering: "This is the new insight that true monotheism brings about: the poor man is your own flesh. You do not consist of your own body, nor is

your wife, the object of your sexual love, that only flesh that is your flesh, but the poor man is also your flesh" (*RR*, 148). Thus, the love of the Ger teaches that we cannot remain separate from the poor. Indeed, in loving the Ger, we become identified with her, and this identity, as the prophet puts it, is bodily, flesh to flesh.

The prophets also make it clear that love for the fellowman cannot stop with compassion for the suffering individual alone; it must be directed to the sufferers in the plural as a collective. In short, compassion must be social compassion. Compassion must develop a "social conscience" because the compassion that is seen and demanded by the prophets is a compassion that knows social, economic, and political suffering (*RR*, 147).

The development of the love of person as fellow creature not only teaches the self about its own identity and about social suffering and a moral social conscience, in its final stage it provides a theological key to God and opens the self to love of God. This is Cohen's most radical move, for now it is the stranger and the poverty-stricken ones that open the self to God: "Only now, after man has learned to love man as fellowman, is his thought turned back to God, and only now does he understand that God loves man, indeed, loves the poor man with the same favor as the stranger" (*RR*, 147). At this point we realize that the entire process of developing love for man as fellow-creature was a function of God's love, a kind of second creation of us as humans capable of love. Furthermore, we come to see that the ultimate teacher of love, the instructor of this process of love, is God.

As I end this discussion of Cohen's figure of the Ger, it is important to distinguish it both from the rabbinic and the Western philosophical traditions. Cohen's notion of the Ger as fellow creature is in direct contrast to the development of the rabbinic notion of the Ger. For the Ger becomes the term in rabbinic parlance for those who convert to Judaism (Btal, Gerim). The rabbinic notion of the Ger obliterates and fails to preserve the otherness of the other. It requires Jews to treat the stranger as fellow creature only if she or he converts to Judaism. And it deprives Judaism of an ethically important intermediate category between Jews and non-Jews that leaves Jews in an "us versus them" dichotomous relationship with the goys, the non-Jews.[19]

On the other hand, Cohen's notion of the Ger is far from the "rational subject," the representative "man" of philosophy. Indeed, Textual Reasoning with the texts of the Bible gives rise to a different anthropology than does philosophy in its presentation of the human as "rational autonomous man." Cohen's scriptural anthropology identifies the "essence of man" in the powerless stranger, the widow and the orphan, the poverty-stricken one who has endless demands and seemingly nothing to offer. This person only seems to have nothing to offer, for as we follow Cohen in his Textual Reasoning, we begin to see that the suffering one, as "the essential man," in fact holds the key to "everything," to the self, to love of God, and to God's love and more.

From Textual Reasoning to Liturgical Reasoning

As I previously mentioned, Cohen sees the process of loving the stranger as one of God's riddles or mysteries that the philosophy of religion needs to address. The problem can be restated as follows: How do we love the stranger, the one who is different, poor, unattractive, often more like an *Untermensch* than a Nebenmensch? One could regard Cohen's Textual Reasoning on the notion of the Ger as a form of ethical pedagogy designed to supply Jews with biblical and even *halakahic* warrants for regarding the stranger as brother or sister. But Cohen does not stop here. In the middle of his discussion of the Ger, in chapter 8, he quotes Second Isaiah and provides a highly suggestive comment: " 'For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples' (Isa. 56:7). Thus, the foreigner becomes fellow creature through the community of prayer" (*RR*, 121).

This suggestive remark on the way in which public prayer functions to make the foreigner a fellow creature is followed up in chapter 9 with an extensive discussion of the specific importance of the festival of Shabbat to make the stranger a fellow creature. Here, Cohen refers to Shabbat as the "keystone for social ethics" (*RR*, 156). He tells us that "in the Sabbath, the God of love showed himself as the unique God of love for mankind" (*RR*, 158). Thus we see how Cohen moves from Textual Reasoning to liturgical reasoning.

Making Shabbat into the festival of social ethics requires Cohen to move the primary associations of the festival from a celebration of the ideal of a perfect natural creation to a celebration of social ideals. To do this, Cohen again becomes a textual reasoner, and here he points to what Jewish exegetes have noticed for centuries, that the commandment for Shabbat observance is given in two slightly different ways in Exodus (20:8–11) and in Deuteronomy (5:12–14). Most rabbinic commentaries, however, have focused on the differences in the first words that are used to communicate the commandment. Thus, we have, in Exodus "*Zahor*" ("remember") the Sabbath day, and in Deuteronomy we have "*Shamor*" ("observe") the Sabbath day.[20] What is crucial for Cohen is that in both versions rest is commanded for the Israelite and the servant and the stranger. What this means, for Cohen, is that Shabbat "is meant to secure the equality of men in spite of the differences in their social standing" (*RR*, 157). The difference in the two versions in scripture, however, is the *Taamei ha-Mitsvot*, the reasons for the commandments. The Exodus version gives creation as the reason for the Shabbat commandment, "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it." Deuteronomy, on the other hand, ties the reason for Shabbat observance to the Israelite experience in slavery and in the Exodus from slavery: "And remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out

of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm: therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath." Thus, Israel's experience of slavery provides for compassion for her servants and for strangers. Cohen tells us that the ethical reason for Shabbat given in Deuteronomy is "that thy manservant and maidservant may rest as well as you (*kamohah*)." Cohen underscores the fact that the commandment presents the servant in direct parallel to the Israelite. The servant is kamohah, like yourself. Similar to a traditional exegete, Cohen picks up on the repetition of the same word in different contexts and uses this word as a hermeneutical key. In the word kamohah, in Deuteronomy 5:14, Cohen hears resonances of the commandment to love the stranger *v'ahavtah lo kamohah*, in Leviticus (Levit. 19:34): "The same phrase that is used in the commandment to love the stranger is used in the commandment to give your servant and the stranger rest on Shabbat" (*RR*, 157).

Thus, love for the fellowman, God's love for humans, and human love for God are established through the mediation of the festival of Shabbat. Cohen asks the rhetorical question: "What meaning does the love of God have?" and responds, "The answer is now found to be the compassion for the poor, which God awoke in us through his commandments [to observe Shabbat]" (*RR*, 158).

In the days of Israelite religion, compassion for the poor was made palpably clear on Shabbat by the fact that servants and strangers rested alongside Israel. In the modern period, that compassion must be initiated through a liturgical practice in which Jews recall the situation of the Israelite past, enact an egalitarian situation by inviting guests into their synagogues and homes, and imaginatively project the ideal situation of social equality and harmony into the future. Through its liturgies, Cohen tells us that Shabbat initiates in us love for the stranger and humankind. Knowing that that love has its source in God, love for God quite naturally follows.

The series of laws and liturgies connected to Shabbat therefore show themselves to be a locus of ideas, feelings, and practices that link the ideal of compassion for the poor, universal love of humanity, and love of God. Therefore, Shabbat stands *between* the abstract ideals of philosophy and monotheism and the concrete realities of social and political life. Shabbat stands as a weekly reminder to Jews of their ethical obligations to their fellowman and the goal of social equality and justice. Shabbat recharges and motivates Jews with love of God and hope for the messianic future. Cohen's social interpretation of Shabbat connects it directly with the experience of slavery in Egypt and the Exodus from servitude to freedom that is mentioned in daily prayer and celebrated in the festival of Pesach. Shabbat, in this interpretation, becomes a kind of weekly re-experiencing of the moral lessons of Pesach. Love the slave and the stranger for "you were strangers in the land of Egypt." Shabbat, too, provides laws and liturgies, which provide a living actualization of the ideal situation of social equality in ancient Israelite society and in the contemporary Jewish home, synagogue, and community. This is the ideal situation that Messianism

hopes to bring about for the entire world: "Out of God's social love for men develops God's universal love as presented in Messianism" (*RR*, 158). In this sense, as the rabbis say, Shabbat gives a "taste of redemption." This "taste," however, Cohen believes is meant to motivate humans to work in the world for a human society and politics of justice.

Theoretical Excursus: Cohen, Buber, Levinas, and the Cultural–Linguistic System of Judaism

Despite the density of Cohen's writing and the difficulties of his philosophical vocabulary, the achievement of his writings on the Ger in Torah were fairly quickly realized by his peers. The mutual interaction between neo-Kantian philosophy and Torah produced a brilliant new form of Jewish ethical thinking that was continuous with the Jewish tradition of exegetical interpretation. Cohen managed to display, through clear textual warrants from the written Torah, that Jews had a moral obligation not only to their own people but to others beyond their community and to the larger modern world. This was important as a response to charges by non-Jews that Judaism was too "tribal" and ethnocentric and could not serve the more universal aims of the Enlightenment. It was also important for Jews, themselves, to show them that working for the good of others and in the modern world was consistent with the ideals of Judaism. Although other modern Jewish philosophers and theologians of German Reform Judaism wrote about the ethical obligations that Jews had to the non-Jewish world, none of them displayed that obligation in such extensive scriptural and philosophic depth as did Cohen. In addition, Cohen's notion of the fellow creature and the Ger presented a challenge to German Christianity to see the Jew as brother and not foreigner and to live up to its own Enlightenment and Christian rhetoric of loving the stranger.

By moving from philosophy to Textual Reasoning to liturgical reasoning, Cohen managed to encode his philosophy in the public categories of rationality, textuality, and liturgy. By making the Shabbat liturgy, the weekly celebration of Jewish community, a celebration of the "Mitmensch," Cohen brought philosophical ethics from its elite home in the university to the variegated and common community of the synagogue. At the same time, the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism was ethically elevated and made a vehicle of, instead of a barrier to, enlightenment ideals. Cohen's notion of the Ger and the Mitmensch remain right at the creative edge of reason and faith. Here, God and human meet, here the moral law of philosophy and the law of God meet, here philosophical and Jewish normativity are preserved. In Neo-Kantian terms, the "moral law" is correlated with Jewish law. And in this process, the moral law gains a foothold in a particular community. By entering into the cultural–

linguistic system of Judaism, the moral law avails itself of all the processes of socialization, pedagogy, and ritualization that philosophy lacks. In this sense, philosophy becomes effective in the world. Hermann Cohen must be recognized as one of the central thinkers who turned the focus of Western philosophy from the Cartesian cogito and the Kantian autonomous self and its categories of understanding to the "other" as a touchstone for both ethics and epistemology. In the introduction to *Religion of Reason*, Cohen makes a remark about the importance of the *Du*, the "Thou," to the I that could have been written by any number of philosophers of the otherness that came after Cohen. Cohen states "only the discovery of the Thou is able to bring myself to the discovery of the I, to the discovery of the ethical knowledge of my I" (*RR*, 15). Certainly, there were other thinkers before him who referred to the other, most notably G. F. Hegel, but Cohen's influence, especially in Jewish philosophy, was both original and far-reaching.

If we return to the earlier discussion about Cohen's foundationalism and the rational origins of his thought, the discovery of the Ger as Du is another point in Cohen's thought where a supra-rational foundation and origin point emerges. Buber and Levinas emphasize this more than Cohen, but it is also clear in *Religion of Religion* that the Du cannot be "produced" by an a priori reason. Perhaps as a concept, or grammatical second person, the other can be known in advance, but by turning to Torah for his portraits of the Du, by seeking the Du in the Ger, the poor stranger, Cohen brings us the other as living human being and not a mere concept. The other as the poor stranger then becomes the key to knowledge and love of God. In addition, the Ger becomes the key to a social ethic that moves the self outside its own skin, outside its own family, community, and nation. The other, thus, becomes the basis for a fundamental switch in the direction of moral action from the "I" to the "you," from "us" to "them."

As I have said, Cohen's notion of commitment to the stranger was taken up in the work of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. Cohen's suffering one is transformed to the "Du" in Buber's *Ich und Du* (1923), and Buber then creates the opposed category of the "I–It." The Du is not only central to the development of the I for Buber, it also provides a glimpse of the "Eternal you," God. Additionally, the Du for Buber becomes an entry point for a new philosophy of social relations, education, and spirituality. The suffering one becomes the "other" in Levinas's *Totalité et Infini* (1961), and it becomes the centerpiece of Levinas's attempt to reorient philosophy toward an ethics of the other. From Levinas we see the effect on Derrida in his notion of "*différence*."

Given that other thinkers have developed the notion of "the other" with far more depth and breadth than did Cohen, it is easy to overlook his contribution to the concept and, more importantly, to his unique way of formulating it. What I find most notable about Cohen's notion of the Ger, especially in

relation to other Jewish thinkers, is the textual and liturgical reasoning that produces it. Cohen had already attempted to subtly parse the relation of a Jew's loyalty to his community and his equally important obligation to his fellow citizens and the state in his *Ethik des reinen Willens*.[21] Yet the structure of this obligation was built on notions of contract and law and was therefore not directly related to the Torah and its notions of covenant (*brit*) and law (*halakhah*). This means that Cohen's notion of the Ger and Mitmensch correlate with his philosophical notions of the "Du," "the other," and the "fellowman." And these philosophical notions reinforce the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism.

For both Buber and Levinas, on the other hand, the Du and "the other" first appear as a point of interruption of any cultural–linguistic system. The other is an interruption to traditional Jewish ethics and to Western philosophical ethics. Buber's Thou and Levinas's other are meant to be interruptions to any system of thought, to I–It, to Totality. Buber stresses that the moment of the Ich–Du relationship is opposed to the structures and institutions of the I–It.[22] For Levinas, the other opens up a different ethical and epistemological dimension in which infinitely enters;[23] and Levinas displays an allergic reaction to institutions and systems of thought that is similar to Buber's view. This makes it difficult for both Buber and Levinas to embrace the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. They certainly try to, and this we see in Buber's biblical hermeneutics and Levinas's Talmudic writings, but the theoretical steps back to these structures are unclear and the embrace of the them ambivalent. There are similar problems in Buber's and Levinas's attempts to embrace legal, political, and social structures. Again, attempts are made, but the courting of infinity and the "Thou" and the primacy of the dyadic I–Thou or I–other relationship make the move to a political system and a philosophy of the "we" or "they" appear secondary in import. For Buber, any form of I–It structure can emerge only after the primary I–Thou encounter. And for Levinas, a political and legal system emerges only after the primary face-to-face meeting with the other when a third person enters.[24]

In contrast, Cohen never violates rationality, institutions, or social and legal structures, but, indeed, strengthens them. Law is not the barrier between Israel and the Ger, but the bridge that links Israel and the Ger. Israel is bound to the Ger not out of some chance meeting or face-to-face encounter with the other, but out of a command that is at once legal, ethical, and rational. The relationship to the other also includes compassion and love, but the compassion and love is elicited in the relationship that is dictated first by command. And this command, of course, issues from a prior covenantal relationship to God. Cohen inserts the law, which Buber considers the I–It, in the very structure of the I–Thou relationship.

But what of Buber's sense of the Thou as a reality that will burst all bounds? And what of Levinas's sense that the other, precisely as "other," as

strange, different, and in need, establishes its own nonlegal ethical hierarchy that calls into question any normative legal code or ethics?[25] Does the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism preserve this? I would argue that it does, precisely by providing a context for it. The Jewish *halakhic* system provides the base line of continuity against which discontinuity and the superordinate ethical demand occurs. And this demand occurs, as the rabbis suggest, *lifnei meshurat ha-din*, "at the very edge of the law." Biblical narrative, law, and liturgy provide linguistic and behavioral forms in which the discontinuity of otherness is sustained and not obliterated. Narrative provides characterization that at once describes the Ger as other and "humanizes" him, shows how he is "like" Israel and therefore must be served. The attempt to humanize the Ger is best seen in the constant signal-phrase references to the Exodus narrative: "You shall love the stranger, for you were a stranger in Egypt." Narrative places the discontinuity that the other represents in the context of an extended series of events, a "plot," which reasserts continuity over time. Law decrees acts of charity that habituate interaction with the other. Liturgy provides a scheme and a process of structure, anti-structure, and aggregation in which the other is celebrated as other and then brought in to enrich the given order.

What the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism does for the needed relation to the other is to provide series of constant and dependable structures and processes that preserve the relationship. Martin Buber finds I–Thou relation a new source of aesthetics, a relation to nature, everyday life, and God.[26] At the same time, Buber claims that the I–Thou relationship cannot be sought, predicted, or willed. What this does is to leave the most important of all forms of human knowing and experiencing to chance, to an accidental grace. What the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism does for the I–Thou moment is to regularize it, to make it predictable and available.[27] In Mendelssohn's apt phrase, Judaism makes the truth of relationship to the other a "useful truth." And it is useful truth that is available not only to adults, but to children and the aged, to the entire range of people in the community.

Monotheism and the Ger as Idolater

In utilizing Lindbeck's notion of a "cultural–linguistic system" to explain Cohen adherence's to Jewish scripture and liturgy, it is important to note that as a philosopher, Cohen sees this system as fulfilling philosophical and not purely social functions. For Cohen, the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism is a social and linguistic system that is about ethical and philosophical truths. The philosophical dimension of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism and of Christianity and the other religions sometimes gets lost in Lindbeck's desire to distinguish his model from cognitivist models.

In preserving the cultural–linguistic system, Cohen, like Mendelssohn before him and Rosenzweig after him, is also concerned to preserve the

philosophical and theological norms of monotheism. What this means in relation to the stranger, who is often also an idolater, is that though strangers deserve respect, charity, concern, and love, their idolatrous beliefs must still be opposed. Cohen does away with the biblical idea that the idolatrous other must be destroyed, but he does not wish to surrender monotheism to the idolater. Indeed, the same may be said for the Jew's identity as a Jew in relation to the non-Jewish other. The Jew must work tirelessly and constantly for social justice for the Ger, but the Jew does not give up her Judaism for the Ger.

In fact, if she gives up her Judaism, she will give up the basis for her ethical work on behalf of the Ger. Thus, even as Cohen establishes a relation between the Israelite and the other, he is also careful to draw a line and preserve a distinction between the two. He does so, not for reasons of ethnic survival or purity, but for philosophic and ethical reasons, to preserve the status of the Jew as monotheist and as agent of social justice.

What is at stake here is made clear if we compare Cohen again to Buber and Levinas. In Buber's model of the I–Thou relationship, Buber seldom brings up the particular religious, national, and ethnic status of the I and the Thou who enter into meeting. Indeed, it is an irony of the book *I and Thou* that in a call for meeting between two selves as whole beings, this aspect is omitted. In the intimacy of the I–Thou encounter, this suggests that the "Jewishness," or Christianity, or paganism of the other falls away or is irrelevant.[28] However, because Buber's model calls for mutual confirmation of the I and Thou as who they are, one could at least theoretically argue that the I–Thou relationship should include religio-ethnic issues and that the monotheistic beliefs of a partner need not be surrendered in an I–Thou encounter.

However, in Levinas's model, the issue is more problematic. For Levinas suggests that the I must surrender her needs to the other. Indeed, the other retains an asymmetrical hierarchy of values over the I.[29] Levinas means this in ethical terms and not in the terms of personal dynamics or ideologies; the ethical demand to listen to and serve the needs of the other is infinite. However, his failure to establish limits between the I and the other and the unlimited quality of the demand to serve the other easily leads to a sacrifice of all that the I has, including his beliefs and spiritual legacy, for the other.[30] In a model in which all limits are cast aside, in the face of the commanding and infinite needs of the other, how is the I to preserve its own integrity? In the face of the infinite need of the other, where is the process of deliberating whether or not the other's plight is caused by her own vicious actions? Levinas's model provides little support for the I to decide not to serve the other whose intentions may be immoral or sociopathic. Cohen, on the other hand, preserves the Jewish halakhic and philosophical processes of rational decision making and just adjudication of ethical needs and claims of the other. These processes call for considerations of the manifold needs of the self, the community, and the

other that lie outside the community in a manner that strives to preserve all three.

Part II: The Liturgies of Atonement and the Moral "I"

The fact that Cohen begins his discussion of Jewish social ethics with a focus on the Ger as other and with the cultural–linguistic and philosophical supports for the other shows his movement from a Kantian focus on the autonomous self and on deontological ethics. The movement to scripture and liturgy shows that Cohen recognizes the importance of language, signs, laws, and behaviors in formulating an ethics.[31] I have already pointed out how these elements in Cohen's thought make him serviceable for the development of a textual and liturgical reasoning. However, the foregoing discussion of the importance of philosophical norms of Judaism and the importance of retaining the identity of the I as a Jew in the encounter with the other suggests that further attention must be given to supporting that I and its moral agency. This is precisely what Cohen does in chapters 10, 11, and 12 of *Religion of Reason*. In the beginning of chapter 10, Cohen states the problem for an I that is solely focused on the Thou, on others. "This I is only the I, for the Thou. However, we have not begun to determine what the I might mean as related exclusively to itself. . . . [This I] is not yet the individual, who alone has to stand up for himself" (165). Cohen has said that an ethics of the fellowman as a "social morality" is the "main point of monotheism" (*RR*, 178). But this ignores the main vehicle of ethical action, the individual. A social ethics assumes that the individual's ethical energies are free and her ethical intentions pure. "Love your neighbor as yourself," the social ethic commands. Yet what if the moral I is underdeveloped and hidden from the self? What if the self is sinful? And if the "social plurality" of the fellowman is the height of ethics, how is the I to avoid being consumed by the totality of the collective? Cohen suggests that the social ethics of the prophets share with Western philosophical ethics a goal in which the ethical individual disappears (*RR*, 178). In prophetic ethics, the individual disappears into the collective, and in philosophical ethics the individual disappears into the "abstract individual" (*RR*, 165), the moral law, and the state.

In his *Ethics of the Pure Will*, Cohen suggests that ethical self-consciousness can be won through relation to moral ideals, in communitas with a socialist society and under the jurisdiction of just laws of the state. In *Religion of Reason*, however, ethical self-consciousness is recalibrated through relation to messianic ideals, an egalitarian religious community under God, and the texts, laws, and liturgies of the Torah. Moreover, in chapters 10 through 12, Cohen shows that this ethical self-consciousness can be fully won only through the assistance

of the Jewish liturgies of atonement. These liturgies provide the self with a form of action that is a break from the hard and cruel work in the world. These actions are liturgical actions, what Zank, recalling the terminology of J. L. Austin and John Searle, calls "speech acts," which are performed in the safe and idealized confines of the synagogue.

When Cohen discusses the development of the individual as a moral I, he is arguing that the individual as a moral I is not given by Kantian reason, duty, or attitude. Cohen wants to establish that the individual as an ethical self-consciousness is never a static given but always an ongoing project. The moral individual is an infinite task molded by a web of relations that include the "Thou" and the "We" and is ruled by the external standards of the heteronymous law. As Cohen puts this in *Religion of Reason*, "The I is a step in the ascent to the goal which is infinite" (*RR*, 204). Because the I is an infinite task, gained incrementally in actions and in relation to the future, it can never be given in the "empirical self." Zank puts this well: "The ethical self-consciousness is thus distinct from an immediate or empirical sense of self. In fact, it is an act of emancipation from a natural perception of self. The latter is psychologically determined by memory and thus by the past. Ethics, however, is tied to the future. It has its mode in possibility, and the constitution of its object, action, is always a turning away from the past."[32]

The moral I for Cohen is constantly in process because it is chasing after an infinite ideal, a messianic ideal of universal peace and justice. But because this ideal is infinite, the self can never fully live up to it. What philosophical ethics fails to provide is a mechanism to deal with the inevitable gap between the infinite requirement of the ideal and the real person. This gap is experienced by the human being as guilt. Each individual feels guilt in his or her unique way, and this guilt is one of the defining features of human individuality. Because of this guilt, the individual can find herself in an isolation that leaves her "at wit's end" (*RR*, 168) and therefore renders her incapable of moral action. The problem may be most severe in the case of a criminal who has been convicted of a crime and has only his punishment as solace. However, Cohen also believes that the problem can be generalized to all human beings who, by being human, are universally and necessarily faced with the ethical demands of moral action. Thus, ethics turns to religion, not out of some extra-ethical or therapeutic need to capture the concrete individual subject, but out of a need to retain its moral efficacy. Religion and ethics are tied together for Cohen because only religion can deal adequately with human guilt and in so doing religion becomes the "origin of the I" as an individual moral agent: "If we claim that religion is concerned with man's guilt, and if we impart to religion the origin of the I as the individual, we do not dissolve its connection with ethics, but, on the contrary, make the connection effective" (*RR*, 168).

The problem of moral guilt turns to religion for a solution because, as Cohen puts its, "Man looks into the eyes of men; only God looks into the heart"

(*RR*, 168). Therefore, the individual looks to God as the eye into her own soul and the source of love and forgiveness despite sin. In the case of excessive guilt from sin, it is only God who can release guilt and thereby recapture the sinner for a future moral life. "If, at this point, the correlation to God did not come into force, he [the sinner] would be absolutely lost to the moral world" (*RR*, 168). Yet God, in the Jewish view, does not provide release from sin through an absolute free grace. Forgiveness and restitution are offered through a process of repentance and through liturgies of atonement that constitute and restore the self as a moral I.

Cohen's solution to these problems of the I are therefore found in the notions of atonement as they are developed in the Torah by the prophets and the rabbis. Cohen asserts that a transformation in the cult of sacrifice initiated by the Prophet Ezekiel and then in rabbinic thought supply liturgies of atonement that retrieve the individual for ethics. This retrieval is won through a transformation in the institution of sacrifice that gives the individual both a sense of autonomy and moral efficaciousness. To map out this process, Cohen again becomes a "textual reasoner." He takes us through an interpretation of the ancient cult of sacrifice that at once preserves the old tradition and transforms it in the light of ethics. To understand the liturgies of repentance and their role in constituting the self as a moral I, we therefore need to detour into another exercise in Textual Reasoning.

The Retention and Transformation of the Institution of Sacrifice

In Cohen's discussion of the sacrificial cult, he acknowledges that the sacrificial cult began in paganism as an attempt to "appease" the gods "whose hatred and envy one fears" (*RR*, 179). In early Israelite religion, the cult's function was to expiate collective guilt that accrued to children and the whole community on account of the sins of their parents. Cohen refers to the Day of Atonement in ancient Israel as a collective "feast for purification and purgation of sin" (*RR*, 216). Sacrifice is, then, a desperate attempt to deal with a predetermined collective tragic fate rather than immoral acts of individuals.

Given this, there is a question of whether or not sacrifice is serviceable for a modern neo-Kantian ethics that is built on the free choices of autonomous selves. Yet Cohen argues that the prophets "transformed the inward meaning" of sacrifice (*RR*, 174). This transformation is indicative not only of the prophets' attitudes toward the "old institution" (*RR*, 175) of sacrifice but of Cohen's attitude toward Judaism. This approach eschews outright rejection and involves a combination of criticism, retrieval, and transformation that preserves continuity with the traditions of the past. Cohen presents the general issue clearly: "Everywhere the question arises of whether the old idea one fights in a traditional institution should be entirely rejected and eliminated or whether it is the case that a new idea seeks a reconciliation with the old institution"

(*RR*, 174–75). Cohen places continuity with traditional institutions as a "methodological signpost" (*RR*, 177) that represents a deep faithfulness with monotheism itself. At the same time, he does not shrink from what he calls the imperative of the "principle of development" (*RR*, 177). Thus, in advance of the postcritical method of Textual Reasoning, Cohen calls for a dialogue of "reciprocal effect" between traditional institutions and their development toward an enlightened monotheism. Here, we see an illustration of Zank's thesis that Versöhnung or "reconciliation" can be seen as the overarching theme of Cohen's thought.

Ezekiel's Breakthrough

For Cohen, the real hero of the battle against the regressive aspects of the institution of sacrifice that at once preserves and develops the institution is the prophet Ezekiel. All of the prophets criticized the abuses of the cult of sacrifice, but Ezekiel was first to break from the old purpose of expiating the guilt of the fathers to focus on the sins of the individual. In a common move of hermeneutical philosophy, Cohen asks contemporary Jews to place themselves in the position of Ezekiel when he performed his bold interpretive task.

> We at once put ourselves before the historical problem which confronted Ezekiel and his successors. . . . Is there really only one way to fight sacrifice, which is to reject it entirely? Or could one conceive of a fight against sacrifice that strives to transform its inward meaning? And would this kind of criticism and reformation still preserve the prophetic spirit? (*RR*, 174)

The breakthrough that Ezekiel makes is found in his famous chapter 18:

> What shall you mean, that you use this proverb in the land of Israel saying that fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, says the Eternal God, you shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine; the soul that sins, it shall die (Ezek. 18:2–4). . . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father with him, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. (Ezek. 18:20)

With this breakthrough, the biblical individual and her responsibility for herself is born. Beyond this, however, Ezekiel outlines a way for the wayward individual to remake herself and return to God. This is through a "turn" (*shuv*) toward God; and this turning provides the rudiments of the remade institution of sacrifice as a vehicle of repentance "*t'shuva*" and atonement for the individual: "But if the wicked turn from all his sins that he has committed . . . he shall surely live not die" (Ezek. 18:21). Ezekiel's innovation for the individual

character, however, does not stop here. For the notion of "turning" means that human character is always a task and never set. The righteous, too, can turn away from the good, and the consequences of their actions will also be noticed by God: "When the righteous turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity . . . none of his righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered" (Ezek. 18:24).

This notion of the moral individual as an endless task is, as I suggested earlier, a hallmark of Cohen's notion of the moral self. It means that the human has an immense degree of freedom to create for himself "a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. 18:31), but it also means that there is a moral responsibility that is infinite. Cohen points out that the implication of Ezekiel's breakthrough is that a new conception of the human being has been forged:

> Thus, the new man is born, in this way the individual becomes the I. Sin cannot prescribe one's way of life. A turning away from the way of sin is possible. Man can become a new man. *This possibility of self-transformation makes the individual an I.* Through his own sin, man first becomes an individual. Through the possibility of turning away from sin, however, the sinful individual becomes the free I. (*RR*, 193, italics in original)

Cohen has performed a magnificent work of neo-Kantian interpretation that is a kind of "reconciliation" or "repair" of Israelite traditions of sacrifice and modern ethics. Yet, at this point, Cohen still has produced a fairly abstract and unliturgical method for the creation of the moral I. The self is presented as an isolated heroic individual carving out her path to freedom by her own will. However, this may be regarded as only an overall sketch of the goal of the process. In the remainder of chapter 11, "Atonement," and chapter 12, "The Day of Atonement," Cohen is clear that this moral work cannot be accomplished by the individual alone. The congregation, the priest, the liturgy of atonement, and God are all necessary to achieve the process of moral self-creation.

Cohen returns to the context of the public institution of the court and the function that the legal procedure of confession has for helping release the criminal from guilt. However, the sins he speaks of in relation to the moral I are neither criminal nor civil crimes (*RR*, 217). Rather, the sins that the rituals of atonement address arise from guilt for things not done, or minor "unwitting" or "unintentional sins," which the Torah and later tradition calls *shegagah* (Lev. 5:8).[33]

The most egregious sins against other persons require criminal procedures, and lesser sins require the self's seeking forgiveness from the injured party.[34] These sins cannot be absolved by liturgy. But the category of sins committed shegagah still bothers the conscience and detracts from the moral integrity of the self. Therefore, they must be addressed. Cohen argues that the

public institution that provides the individual with the tools of expiation is "divine worship" held in the context of the larger congregation. Cohen describes the public institution of transformed sacrifice and worship as a "moral institution" whose specific task is to aid the individual in her moral work:

> This constantly new beginning must be joined to a public institution; it cannot be actualized merely in the silence and secrecy of the human heart. It is the meaning of all moral institutions that they support the individual in his moral work. This, indeed, is also the meaning of the legal formulations, that they formulate the idea of the will, and through this help man to achieve the actuality of action. A similar actuality is to be demanded from confession and to be sought in a public institution. This desire is satisfied by divine worship. (*RR*, 196)

The Liturgy of Atonement and the Moral Education of the Will

After Ezekiel's innovations in the sixth century BCE, the development of the Day of Atonement liturgy toward present-day practices was long and complex, and Cohen gives us little of the historical process of this development. Rather, Cohen reads back into the ancient Israelite liturgies his own neo-Kantian sense of the moral meaning of the Day of Atonement. Cohen's anachronistic and idealized presentation of the ancient Israelite liturgy might seem grating to historical sensibilities, but, again, I see his reading as less a historical presentation of the ancient liturgy and more an interpretation for his contemporary audience.

With Cohen's ethical and rational presuppositions in mind, I see the objectives of his creative interpretation to first, follow the rational tradition in Jewish philosophy and stress the centrality of the human will as opposed to divine Hesed, mercy, in the moral purification of the self. The second objective is to carve out a role for sacrificial institutions and laws, the congregation, and public figures (like the ancient priest or present-day rabbi or cantor) in the self-purification and moralizing process. In addition, Cohen endeavors to spell out the place of God in this process. Cohen takes a position contrary to that of many modern Jewish liturgists and liberal Jews who believe that sacrifice "hindered and impaired" the ethical goals of monotheism and therefore needed to be expunged from all Jewish liturgy.[35] Cohen argues, instead, that the institution of sacrifice led to a "deepening of monotheism" (*RR*, 198).

In reclaiming a positive moral role for the institution of sacrifice, Cohen, as I already suggested, must reinterpret it, repairing and qualifying its function. The trick for him is to stress that the function of the institution of sacrifice is a "support" to the moral work of the individual and not a substitute for that work. Israelite sacrifice and its transformation into the Yom Kippur

liturgy must, in Cohen's words, help initiate a "self-sanctification" of the individual I in which the "autonomy of the will must remain inviolably in power" (*RR*, 202). Thus, the priest's activities reported in the liturgy—slaughtering the animal, sprinkling the altar with blood, sending the *Azazel*, the "scapegoat," into the wilderness—become "symbolic acts" (*RR*, 198) that help dramatize the activity of expiation of sin, which the individual must undergo. The *Cohen Gadol*, the high priest, after the process of purification that renders him fit to perform the Yom Kippur rituals, becomes something of a model of atonement. Cohen tells us that the "priest represents, symbolically, the purification, which the individual has to accomplish in himself" (*RR*, 200). Furthermore, Cohen argues that the congregation plays a crucial role in the process of self-purification. The individual "needs the congregation" (*RR*, 199) for the act of self-purification. The self-purification "has its peak" in the public "speech act" of the *vidui*, the confession of sins. The "peak" that is reached in the vidui, however, is not an end but, rather, the middle of a process of repentance that has a number of steps. These steps culminate in Ezekiel's directive, "Make you a new heart and new spirit" (18:31). To argue for the thoroughgoing nature of this self-transformation, Cohen quotes Jeremiah: "Let us search and try our ways, and return to Thee" (Lam. 3:40). The reference to "our ways," Cohen suggests, is a directive to address our "old way of life" (*RR*, 203), the entire gestalt of how we have been living in the world—the "whole framework of human life" (*RR*, 205).

It is not clear why Cohen does not refer directly to Maimonides's delineation of the steps of repentance from his *Hilhot Teshuva*, his "Laws of Repentance."[36] Yet Maimonides's description of the procedure for repentance shines clearly through Cohen's discussion of the tasks of repentance. Like the Laws of Repentance, Cohen's process of "self-sanctification" proceeds through a series of steps from showing remorse to a full-fledged self-transformation.

> Repentance is *self-sanctification*. Everything that can be meant by remorse, turning to the depths of the self and examining the entire way of life and finally, the turning away and the returning and creating of a new way of all, all this is brought together in self-sanctification. It contains the power and the direction in which repentance must employ itself for the new creation of the true I. (*RR*, 205)

Repentance "before God"

Cohen states that the entire process of symbolic sacrifice by the priests, the public confession, and steps of self-sanctification all take place in relation to God. When he describes this process, however, he likes to use the phrase from Leviticus 13:30 that the process takes place *lifnei Adonai*, "before God," to defeat any suggestion that God causes the sanctification and to emphasize the central

role of the human will. Cohen suggests that God be understood as the "moral archetype" for humans. As a moral archetype, the process of *imitatio deo* then becomes the ultimate "goal" for the individual. God becomes "the ideal" for the penitent; and this means that she must know that her process is an "infinite task" (*RR*, 207) that is never finally fulfilled. Setting forth on the process of self-sanctification before God means that any new creation of the "true I" that is accomplished only issues in "the bliss of a moment" (*RR*, 204). But this is also a moment that can be "repeated unceasingly." The infinite nature of the task of ethical self-transformation means that God stands at the end of the process as a goal as opposed to at the beginning of the process as the cause of the process. Thus, Cohen tells us that "God's entire relation to man is assigned to the domain of teleology, which is different from all causality" (*RR*, 214).

The Liturgical Self

We might now want to pause to recollect the significance of Cohen's view of the self and the creation of the individual as a moral I for contemporary views of the self. Cohen's immediate dialogue partner is Kant, and he is trying to free the self from an abstract portrait in which individual reason, moral conscience, and moral agency are relatively unproblematic. This portrait includes elements that are at once philosophic and Protestant. In the same way that Cohen, as neo-Kantian, tries to "externalize" Kant's categories of understanding in social processes of philosophy and science, he externalizes Kant's moral conscience in social processes of philosophy and law. Cohen's model of the self then introduces external standards that intervene between the self and itself as moral I, and between the self and the other. Thus Cohen develops a kind of triadic relation that includes the self, God/Divine Law, and the other. This follows a Jewish model in which morality is determined by divine commands and halakhah mediates all moral relationships. Jewish law, in this model, is not Kant's heteronymous law that renders the self passive and obedient and destroys moral autonomy. Rather, Jewish law is both part of and a support and guide for the autonomous self. However, the standards of divine law are both absolute and ideal, and therefore the self often feels inadequate and guilty in the face of them. The self can easily then become morally paralyzed by feelings of guilt and sin. At this point, social liturgies of repentance offer a process through which the sense of moral integrity is restored and new energies for ethical action are made available. Through this process in which the community and God participate, the self makes itself into an "I." Because the self "makes itself" an I, because the self sees that it has the power and agency to transform itself into a moral being, the self gains confidence in its own moral powers and is therefore now adequate to the challenge of moral action. This is what Cohen means when he says that "self-transformation

makes the individual an I." Yet because the self achieves moral selfhood in the context of a social liturgy with particular signs and behaviors and with the assistance and participation of the community, this self also becomes a particular individual. Through Jewish liturgy, the self therefore becomes a "Jewish self" as well as a moral self. The liturgical process simultaneously establishes the I as a Jew—that is, it secures Jewish identity—and pushes this individual Jew to act for the non-Jewish other.

Given the formative role that liturgy takes in the constitution of the self as moral Jewish "I" we can say that Cohen provides us with the rudiments of a "liturgical selfhood." This is a self that exists in and through a liturgical process. Because the moral I is both an endless and infinite process, it does not really exist in a stable sense. To put this in the strongest terms: *outside of liturgical performance, there is no moral I*. Yet within the liturgy, the moral I does exist. This is why the self must continually participate in liturgies of atonement. This is why liturgy is enacted daily. Although Cohen clearly focuses on the liturgies of the Day of Atonement, he suggests that atonement and repentance is a central feature and model for all Jewish liturgy. Cohen makes this obvious in *Religion of Reason* in chapter 17, which is titled "Prayer." We can see elements of atonement and repentance throughout the daily morning service. For just a few examples, note the repetition of the Akedah (the binding of Isaac) story, with references to the merit of Abraham for forgiveness of sins; the *Amidah* or standing prayer with its prayer for forgiveness; and the *Tahanun* (supplication) section of the morning service.

The liturgical nature of moral selfhood suggests that moral selfhood is an achievement, a product that has to be continually worked upon, exercised, and habituated throughout a lifetime. The central issue, then, is not only expiation of guilt but the formation of moral character. If we see Cohen's moral Jewish self as daily and life achievement, we begin to see less of the Kantian and more of the Aristotelian and Maimonidean elements in Cohen's self.[37] Cohen, himself, wanted to distinguish his "Jewish" notion of virtue, which makes a distinction between morality and virtue, from Greek Platonic and Aristotelian notions that collapse morality into virtue (*RR*, 401–4). In Kantian fashion, he is especially critical of the eudemonistic quality of Aristotle's character ethics and prefers a more ascetic form in which morality as "the idea of the good" is different from virtue as practice. Yet, despite Cohen's own attempts to make his distinctions, there is an affinity between the liturgical self and a character ethics. The virtue and character dimension is underscored by the fact that liturgy enters to guide and mold the self through daily practices and remembrances. Liturgy then helps constitute a certain type of person, a "character" with certain dispositions and virtues. Cohen outlines his version of the Jewish moral virtues in the last chapters of *Religion of Reason*. These include "truth," "justice," "courage, "faithfulness," and "peace."

The Liturgical Self, Postliberalism, and Postmodernism

What Cohen's liturgical self suggests is that in order for the goal of a universal philosophical ethics to succeed, it needs to ground the isolated modern self in her community. This is true for the Jew and by extension it would also be true for the Christian, the Muslim, and others. For these communities all have the liturgical resources that are needed for the constitutions of the moral self. This claim, which is central to the postliberal position, is opposed to the tenor of modern enlightenment culture and religious liberalism. For the modern liberal view is that people need to shed themselves of their particular ethnic, religious, and national identities in order to enter into relations with those "others" whom they will meet in the cosmopolitan and secular city. The postliberal critique of this would be that if all people shed their individual identities there would no longer be any meaning to otherness. Indeed, all would appear the same. Cohen's model for the moral self as a liturgical self suggests that the cultural–linguistic systems of religions, specifically, of the monotheistic religions, are not necessarily impediments to the liberal humanitarian goals. When reinterpreted, these religious systems can be vehicles to, instead of barriers against, the fulfillment of humanitarian goals. At the same time, Cohen's argument for the need to support the moral I in the face of the challenges of serving the other is an important corrective to Levinasian exclusive focus on the other. By focusing on the ethical obligations of the self both to the other as Du and to the self, Cohen supplies us with a balanced ethical discussion of both sides of the ethical equation. Cohen's movement back to the I after establishing the need to attend to the other can, indeed, be used as a critique of Levinasian ethics for abandoning the I.[38] Cohen shows that attention to the I is necessary for the sake of the other! For the other, precisely in her "otherness" and in the poverty and abuse that attends otherness, is dependent upon the actions of an ethical self to heal her. Indeed, a debilitated self will not even be able to stand up for itself and thus will be useless to both other and self.

Since Levinas, we have seen an expansion of the ethics of the other to an aesthetics and philosophy of "alterity" in the writings of literary critics and philosophers of postmodernism. This has opened a vacuum that has sucked into itself all subjectivity, moral autonomy, and philosophical and ethical norms. Since Roland Barthes declared "the death of the author," critics like Fredrick Jameson have taken it as given, a presupposition of the postmodern condition, that the "subject has disappeared," that "the norm itself is eclipsed," that there is an "absence of any great collective project."[39]

Ihad Hassan has given us a long list of themes, terms, and tropes to define postmodernism. This list reads like cultural wasteland—"Disjunction," "Exhaustion," "Absence," "Dispersal," "Indeterminacy."[40] Although the initial

goal of postmodernism was to continue the traditions of Western ethics, philosophy, and aesthetics in a series of radical critiques of the abuses of modernity, the unintended consequence of this movement has been to undermine the very project of meaning making. Thus, all attempts to reconstruct communal identities, norms, and ethical systems are criticized as at best "naïve" or "ironic" or at worst "authoritarian," "exclusive," or "violent." The consequence of this is that the "great collective project" of repairing modernity has become impossible. What Cohen's liturgical self suggests is that human selfhood depends upon the social processes that support it. And human selfhood at its highest level, that is, moral selfhood, requires religious social processes to support, purify, reinvigorate, and sustain it. What Cohen's liturgical self suggests is that moral selfhood is possible; but that it takes a cultural–linguistic system, a system of moral goodness and faith, even a theology of the one God to support such a self.

Addendum: From Liturgical Selfhood to the Liturgical Community

Although the liturgies of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism function to support the moral Jewish self, they do not end in personal selfhood. Clearly, the scope is larger than that. As liturgies are performed by the entire community they also address the needs of the larger community and the larger world. Here, liturgy is about issues of redemption and Messianism.

In his discussions on prayer in chapter 17, Cohen describes how prayer originates in (even as it comes to replace) the Israelite institutions of sacrifice and prophecy. Cohen uses the word "prayer," *Das Gebet*, to describe this phenomenon, but as a collective institutional expression, he could have used the term we have adopted, "liturgy." Following the collective institutions of sacrifice and prophecy, prayer (or liturgy) carries through with the both the purifying and atoning power of sacrifice and the social morality of the prophets (*RR*, 371).

The self-examination and self-purification that the liturgy of Yom Kippur initiates does not end the realm of the individual. The purified and atoned individual cannot remain as a single one and in the white purity of the Yom Kippur liturgy. The individual I, created by the liturgy, is quickly moved "in symbolic transference" to become a representative of the purified community Israel. The I as Israel must then move out of the synagogue and into the world to work for its redemption. The suffering that repentance, fasting, and atonement require the individual to undergo is an idealized and symbolic liturgical suffering that is, in its turn, transferred to the suffering in the world, which Israel undergoes for the sake of humankind. Therefore, Cohen sees Yom Kippur as a process of educating the self, the community, and Israel for "the great calling that has been allotted to them by their unique God" (*RR*, 235).

Yom Kippur then becomes a "symbol for the redemption of mankind" (*RR*, 235). In this way, the liturgical moment becomes an interlude that is preceded and succeeded by involvement in the struggle for the infinite work for redemption that must be realized in the world and in history. For this reason, Cohen follows his chapter on Yom Kippur with a chapter on the prophetic "Idea of the Messiah and Mankind." Here he outlines the significance of the ideals portrayed in the Yom Kippur liturgy and the work of the moral individual for the alleviation of suffering in the world and the proclamation of the universal message of the unique God for all of humankind.

Cohen argues that prayer functions to transform the longing and love for God into a love for the congregation (*RR*, 378). In the public liturgical moment, Cohen says, "Differences between individuals become reconciled and all men are equal before God" (*RR*, 388). This suggests that, in liturgical acts, people practice the ideal relations of brotherhood and sisterhood. In liturgy, people not only imagine ideal relations but get to act them out in a kind of theater of the ideal.

Cohen follows this suggestion with perhaps his boldest assertion for the power of liturgy. For he argues that prayer has the ability to offer "a common place," the synagogue, and a "common language" that "exceeds all the means of knowledge" (*RR*, 388) in philosophy. Liturgical or public prayer exceeds philosophical knowledge because it moves the individual in successive stages from the personal, to the particular collective of the people Israel, and then to universal humanity. Liturgical prayer opens the individual to the broader collective and universal concerns through the incorporation of the concepts and images of prophetic Messianism.

Cohen argues that we see this movement throughout the Jewish service but particularly in the concluding *Aleinu* prayer that looks toward the establishment of the "Kingdom of God." Here the earthly concerns of the individual receive their proper context by being placed "beside the heavenly goal" (*RR*, 388). In the Aleinu, the establishment of the congregation Israel is placed as a first step that leads to the future messianic fulfillment for universal humanity (*RR*, 385).

In the end of his chapter on prayer, Cohen makes it clear that prayer not only serves the function of the "idealization of the individual" (*RR*, 399) but also gives the entire community an experience or actualization of that idealization. What the idealization of the human being means for Cohen is a ritual process of transformation through which the ideals of Ethical Monotheism are moved from the realm of the infinite and the ideal to the real in human lives.

In prayer's ability to transform consciousness, it displays a moral power beyond ethics and philosophy. For where ethics can only define God as "guarantor of morality" and postulate ethical ideas, prayer conveys "trust" in God and "confidence" in the fulfillment of the messianic ideal. In its ability to convey trust and confidence, Cohen asserts that prayer constitutes the "universal

language of humanity." He writes, "Ethics defines its God to itself as the guarantor of morality on earth, but beyond the definition, beyond postulating this idea, its means fail. The peculiar contribution of religion to the ethical idea of God is the trust in God, the confidence in the messianic fulfillment of this idea. Thus prayer, as the language of the correlation of man and God, becomes the voice of Messianism, and therefore the universal language of humanity" (*RR*, 398).

Whether or not we follow Cohen to his triumphalist conclusion, I believe he has made a compelling case for the philosophical and moral power of prayer and liturgy. This case is carried forward in Rosenzweig's thought with an appreciation for Christian liturgy as well, and it is, I believe, one of the challenges of contemporary Jewish philosophies of liturgy to recognize the power of Islamic liturgies too. For the dawn of the messianic era and the meaning of monotheistic Messianism will be more clearly seen when Jews, Christians, and Muslims work together for the redemption of the world.

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3

Liturgical Time

Franz Rosenzweig's "Star of Redemption"

With Franz Rosenzweig's *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1923), *The Star of Redemption*,[1] published just four years after Cohen's *Religion of Reason*, we have a "sea-change" in Jewish philosophy. *The Star* represents a serious departure from foundational and idealist Jewish philosophy. It is written in the language and style of German Neo-Romanticism[2] and Existentialism. Yet it cannot be limited to these movements because it is deeply critical of them and seeks to move beyond them toward a "New Thinking" (see *NT* in Abbreviations). This new thinking is to be marked by opening philosophy to theology, mysticism, art, language, and temporality. I share with Robert Gibbs his sense that Rosenzweig's thinking has affinities with trends in postmodernism,[3] but I would offer that "post-liberalism" may provide a richer theoretical matrix to understand the significance of Rosenzweig's *Star* for today. This means that Rosenzweig's work can be seen as a precursor to attempts to view religion as a "cultural–linguistic system" in which liturgy has a central role. Lindbeck's model of religion invites us to consider part 3 of the *Star* as Rosenzweig's endeavor to map out the liturgical year as its own kind of system. And I will argue that this liturgical system is directed to altering and deepening our sense of time.

Much of the framework for the *Star* was written from the Eastern front of the First World War, and the book carries the radical shock and disappointment in the doctrines of political liberalism, humanism, and progress that the Great War brought to many European intellectuals. This disappointment and disillusionment with humanism, with Enlightenment faith in reason, in politics, and in history,

distinguish Rosenzweig's work from Cohen's idealist project. This disillusionment leads Rosenzweig to embrace rabbinic Judaism's more somber exilic view of human nature and history, and it also turns Rosenzweig to Jewish texts and liturgies in far more breadth and depth than we see in Cohen. Instead of initiating a correlation between Jewish texts and liturgies and Enlightenment reason, Rosenzweig is more concerned with lifting out the indigenous Jewish textual and liturgical forms of reasoning as an "*Organonstellung*" (*Stern*, 327), as a Jewish "system of reasoning." Having become disillusioned with the promises and temporality of modernity, Rosenzweig turns to the alternative forms of time and redemption available in Jewish liturgy and seeks to formulate notions of time that we often associate with myth. Although, out of respect for Jewish notions of history, he develops a complex temporality in which mythical and historical notions of time interpenetrate. In addition, he seeks a way of speaking about the unity of the three tenses and also addresses eternal time. In seeking a full accounting of the various dimensions of temporality, Rosenzweig recalls Augustine's articulations of the aporias of time as he expressed them in his *Confessions*. In this chapter, I present Franz Rosenzweig's liturgical reasoning as an answer to Augustine's problematic of temporality and the exacerbation of this problematic in the temporality of modernity.[4] Through liturgy, time is given the depth of the relived past and the drama of an anticipated and proleptically experienced future. Through liturgy, time is stopped, bent, and formed into a spiral that travels unceasingly toward redemptive fulfillment.

I have already mentioned how both scripture and liturgy presuppose a relationship between God, word, and world. Mendelssohn and other early-Enlightenment figures attempt to hold onto this relationship by reinterpreting Western religion in the terms of Enlightenment philosophy, aesthetics, and politics. Although this enterprise had great power and positive consequences for European society in its day, much of this attempt appears, now, as a process of emptying out religious content into modern culture. Hermann Cohen, who is probably the last of the Jewish Enlightenment philosophers, tried to hold onto the God–word–world unity by directing Enlightenment thought through Jewish texts and liturgies as through a prism. This "colored" Enlightenment culture in Jewish terms and allowed Judaism and the Enlightenment to interact in a mutually critical and enriching fashion. After the Great War, many intellectuals simply gave up on the old unity God–word–world and they started a trend of turning inward, away from the world and the political sphere, toward the personal dimension of human experience and toward a supra-rational mysticism, aesthetics, and spirituality. Rosenzweig is again both part of this movement and critical of it. This means that despite his quest for Jewish inwardness and eternal time, Rosenzweig attempts to continue Western traditions of rationality and sociality, and he even charts a route from personal inwardness back out to the world.

In part 1 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig tries not only to formulate a notion of the world but also a new way of conceiving the old unity God–word–world. Reestablishing this unity is crucial because it allows him to reconstitute the context for scripture and liturgy. To do this, Rosenzweig establishes not one triad but two. Rosenzweig's first triad consists of the elements God–world–human and word then is expanded into a theological triad—creation, revelation, and redemption. Rosenzweig presents these two triads in the form of two triangles configured one over the other in the manner of the Jewish Star of David.

In turning to his triad of theological concepts, Rosenzweig considers the alternate rational and public Western discourse to philosophy. Theology, then, infuses Rosenzweig's existentialism and mysticism with a rational discourse. In his most daring move, however, Rosenzweig relies on Christianity to link the Jews as an "eternal people" to the world. In using Christianity to complete Judaism, Rosenzweig anticipates contemporary attempts by the Society of Scriptural Reasoning to construct Jewish, Christian, and Muslim thought in a multidirectional dialogue where each cultural–linguistic system interacts with the other through a web of relationships.

In this chapter, I will first attend to Rosenzweig's attempt to reestablish the relationship God–word–world. I will then try to show liturgy to be a form of reasoning about time that provides answers to the age-old aporias that Augustine exposed in his *Confessions*. This will involve us in an interpretation of parts 1 and 2 of the *Star*, in which I highlight Rosenzweig's "Textual Reasonings" on select passages in the *Tanakh*. In the second part of this chapter, I focus specifically on part 3 of the *Star* and Rosenzweig's liturgical reasoning with the synagogue rituals and prayers found in Shabbat, the three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot and in the high holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I conclude with Rosenzweig's bold Jewish theology of Christianity and with a discussion of the promise of "scriptural reasoning."

God–World–Human

Rosenzweig's strategy in reconstructing the God–word–world relation is to take out the Divine Word at first and expand the God–world relation to include the human. He sees these three as the primary elements of Western thought up to Hegel and he views all previous ways of handling these elements as flawed. The previous philosophical attempts are flawed because they do not really seek the three elements in their uniqueness but, rather, they attempt to construct a unity in which the elements are dissolved into thought. Philosophy "from Iona to Jena" has proceeded on the assumption that thought can comprehend being. It has tried to find some essence—be it water, substance, or reason—into which all multiplicity could be dissolved. Philosophy is thought

about "origins" that seeks a beginning, a foundation, out of which all that exists springs. The culmination of this type of philosophy is found in Hegelian idealism, where a rational "All" is constructed that takes everything up in it. Science also follows this reductive path as it tries to collapse the three elements into one by suggesting that God and human can be reduced to the material world. Rosenzweig begins the *Star* with an attempt to deliver God, world, and human from the "all" of philosophy and the materialism of science to their primal state as "unknown" and therefore "naughts" or nothings. Rosenzweig begins not with one origin but with three unknowable somethings. These "somethings" will eventually become known, but knowledge of them will result from their relationship to one another. And these relationships will be disclosed not in the beginning but in time and human experience, in scripture and in liturgy. This means that knowledge of the primal elements is a process of reading back from consequences and fruits rather than deducing from first principles or rational intuitions.

For Rosenzweig, the "new thinking" is a kind of reflective exercise that moves backward after experience, collective performance, and language, rather than forward. He illustrates this through the metaphor of a packed suitcase. Reality, as we receive it, is already "packed." Experience is a matter of "unpacking" the suitcase, and we come to know its contents in the reverse order of its packing. Thus, we see first what was packed last, and we will only see what was packed first, our origins, at the end.

Another favorite metaphor of Rosenzweig's is adopted from the kabalistic notion of contracting and unfolding. Lurianic Kabbalah attempts to explain God's freedom and distinctness from creation with the notion of the *tsitsum*, the contraction.[5] Creation results from the indeterminate moment when God freely contracts into himself, creating an empty space into which the creating light issues in the world. Creation is an ongoing process of contraction into particularities of matter, into living things, and an expansion back into the primal light through dissolution and death.[6]

The process of contraction for the sake of affirmation and unfolding becomes a methodological leitmotif that we see repeated throughout the *Star*. Thus, the world and the human being are created as separate entities with their own unique natures. The separateness and unique definitions of the natures of the world and humans are contractions into definite forms. Revelation may be seen as both a contraction of God into the confines of a relationship with humans and also a manifestation in the form of scripture.[7]

In part I of the *Star*, Rosenzweig employs Cohen's infinitesimal logic, the binaries of negation, "nay," and affirmation, "yea"; and mathematical symbols (A – B =) to illustrate what he calls the "protocosmos" of the primal elements. Part I is somewhat like the beginning of Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* and Cohen's *Religion of Reason* in that Rosenzweig speaks in the language and terms of

philosophy and science. Yet the crucial difference here is that, whereas Mendelssohn and Cohen believe that philosophy and science can produce real knowledge of God, world, and human, Rosenzweig has given up on that foundational belief and uses philosophy and science to produce a strictly hypothetical knowledge and to establish the mere possibility of that knowledge.[8] Part 1 of the *Star* yields what Rosenzweig calls the "ever-enduring protocosmos" (*Star*, 1985, 2), and he argues that in it we have the "dark-mute hidden presuppositions" (*NT*, 90) of the realities with which we live. The purpose of part 1 is twofold. First, it has a negative purpose, to clear away the illusions of the idealists who claim to know too much about the three elements God–world–human. It also serves to defeat the claims of Kantians, secularists, and existentialists, who claim that there is nothing to know or that knowledge of God, world, and human, as living and ensouled entities, is impossible. The second, positive, purpose of part 1 of the *Star* is to prepare the way for the reentrance of the word through the theological notions of creation, revelation, and redemption that will come in parts 2 and 3. When the word reenters the God–world–human axis, this makes the presupposition of scripture plausible. And with this, Judaism and Christianity are once again relevant, and redemption, salvation, and eternity open to he and she who seek and practice.

Part 1: Augustine's Temporal Aporias and Rosenzweig's *Star*

Augustine begins book 11 of his *Confessions* with a query about God's eternity and our temporality: "Lord, since eternity is Yours, are You ignorant of what I say to you? Or do You see in time, what passes in time?"[9] This is a question that not only inquires into God's relation to humans as temporal beings but begs the question of the human relation to God as an eternal being and to the human relation to eternity. Without fully answering these questions, Augustine moves further in his thoughts about temporality and makes his reader realize that as difficult as it is to contemplate eternity, we are also far from comprehending what we mean by time. He asks, "What, then, is time? If no one asks me I know; If I wish to explain it to one that asks, I know not."[10] Augustine describes the reality of time as a moment that passes before humans can apprehend it. The present moment passes in an instant into the past. And the past is irretrievable precisely because it is past. The future that lies in front of us includes infinite possibilities that have not yet happened, so the future, too, is beyond our grasp. And if the immediate past and future are not enough to befuddle us, we have no knowledge of our own origins, our birth, and we equally can have no knowledge of our death and afterlife. This problem is magnified when we think of the ultimate origins of all life and its final end.

Rosenzweig and the Time of Modernity

Added to the problematic of time as Augustine articulates it is the unique series of transformations in our conception of time that accompanies the modern world and modern science. Along with the transformed understandings of the nature of the solar system and the physical laws of nature come new conceptions of time. The Copernican revolution, the decline of myth, the ascendancy of secular history, brings with it the scientific notion of time as a linear string of discreet and unique moments. Secular time significantly narrows the range of temporal qualities to the monotony of clock time. In secular time, the sun and moon and the cycles of nature that they rule become irrelevant to human lives. In secular time, there are no divine interruptions. There is no return to earlier time and no experience of future time, no stopping of time, no purification of time. There is no new beginning and final end. It is one damn moment after the other.

Thus, while increasing our knowledge of the cosmic processes that rule time, and by increasing our ability to measure and organize time, modernity has not really solved the questions and aporias of time that Augustine articulated. Indeed, we can say that modernity has exaggerated the problematic of temporarily. We are not only still faced with Augustine's experience of time as a fleeting ungraspable present moment that is destined to be encased in an irretrievable past, but there seems to be no way out of the epistemological and existential dilemmas that our modern scientific notions of time cause. We are left with the time of machines and electronic clocks and are robbed of the time of people—the time of relationships, the time of epic-making events, the hope for a transformed and redeemed future, and a time after the time of death.

The Star of Redemption begins with the words "*Vom Tode*"; it begins with death. It thereby begins with the contemplation of the end of time for humans. In Rosenzweig's discussion of death, at the beginning of the *Star*,[11] he further develops the existential problematic that lies at the core of Augustine's reflections on time. Time bothers humans because they are aware that time comes to an end for them; time ends for humans in death. Death represents the essence of humanity; its ephemeral characteristic, its ceaseless processes of change and becoming, its journey into nothingness, into naught. Another way of saying this is that the essence and enemy of humanity is its temporality. But if life is temporal and fleeting, there are certain "forms" of thought and action that serve to make time more friendly. Indeed, time can be the friend of the human being, and one might say that the main purpose of scripture and liturgy is to tame and befriend time. In his *Das Neue Denken* ("The New Thinking"), Rosenzweig suggests just this. Embracing our temporality is the first step in befriending time. Indeed, embracing our temporality becomes not only the key to overcoming the fear of death but also provides the gate that opens to a new

form of thinking, a form that rescues thought from the old philosophy and forges a new reliance upon forms of thinking that go beyond philosophy to the literary and aesthetic forms of speech and dialogue, and to scripture and liturgy. Rosenzweig calls his new thinking "*erfahrende Philosophie*" (ND, 1984, 144), or "experiential philosophy." And with this term, he specifically wants to "take time seriously" (*NT*, 87). For thought to take time seriously means to take experience and the mysterious and unpredictable moment of the present seriously. Rosenzweig argues that the way we can take the present moment seriously is by taking the central medium of communication of the moment seriously, and that is speech. Therefore, he also refers to his new thinking as "*Sprachdenken*" ("speech-thinking").

Now, we could imagine that the new thinking, as temporal thinking, could occur as dialogue about philosophical subject matters between person and person, much like a Platonic dialogue. And we could also imagine a form of thought (and here I have Medieval scholasticism in mind), in which we engage the terms "creation," "revelation," and "redemption" as theological concepts or doctrines. But this clearly is not what Rosenzweig has in mind for his new thinking. As Buber has said in his dialogical version of the new thinking, dialogue is not thought that is "about" persons and God set in the third person. It is thinking that is addressed to persons and to God in the first person. It is thought that occurs "between an I and a Thou." For Rosenzweig, the best model for this type of thinking is provided in Jewish scripture and the prayer book. Thus, he confesses to us, "I received the new thinking in these old words, thus I have rendered it and thus I have passed it along" (*NT*, 92). The old words are the words of "the Jewish books" (*NT*, 92).

Because the new thinking is temporal and relational, its proper form of expression is narrative and lyric. Relationships between God, humans, and world, are experienced. They occur in events and unfold over the course [*Bahn*] of life. Experience, events, and temporal development cannot be captured in binary logic, but they can be captured in story and history, and that is precisely the language of the opening books of the Torah. However, heightened experience, experience of God, cannot be related in mere chronology, and so it adopts the forms of poetry and song. Thus, Rosenzweig must move to the biblical psalms and to liturgy.

Scripture and liturgy memorializes past events and allows the past to be relived as the present. But lest we think of the temporal events captured in scripture and liturgy as past events alone, Rosenzweig argues that the words of Jewish books "take part of the eternal youth of the word" (*NT*, 92). Thus, Torah is a temporal "form" that "does not pass away" (*NT*, 92). Torah works upon the tenses of the past, present, and future and transforms them into *unsichbargeheimen Quellen* (ND, 1984, 155) ("invisible-mystery sources") (*NT*, 93), each of which opens a window to eternity. So, Torah emerges from temporality to take on an eternal form, to produce "glimmering pictures onto heaven" (*NT*,

93). Those "pictures" of eternity then react upon time of reading Torah to transform and enrich it with a sense of eternality.

Creation: The Genesis of Time

> God spoke. That comes second. It is not the beginning. It is already the fulfillment, the audible fulfillment of the mute beginning. It is already the first miracle. The beginning is: God created. God created. This is what is new. Here, the shell of mystery breaks. Everything we knew about God till now has been only knowledge of a hidden God. . . . But God the creator is in the beginning. (*Star*, 123)

Rosenzweig begins book 1 of part 2 of the *Star* with the text of Genesis. He begins as a Jewish commentator and textual reasoner, with a difficulty in the text. Before God says, "*YiHi Or*" ("Let there be light!") in the third verse, there already appears to have been some sort of creation. For in the first verse, the text says, "*Bereshit bara Elohim et HaShamyim ve et HaAretz*" ("In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth").

Rosenzweig's commentary on Genesis 1 above follows from his attempt in part 1 to use philosophy to establish the primary elements God, world, human. They also follow an introduction to part 2 in which he introduces his notion of the miracle. Rosenzweig will use all of this to enter into a discussion of the creation of time and its tenses. These tenses will be correlated with the theological notions of creation, revelation and redemption. But to understand this correlation we must first understand Rosenzweig's view of the miracle.

The Miracle

In his introduction to part 2, Rosenzweig takes all of modern theology to task for giving up on miracles as the worn-out beliefs of "ancient man." Rosenzweig seeks to reinvigorate the notion of miracle since he sees it as crucial to all biblical theology. This includes the biblical view of God, world, and human, and the biblical notions of creation, revelation, and redemption. What the miracle is for Rosenzweig is neither the insertion of the supernatural into the natural realm nor some act of magic that occurs through the hand of the sorcerer or prophet but "a sign" that God, word, and world are connected, a sign of "God's Providence" (*Star*, 105). The miracle is a fulfillment of a prediction. It is a species of repetition in which what is promised by God is fulfilled in time. It is therefore already a way of taming time and quelling the fears that the unpredictability of

time gives rise to. The miracle, in its first stage, predicts that the future will take a certain path. And when, in the second stage, the path is followed and the prediction fulfilled, time receives a definite form, and its demons are disarmed. God's providence is realized and hope for eternal life takes root.

Rosenzweig sees "the first miracle" in the Bible in the opening lines of Genesis. Here, the phrase "In the beginning God created" becomes a harbinger or prediction of a second creation. And the second creation, God's saying "Let there be light," is a miraculous fulfillment of the prediction. The first creation, however, is a creation in two senses. The first creation is a creation of the condition for the possibility of creation. That condition is that God, as unknown element, God as infinite and eternal "something," emerges from the plenitude of his mute "hidden and mythical domain" to become creator. As Rosenzweig says in the quotation above, "God, created, this is what is new. . . . God, the creator is in the beginning." The self-creation of God as creator occurs, at a proto-time and in a proto-space, in a type of eternal time and space, that is before the second creation—the results of which humans can see and hear and experience. That first creation is the truly new thing after which everything that happens follows as fulfillment, as repetition, as "miracle." We know truly nothing about the first creation of God as creator, but Rosenzweig hypothesizes that it occurs through the logic of "yea and nay." As Lurianic Kabbalah suggests, and Friedrich Schelling proposes,[12] God negates his own infinitely dynamic essence and limits his infinite power through an act of tsitsum, or contraction or primal negation. This negation allows God to contract himself into the limits of a creator God and also makes an empty space in eternal time and space into which the space and time of the world can be placed. This creation is the affirmation, an archetypal "yea" that is heard six times in the refrain in Genesis, "It is Good."

But after the primal negation and affirmation of God as creator and the world as good, scripture adds a principle that is different from the binary yea and nay. Scripture, as I suggested above, proceeds in a narrative mode that follows the pattern of "promise and fulfillment" (*Star*, 123), the pattern of the miracle. Thus, Rosenzweig sees what every close reader of the Torah sees, and that is that the Torah is composed of a series of relatively simple themes that are continually repeated and varied. The theme of creation and re-creation is repeated after the first and second creations, with a re-creation in the flood narrative, in the patriarchal family, and then in the people, Israel. Other themes that are consistently repeated are the overthrowing of the principle of primogeniture, the barrenness of the matriarchs, the birth of twins, and exile and return. The theme that Rosenzweig focuses on, specifically, is that of prediction and fulfillment. Creation is predicted and fulfilled in the miracle of the creation of God as creator and the coming to be of the world. Creation, then becomes a prediction of a further miracle, the miracle of the revelation of God

to humans, and that miracle predicts yet another, the miracle of redemption of all humans and the world.

Thus, instead of following the binary logic of "nay and yea," of negation and affirmation, Torah seems to follow the aesthetical and musical logic of repetition. Here, a theme is introduced and then repeated multiple times, like a fugue, each with a slight variation, each with a further augmentation, each a new unfolding. Rosenzweig and Buber noticed that often the repeated theme is signaled in the Bible through the use of a repeated word or word-root. They called this the *Leitwort*, "lead, or key-word." Furthermore, they identified the "key-word" as a hermeneutical key to understanding the deep structure and meaning of scripture.[13]

The deep structure that the Leitwort points to has a theological dimension. I think that Rosenzweig is pointing to that dimension with his notion of the miracle. What the Leitwort means theologically is that just as scripture has a pattern, a design, and a shape that is set by God, human life follows a pattern and design that is ultimately controlled by the providential hand of God. What is more, the biblical word has a pattern that resonates deeply with the structure of the world and with the time of the world. From the perspective of biblical theology, biblical temporality is world temporality; biblical beginnings and ends mark the world with a beginning and end. Rosenzweig puts it this way in "The New Thinking." In the Bible, he writes, "There is shaped in the form of a replica the course of world time" (*NT*, 93).[14]

But let us return now to Genesis and to Rosenzweig's careful "grammatical" exegesis of it. In addition to the problem of the double creation of heaven and earth, Rosenzweig is perplexed by different forms of time and space in Genesis. In the phrase "In the Beginning God created" the past tense of the verb *barah*, "to create," appears. The first day also ends with the phrase "And there was evening and there was morning one day." Yet the markers of time, the sun and moon, do not appear until the fourth day. Also, God seems to place things in space in the first creation, but he does not make "an expanse" until the second day. And though God created earth on the first day, he does not gather up water to allow earth to appear until the third day.[15]

Rosenzweig is able to solve the problem of the double creation of time and space by noting that in the first creation, the Torah uses the definite article *the* heaven and *the* earth and the object marker *et* (Genesis 1:1), whereas, in the creation that occurs through God's word (1:8) the indefinite form "heaven," without use of object marker "*et*" is used. For Rosenzweig, this means that the first creation "anticipates creation in its entirety" (*Star*, 164). God creates space and time, things and qualities, the totality of the heavens and the earth, but in a dark and inchoate *tohu ve'vohu*, "unformed and void," manner.

> [The first creation] confers at one go upon that which was created creation in its entirety the form that is appropriate to it, just as it gives

> in advance to what was created the clear and active form of the past tense, and accordingly its reality as time to the Creation. . . . [T]he definite article here confers the form of space upon the objectivity of things in general, before any particular determination; exactly like the first determined and personal "he created," which fixes for that which is to come the temporal form of objectivity." (*Star*, 164)

In the language of Torah then, a general and an objective form of space and time precedes particularization in events and spaces. The time between God's eternal time and the time of present tense is compacted time, time without separate moments, time without the extension of past, present, and future, just as the space of the first creation is unextended space, space with no distance to allow for spaces.

Since this pre-time time is whole and complete, the best way to speak of it is in the past tense; it is a time that was. Rosenzweig writes, "God created. And the world, that which was created? It 'was,'" emphasizing that the creation before creation through speech was a creation of the world as objects, as things. In Buber's language, this is a world of "Its," the world as "It." And thus, contra Buber, Rosenzweig suggests that the creation "In the Beginning" was not the world of relations but the world of things. This fits with the title of first book of part 2 of the *Star*, "*Schöfung oder der immerwährende Grund der Dinge*," "Creation or The Everlasting Foundation of Things." With this title, Rosenzweig's target is surely not Buber but, rather, Hegel. Rosenzweig wants to assert that there is an "everlasting" quality of creation that will never be taken up, sublimated, or transformed through reason. There is also an everlasting quality about the "past" of creation that cannot be taken up, sublimated, or transformed by the dynamic processes of temporal evolution and development.

But if creation is mainly involved with a creation in the past, Rosenzweig does not thoroughly lock the processes of creation into the past. Indeed, the creation of the totality of space and time is also the creation of the possibility of the present and the future. Rosenzweig finds the present tense in the second creation of the world through speech. In the use of the present imperative, in the YiHi Or, "let there be light," Rosenzweig says that "God pronounces for the first time, amid all the instances of the past tense, the present tense" (*Star*, 166). This suggests that the second creation has within it something of the spontaneity and freedom and unpredictability that we associate with speech and with the present tense. The YiHi Or is not real speech, because there are no subjects, only objects, only "Its" in the world. There is no real speech, for God has no human subject to speak to. Yet again, the first use of the present tense is a harbinger, a prediction of the spontaneity of the present tense and the divine and human subjectivity that will come with the creation of the human, *HaAdam*.

In the creation of the human, Rosenzweig finds a further unfolding of the dimension of speech, presentness, and subjectivity in God's words "Let us make Adam." Rosenzweig does not turn to the notion of the royal "we" to solve the oddity of the one God speaking in plural. Rather, he suggests that God is speaking to himself, as a subject, as a "Thou"; and this then is a predictor of human subjectivity and the ability that God and humans will have to speak to one another in the present tense of dialogue (*Star*, 166–67).

Rosenzweig's final remarks on Genesis allow him to address the issue with which he began the *Star*, the issue of death. Rosenzweig notes that the last time the text uses the word, *Tov*, "Good," as a qualifier of the creation, it uses it in connection with the creation of the human. There, however, we have the expression "very good," "*Tov Ma'od*." Rosenzweig follows the traditional Jewish commentators by stating that the addition of the comparative word "very" must signify something different in the creation of humans. That creation must be a super-creation, an addition to the creation that preceded it; and that creation is death!

> This "very" announces a trans-creation right within creation, within the world, a beyond of the world, something other than life while belonging to life and only to life, created at the same time as life, as its ending-point, and yet allowing life to have an inkling beyond it. . . . The created death of the creature is at the same time the sign that announces the Revelation of life which transcends that of the simple creature. (*Star*, 168)

What Rosenzweig seems to be suggesting here is that the recognition of death in the context of creation radically alters the meaning that death had when it first appeared to the isolated lonely thinker at the beginning of the *Star*. The recognition of death that creation brings is the reality of death, not as the brute fact of a temporal end to life, but as a part of life. Creation, then, becomes the first answer to the challenge of death by providing a beginning as well as a telos to life. Creation provides an orientation point in the open sea of time and space that anchors life in a beginning and an end. Creation provides an answer to death, not only in providing a beginning point but also in placing that beginning point in the hands of a creator. The existence of a creator provides an answer to the issue of death because it means that the human is a creature, formed in the image of God. Rosenzweig says that creation is the creation of a truly new reality out of the primal pre-reality of God. Creation is the pre-existence and eternal promise of revelation and redemption. For revelation is nothing more than the revelation to humans of the existence of the creator and the infinite possibilities of a creation. And redemption is nothing more than re-creation, new life, eternal life in and after death.

Revelation

"Love is as strong as death." In the opening of book two, part 2 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig uses a phrase from the Song of Songs to continue his reflections on the way in which scripture handles the challenge of death. In fact, the entirety of Book Two may be seen as an extended commentary on the Song of Songs. Rosenzweig criticizes the nineteenth-century tendency to view the Song in its "purely human sense" (*Star*, 213) as the portrait of the love of a young girl for a shepherd.[16] He asks, if the Song only refers to human love, how did it get into the scripture as "the word of God"? Rosenzweig is also troubled by traditional views of the Song as only "simile" or an "allegory" for the love between God and Israel. He, thus, seeks something between the Song as expression of human love and the Song as only an allegory for divine love.[17]

To get to this type of reading, Rosenzweig suggests that one must approach the Song with a number of hermeneutical assumptions. First, the Song must be assumed to be "God's word." It must be seen as scripture. This sets up a hermeneutical context in which the question of the spiritual meaning of the text is real, the contradiction between sensual and spiritual desire posed, and the simile or allegory established. However, the issue of simile and allegory cannot be brought up too directly. The issue must be delayed, for if we move too quickly to the simile or allegory, to the assertion that God is the lover or the beloved, then the literary/theological device will not work. The Song can work only if the reader sees the Song as "more than simile" and "more than allegory" and also less than simile and allegory. For a reading of the Song to really be revelatory of God's love, the reader must accept that the deeper spiritual meaning is given "precisely in the purely sensual meaning" (*Star*, 214). This can be said in more traditional terms, in which the "*derash*" or interpretive meaning of the text must and will properly arise only out of the "*pshat*" of the literal meaning of the text. Readers must experience the longing, fulfillment, bliss, shame, and doubt without a "reference to that for which it is supposed to be the allegory" (*Star*, 213). At the same time, readers must see the Song as truly "God's word" and as a direct description of the way in which God reveals himself to humans. For this to occur, Rosenzweig suggests one more hermeneutical aid, and that is *der Gegenwärtigkeit unseres Erlebnisses* (*Stern*, 221) "the presentness of our own living experience" (*Star*, 213).[18] In other words, the Song of Song will become a revelation of God's love only if readers bring to the text their own experience of falling in love with another person together with their struggles to develop a relationship to God.

Once we understand the series of hermeneutical assumptions that Rosenzweig establishes for his approach to the Song of Songs, we can see the entire second book of part 2 as a phenomenology of the experience of revelation

as God's love. We can also see this second book as a repetition of the dynamics of the human fear of death and the presentation of an answer to death. This is an answer that both follows and goes deeper than the notion of creation, and that is the notion of revelation.

> It is not by chance that we have used the words [Love is strong as death] to characterize the transition from Creation to Revelation. In the essential book of Revelation, as we have seen the Song of Songs to be, . . . Creation visibly hastens forward into Revelation and is visibly enhanced by it. Death is the ultimate point and the fulfilled end of Creation—and love is strong as it. This is the only thing that can be said about love . . . nothing else can be "said" about it, but only spoken by love itself. For love is completely active, completely personal, completely alive, completely—speaking language; all the true sentences related to it must be words that came from its own mouth, words brought forth by the I. (*Star*, 217)

The answer of creation to the problem of death is the orientation that God as creator and creation as past gives. But this answer is given in the language of a proposition that speaks "about" love, taking the form "love is strong as death." Revelation, however, represents a new and more powerful answer to death for it speaks in the personal language of the first and second person, the I and the You. The temporality of this language is the present rather than the past. Thus revelation answers death with the overwhelming sense of the present moment filled with love.

> The language of love is only present, dream and reality, sleep of the limbs and wakefulness of the heart are inextricably woven one into the other, everything is equally present, equally fleeting and equally alive—like the deer or the young gazelle on the mountains. (*Star*, 217)

The language of love and revelation makes use of another aspect of the present tense when it moves to the imperative voice, "Love me!" The overpowering feelings for the fulfillment of sexual desire cannot wait for satisfaction. The language of love is full of imperatives.

> A shower of imperatives descends and endows with life this eternally green meadow of the present, imperatives from different horizons, but always alluding to the same thing: draw me near to you, open to me, come, rise up, hurry—it is always the same and one imperative of love. (*Star*, 218)

What the foregoing grammatical analysis of the language of revelation shows is that in explicating revelation Rosenzweig moves again into a new modality of expression. This mode is neither based on the binary yea–nay form of the hypothetical or pre-creation, nor on the narrative form of creation, but on

the present tense and the imperative voice as the vehicles of the speech that occurs between lover and lover and between God and human.

Other Scriptural Resources

When Rosenzweig explicates the Song as an allegory of the divine–human relationship, he describes the experience of revelation as a journey through multiple stages. In this description, Rosenzweig interweaves select biblical passages into his interpretation of the Song so that a rich intertextuality develops in which the Song and other parts of the Torah are brought into an interactive dialogue much like the two lovers in the Song.

The first stage of revelation is the call of God as lover to the human, to Adam. I already spoke of the "promise" or pre-stage of this call in the creation of the human, "Let us make Adam in our image" (Gen. 1:26). The call emerges more directly in God's question to Adam after he eats from the tree: "*Ayehkah?*" "*Where are you?*" But Adam is not ready to recognize himself as "*Du*" as you, as subject. Like the beloved who first hears the voice and feels the power of the lover, Adam turns away, hides, and shrinks from the question. Rosenzweig observes, "He remains mute, he remains the Self as we know it" (*Star*, 189). He does not respond as you but, rather, objectifies himself "as male human" and points to Eve as "she" and the serpent as "it." Rosenzweig sees this language as a nonanswer, that is, it is not yet speech. And we may say that the biblical figures that follow Adam and Eve—Cain, Noah, the people at Babel—likewise remain locked into themselves and into the mute language of objects. This continues until we get to Abraham. Here, Rosenzweig offers, a "breach is opened in the fixed wall of thingliness" (*Star*, 201).

Abraham breaks the mold and opens himself to God's question and love when he stands up and openly says in Genesis 22, *Heneni*, "Here I am." But Rosenzweig makes it clear that it is God that initiates the breakthrough when he calls Abraham, and God does this by using his personal name, "Abraham, Abraham." So it is unclear whether it is the courage and integrity of Abraham or the overpowering love of God that brings about the breakthrough. But Rosenzweig remarks that the greatness of Abraham is found in his openness, his "pure readiness and pure obedience" (*Star*, 190), his "obedient listening" (*gehorsame Hören* [*Stern*, 196]). "Our father," Abraham, the obedient shepherd at the Akedah, at the moment when God stays his hand, is juxtaposed by Rosenzweig with the beloved handsome shepherd in the Song of Song. The two make an unlikely pair and merge only through their awareness that they are being called by an overwhelming force. And what is the content of that call? Rosenzweig articulates that it is a command, the commandment that at once precedes and includes the essence of all commandments from God: "Love me!"

If we want to see this command most directly articulated, Rosenzweig moves us simultaneously to scripture and prayer, as he gives us the formulation

in the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4: "You shall love the Eternal your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might." However, in bringing us to this commandment, Rosenzweig must take on the standard question. How can love be commanded? Is not love free? How can we will our love? But Rosenzweig again points us to the experience of love and provides us with a straightforward answer. Love can, indeed, be commanded, if and only if it comes from the "mouth of the lover." He writes, "Only the one who loves, but really he can say and does say: Love me. From his mouth the commandment of love is not a strange commandment, it is nothing other than the voice of love itself" (*Star*, 190–91). This is the paradoxical yet existential reality of love. It is always commanded: "Love me!" the lover quite spontaneously says. And the very fact that this command issues from the mouth of God as the direct speech of the Thou to the You means that it remains a command in the present moment. It remains the *mitsvah*, the commandment, that is heard "today" (*Star*, 192). As such, mitsvah cannot be objectified as law, as *Gebot*. Yet it remains at the center of all law and is its animating source. This dynamic source, the command to love God, means that all obedience to God's law is a loving response to His call.

Love and the Birth of the Soul

The experience of human love is experienced as vivid confirmation and fullness of self. As the Song puts it: "He brings me to the house of wine and looks at me with love" (Song 2:4), and "My beloved is mine and I am his" (Song 2:16). Rosenzweig translates this fullness of self theologically to mean that the self has been ensouled by God. "I sought for the love of my soul" (Song 3:1). The formerly silent and sealed off self has given birth to the soul.

But love comes not only with a sense of fullness but often also with an equally severe feeling of unworthiness and insecurity: "I am dark. . . . Do not stare at me because I am dark" (Song 1:5, 6). Rosenzweig sees this confession as the realization of the shame of the sinfulness of the self (*Star*, 194). He then correlates this experience with the experiences of the biblical prophets after God reveals himself to them. Their response to God's revelation and demand of love is almost always the feeling of unworthiness and sinfulness. Thus, we have the reaction of the prophet Isaiah: "Woe is me: I am lost, I am a man of impure lips" (Is. 6:5). However, both the beloved and the prophet, as they confess to their past sinfulness in the face of God, are strengthened to move beyond their sense of sin and to speak from the now-strengthened soul words in which they confess that God is the true God. "The soul that is loved gains the certitude that the God who loves it really is God, the true God" (*Star*, 196).

The confession of the human soul then serves to draw God further out of his concealment: "Now he can, for his part, reveal his identity without danger to the immediacy and pure presentness of the lived experience" (*Star*, 196).

Now, Rosenzweig says, God can "make himself known." At this point, Rosenzweig moves us to Moses at the burning bush. Here, with Moses, the passive beloved soul now become active and can ask God to reveal his name. At this point, revelation "arrives at its conclusion" (*Star*, 197) and is able to serve as a "ground" and "foundation" (*Star*, 202).

Rosenzweig uses concrete words like ground and foundation, words that we might associate with creation, because he wants to suggest that revelation is both preceded and dependent on creation and is itself a new creation. Revelation is a creation of a new form of temporality—the present tense. It is the creation of a new form of language, the imperative speech of love, the dialogue of subjects, the conversation between an I and a You. It is also the transformation of self into soul, and the recognition and overcoming of sin. Rosenzweig summarizes all of this by suggesting that revelation is the creation of a new world with a new quality of time and space, a new beginning and a new center.

Of course, tradition points to Sinai as this new center and new moment, and Rosenzweig seems to be alluding to it. But then he seems to conflate Sinai with the revelation to Moses on the mountain in the burning bush. The new world is founded, for Rosenzweig, in the revelation of God's name; in the *Yod, Hey, Vov, Hey* (YHVH)—the tetragrammaton. In this name, which is revealed to Moses, "Foundation and Revelation, center and beginning all come together" (*Star*, 202). With the Revelation of God's name, the promise of orientation that the human received in creation and the sense of victory over death is further affirmed as miracle.

From Loving Speech to Prayer

In the Revelation of God's name, the YHVH, in Exodus 3, the soul receives the assurance that "God will be present" with her wherever she goes. This opens to the soul an immense reservoir of trust that leads to another level in the relationship to God. Rosenzweig writes, "Man receives the objective ground of his faith. . . . The soul can make its way into the world, open-eyed and without dreaming (*Star*, 198). From here, a whole new dimension in the human–divine relationship opens, for now humans can address God directly by name. Now the language of the soul will take flight in a new form, in the form of prayer. Now the soul can repeat, " 'My God, My God,' Now it can pray" (*Star*, 198).

With this last move, Rosenzweig has reinterpreted the soul's ability to speak to God, to articulate her love of God, as the ability to pray. Rosenzweig points to Psalm 66 to express the most basic of prayers: "Let not my prayer nor your love withdraw from me." These words display the intricate relationship between prayer and love of and love from God. The most basic prayer is for God to preserve the "protective line" around the soul that God's love establishes. But there is a further dimension to prayer and an additional request that the soul must make of God.

A final level of the experience of both human and divine love occurs when a new kind of inadequacy is felt. This is not the inadequacy of the feeling of personal unworthiness and sin but the sense that the young and ever-new love of the present moment does not encompass all that there is to love. This is that sense that the private and tender love must go out toward "the realm of brotherliness beyond the love between I and You" and to the "earthly world" (*Star*, 219). This is a sense that there is a form of temporality beyond the present moment. Thus, revelation turns to the future and toward a further concretization of God's love, and revelation then turns to prayer for the "coming of the Kingdom" (*Star*, 199). But the height of revelation does not only open the soul to pray for the Kingdom; it also issues in a command to act in the world for the Kingdom: "As he loves you, so shall you love."

With the command to act on the love and trust that emerges from revelation, the association between the beloved and the prophet becomes all the more appropriate. The revelation of God to his prophets is regularly followed by instructions to fulfill a mission in the world. Rosenzweig tells us that the revelation of God's love issues in a new word, the words "Love your neighbor." Love your neighbor is then the further expansion of revelation into the world as redemptive love, and thus revelation naturally leads to redemption.

Redemption

> Love your neighbor. This is, Jews and Christians affirm, the embodiment of all commandments. With this commandment, the soul, declared grown-up, leaves the parental home of divine love to go out and travel through the world. (*Star*, 221)

With redemption we begin to close the circle, or better, we connect the lines of the triangle creation–revelation–redemption. With redemption, we leave our focus on the present tense and imperatives to the language of the poetry of the psalms and the act of singing. This moves us from the present to the future. With redemption, we leave the focus on the individual and move to the world and to the human community. This involves a move from young love to mature love, from youthful play, to the ethical responsibility to turn toward the world and redeem it. At this point, the private dialogue between God and human and the prayer of the individual is replaced with communal prayer and liturgy.

The expression of the future is one of the most difficult representational tasks that Judaism takes on. Whereas the past leaves records and witnesses, and the present is immediately experienced, the future is, by definition, beyond all experience and records. Rosenzweig refers to a common error we make about the future. For we regularly attempt "to give an account of the future," and when we do so, "we surely turn it into a frozen past" (*Star*, 235). In his *Confessions*,

Augustine tells us that the future can be known only through a form of consciousness of the present that he calls "the present of things future." He clarifies this further by calling this "present future," "expectation," or "anticipation."[19]

Rosenzweig seems to agree with Augustine when he tells us that "the future can be grasped in its reality, that is to say, as future, only by means of anticipation" (*Star*, 235). Judaism then must help us in the process of anticipating the future. The temporal challenge of the future for Judaism is, then, to aid Jews in waiting for the future with the appropriate patience and trust. Rosenzweig suggests that Judaism does this through its concepts, prayers, and liturgies of redemption.

Although a common human error is to imagine the future in terms of the past and present, the past and present are not entirely useless to imaging the future. Indeed, the past and present can be helpful if we make productive use of the forms and experiences as we receive them in creation and revelation. Rosenzweig's view of miracle is a primary resource here, for it suggests a series of processes of greater unfolding from an initial creation of God as creator, to the creation of the world in space and time, to revelation of God as love. For Rosenzweig, each successive unfolding is a miracle in that it was predicted by the preceding stage. The individual is prepared to anticipate the future redemption because she already experienced the miracles of creation and revelation. Revelation predicts the miracle of redemption as the love that is given in it naturally overflows to the world through the person who God loves. Revelation predicts the future redemption in the very future orientation that is revealed in God's name, the "I will be present" (Ex. 3:14) of YHVH. Redemption is built upon creation and revelation since redemption is precisely the coming together of creation and revelation. With this coming together, world and human soul and God are brought into relationship. But how do we express this coming together? A coming together that is fulfilled in the future? Rosenzweig stresses that in the meeting of soul and world, the conjunction "And" is crucial (*Star*, 260). Redemption refers to the relation of world "And" human through God. Redemption, even more than creation and revelation, is a relational term. Redemption is that new thing that comes into existence through the threefold relationship God, world, and human. It can be diagrammed or figured through a triangle. But the best way to give expression to the threefold relationship that redemption entails is through song. And the form of singing that Rosenzweig highlights for the task of expressing redemption is the psalm when it takes the "hymnal form."

Augustine and Rosenzweig on the Temporality of the Psalm

At the end of chapter 11 in *Confessions*, Augustine points to the recitation of a psalm as a model for the comprehension of the various levels of temporality

and of the relationship between humans and God. The psalm provides Augustine with a device to imagine the unity of time, a way in which to accomplish what seems to be impossible, to extend the present out into the past and future in such a way that the fleeting present becomes what he calls a "long present."

> I am about to repeat a Psalm that I know. Before I begin, my expectation is extended over the whole; but when I have begun, how much so ever of it I shall separate off into the past, is extended along my memory; thus the life of this action of mine is divided between my memory as to what I have repeated, and expectation as to what I am about to repeat; but consideration is present with me, that through it what was future, may be conveyed over, so as to become past.[20]

Augustine's suggestion—that the psalm's unity is a model for the relatedness of the past, present, and future—provides a key to understand the temporal unity of a human life. Our lives take shape as a kind of poem or narrative or even an autobiographical "confession." In this view, we grasp our own temporal unity when our own past becomes the beginning of a story, our present becomes the middle, and our imagined future, the end of the story. The narrative form is crucial to both Judaism and Christianity as it supplies a beginning, middle, and end to the collective life of the Jewish and Christian communities. Augustine goes further to suggest that the narrative form of the psalm, if enlarged, can encompass "the whole age of the sons of men."[21] Thus, the form of the psalm allows for the telling of the vast human past and the presentation of the expected future, and through this all the dimension of time is comprehended.

Rosenzweig is also impressed with the power of the recitation of psalms to encompass dimensions of human temporality. However, at the end of book 3 of part 2 of the *Star*, he gives us a sense for how the temporal contours and the spiritual power of the psalm can be enlarged. Where Augustine remains largely with the recitation of the psalm and its cognitive digestion in the individual mind, Rosenzweig considers the psalm as it is sung by the community in synagogue. Here, the psalm is taken up into the community and enlarged through the communal chant, through gesture, and through sacred space. The liturgical chanting of the psalm gives Augustine's meditative mental recitation a communal and sensual embodiment. The liturgical chanting of the psalm suggests that the experience of the deepest dimensions of time requires the participation of the community and the body. The psalm allows for the expression of the event of redemption as "not-yet-having-taken-place and yet still-to-come one-day" (*Star*, 268). The psalm gives voice to the world and to the community in words of praise and thanks. In Psalm 19, we hear the

world speak: "The Heavens declare the glory of God and the sky declares his handiwork." Rosenzweig follows Cohen and argues that even when the psalm speaks in the voice of the individual, that voice represents the whole community. And the central task of the psalms is to praise God: "Therefore I will give thanks unto you O God. And will sing praises unto your name" (Ps. 18:50).

The great Temple and then the synagogue provides a special space for these voices to come together liturgically and harmonize in what Rosenzweig calls the "*Gemeinsamkeit des Gesanges*" (*Stern*, 258), the "community of the chant" with the union of "the voice of the soul" and "the voice of the world" (*Star*, 250). Rosenzweig says liturgy establishes "a great fugue." The community of the chant provides the unity of the human soul and world under God that will occur in the future redemption. The hymnal form that he calls upon throughout book 3, part 2 is the chanting of Psalms 113–118 that makes up the *Hallel* service that traces its roots back to the first Temple and is still chanted today in the synagogue on Jewish festivals. In the Hallel service, Rosenzweig finds a kind of theater of the future redemption in which the unity of world, human soul, and God is dramatized and performed. Since the future is known only in anticipation and waiting, the Hallel provides a modality of waiting for redemption in which redemption is enacted. Rosenzweig focuses on the culminating refrain of the Hallel in Psalm 118.

> *Hodu Adonai ki Tov.*
> Praise God for He is Good.

This verse provides a responsive refrain to the theme words of Genesis I: "*Ki Tov*," "It is Good." In redemption, all realize that the goodness of creation is an outgrowth of the goodness of God. Rosenzweig suggests that we understand this answering refrain as a conclusion, "For He is Good" or "Because He is Good." God is praised because He loves the human and ensouls her. God is praised because He created and revealed. He is to be praised because He redeems. And He redeems because He is good.

At the end of book 3, part 2, Rosenzweig turns back to Psalm 115 to conclude his discussion of redemption and draw together a variety of themes from part 2. What he sees in this psalm is a movement from the lonely and suffering individual, to the community of Israel, to the "We" of "everyone" redeemed through God. Rosenzweig notes that Psalm 115 is the only psalm to begin and end with the collective voice of the "We." The psalm envisions a time when everyone will be counted as part of the "We" that is with God. Yet it also acknowledges that the We and the redemption is "not yet." The psalm acknowledges that redemption "cannot be given in time" (*Star*, 270), so the psalm must give the special ones, the believers, the wherewithal to trust. The wherewithal to wait is given through what Rosenzweig calls *Hoffendes Vertrauen*

(*Stern*, 280), "hopeful trust," which can be seen in the first half of the psalm (1–11): "Let the House of Israel trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield. . . . Let the House of Aaron Trust in the Lord. . . . Let those who fear the Lord trust in the Lord." These words form something of a prediction of the miracle of redemption that is given in the second half of the psalm through a corresponding repetition of the three groups.

> The Lord Remembers us with blessing.
> He will bless the house of Israel.
> He will bless the house of Aaron.
> He will bless those who fear him small and great.
> May the Lord increase your blessings.
> May you be blessed by the Lord, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

Rosenzweig interprets the second half of the psalm in light of the first half: "Out of the triumph of trust which anticipates the future fulfillment, there now arises in exactly corresponding structure, the prayer that the community prays and again it is Israel, the house of Aaron, and those who fear God, 'small and great' " (*Star*, 270). In the "increase in blessings," Rosenzweig sees both the movement beyond the chosen ones of Israel to all people and a movement beyond the "silent automatic growth of creation." This "beyond" to creation occurs because of the love and speech that is added through revelation and spread through the redeeming love of the human soul. But it is also a beyond to the death that is determined in creation. Rosenzweig sees then, in the final line of Psalm 115, the triumph over death that is given in the We of redemption. "But We shall praise the Lord now and forever." In this "We" that sings God's praises to eternity, the psalm throws a bridge beyond the time of the future to the eternal time beyond time: "Before this triumphant cry of eternity, death is hurled down into the nothing. Life becomes immortal in the eternal song of praise of Redemption" (*Star*, 271). In this song of praise, death is not only overcome but the song manages to "pull" redemption into the moment of singing. Rosenzweig writes, "The chorus intensifies to the immense unison of the "We" which pulls with all the united voices of the future eternity into the present "now" of the moment" (*Star*, 271). What this means is that at the height of the liturgical chanting of the psalm, worshippers are *looking back from eternity to redemption*. Here, the parallels between liturgy and theater that Schechner raised are clearly apt. Liturgy for Rosenzweig is, finally, a theater of the redeemed that is full of harmony, opulent imagery, and celestial images. The theater is imagined in the styles and figures of the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, complete with a retinue of the servants of the King of Kings. It is a state where humans join with animals and angels and even the heavens and the Earth to proclaim the goodness and glory of God. In this theater, humans truly take on and act out the roles of the redeemed. The height of liturgy for Rosenzweig bespeaks a harmony that is truly not of this world. It is intended to

take place after time, after redemption, in the time of eternity. Thus, in Rosenzweig's view, the "liminal" act of liturgy intends to cross over the ultimate temporal barrier that Augustine established in the opening of chapter 11 of the *Confessions*, the barrier between time and eternity. But just as the actors must return to their all-too-human roles and life after the theatrical production is finished, the players in the theater of the redeemed return to their human lives after the liturgical performance. But, if the liturgy is performed well, they return different than they were before they performed. They return with renewed hope and energy and a palpable sense that redemption is not a mere dream but an actuality.

From the Universal Back to the Particular

Rosenzweig's ending of part 2 of the *Star of Redemption* is so exquisite that it might have been the ending of the entire book. Rosenzweig begins the last book of part 2 with the command: "Love your neighbor," and in a particularly inclusive gesture, he suggests that this command is the "embodiment of all the commandments that Jews and Christians affirm" (*Star*, 221). Part 2 ends with a unity of humans and the redeemed world, and with the unity of those who take part in the liturgical chant with those who live in eternity. Ending part 2 with the redemption of the world suggests that, despite some critiques of Rosenzweig's *Star* as a Jewish form of world-abandonment,[22] Rosenzweig is fundamentally concerned with the world.[23]

But as wonderfully open and universal as the ending of part 2 is, it does bring up certain questions about who is participating in this liturgical chanting and where it is taking place. Does the "we" that is singing Psalm 115 in the holy space of the liturgy include those Christians and Jews to whom Rosenzweig referred in the beginning of book 3, part 2? If the liturgy is taking place in the Jewish sacred space of the Temple or synagogue, it certainly would not include these Christians. A similar question about the who and the where of Rosenzweig's subjects could be asked about the figures in parts 1 and 2 of the *Star*. Is the lonely isolated self who is opened to God's love and ensoulment necessarily Jewish? Could not he be, as Rosenzweig himself suggests in part 1, "the tragic man" of paganism or the lonely man of the modern world? He certainly resembles other existential portraits of the isolated modern intellectual that we find in the work of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre. In parts 1 and 2 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig ranges over the entirety of Western religious and philosophical history. The broad scope of Rosenzweig's study reminds us of his first teacher, Hegel, and it also gives the *Star* its universal relevance and, as he himself suggests, keeps his study far from fanaticism. But it also gives parts 1 and 2 of the *Star* an abstract quality. Rosenzweig tells us in "The New Thinking" that he chooses to express his new philosophy and theology in the "Jewish books" of his tradition. I have tried to stress the Jewish

cultural–linguistic quality of parts 1 and 2 where the creation narrative and select verses from the Pentateuch, the Song of Songs, and the psalms are quoted and interpreted. But even here, Rosenzweig has fashioned a highly limited canon of Jewish texts and liturgies with a decidedly universal bent. This can be seen if one merely ponders the oddity of a Jewish philosopher citing Song of Songs as the core text for Revelation instead of Exodus 20 where the Torah is revealed on Mount Sinai.

I believe, however, that there is a logic and a strategy to parts 1 and 2 and that Rosenzweig himself provides the key to it when he describes the biblical pattern of prediction and fulfillment. Just as creation predicts revelation and revelation predicts redemption, part 1 predicts part 2, and part 2 predicts part 3. Each follows from what came before in a process of ever-deepening development and enrichment. Thus, the end of part 2 of the *Star* must be seen as a preface to, a prediction of, a further development that will come in part 3. Part 2 ends in the Temple with the chanting of Psalm 115 that points to the celebration of the coming together of all humans and the world in redemption. This, however, is just a preface, a foretaste of part 3, which will give the *Star* a concrete manifestation in the world in which humans actually live. Part 3 will answer the question of the who that chants and the where of the chanting by turning to the specific communities of Jews and Christians. In "The New Thinking" Rosenzweig specifically says that part 3 of the *Star* is structured to show how the specific sociological forms of Judaism and Christianity "wrest eternity from time" (*NT*, 94). Parts 1 and 2 call out to a third part in which the notions of creation, revelation, and redemption can be grounded in the specific cultural–linguistic systems of Judaism and Christianity and the concrete lives of Jews and Christians.

Part 2: A Wheel within a Wheel: Liturgy as a Means of Reasoning

In part 3 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig will not leave his themes of creation, revelation, or redemption behind; neither will he abandon the connection he establishes between Jews and Christians nor will he forsake the universal dream of a redeemed humanity. Yet all these themes will be recast by plunging them into what we have been calling the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism with special attention to the liturgical aspect of that system. In the process, Rosenzweig will recast the entire system of the *Star* in the signs and practices of the liturgical calendar. This gives the system of the *Star* not only historical concreteness, but the warrant and legitimation of Jewish tradition. This, of course, is not a mechanical application of tradition to the system of the *Star* but a highly creative dialogic process that allows Rosenzweig to reinterpret the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism as he interacts with it.

Redemption from Time in Eternity

> "Blessed art Thou . . . who has planted eternal life in our midst." The fire burns at the core of the *Star*. The rays go forth only from this fire and flow unresisted to the outside. The fire of the core must burn incessantly. Its flame must eternally feed upon itself. It requires no fuel from without. Time has no power over it and must roll past. It must produce its own time and reproduce itself forever. It must make its life everlasting in the succession of generations, each producing the generation to come and bearing witness to those gone by. Bearing witness takes place in bearing—two meanings but one act, in which eternal life is realized. (*Star*, 1985, 298)

So Rosenzweig begins part 3 of the *Star* with the blessing that is said by individual Jews before each section of the Torah is liturgically chanted in the synagogue: "Blessed art Thou . . . who has planted eternal life in our midst." The planting to which the prayer refers is not the revelation of love that comes out of "God's caprice, born of the moment" (*Star*, 1985, 160). Instead, it is a planting that occurs on solid earth and in the midst of human history. It is a planting that grows out of the life of the Jewish people and out of the fertile spiritual seed bed of the Torah. With part 3 and the conjunction of the eternal people and the eternal book of the Torah, the locus of revelation moves from the unpredictable and spontaneous meeting of God and the human individual to the life and history of the Jewish people. With part 3, we move much more deeply into the liturgies of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism.

The metaphor for the planting of the seed of eternity is not the wild, spontaneous, and fleeting first love of youngsters expressed in the Song of Songs. Rather, the eternal life planted in the Torah is a mature love that grows over time and issues in marriage and children. This love does not remain in the private moment but is sanctified and solidified by a public marriage ceremony, a *kaddushin*, or "making holy." This love is thereby made predictable, dependable, and able to serve as a foundation for family and community. Rosenzweig tells us that from marital love "the full realization of this life begins" (*Star*, 345). The beginning is marriage, but the end and purpose is "bearing." From marital love issues the next generation of Jews. Here, eternity exists in Jewish blood, history, and being.

To return to the problematic of temporality, the problem of overcoming death, we could say that Jewish blood offers a different sort of answer than that offered by Rosenzweig thus far. Here, it appears that death is conquered by attachment to the Jewish people, by the continued life of the people, and by the preservation of Jewish blood through reproduction. We could thus say that where the end of part 2 is excessively universalistic and abstract, the beginning of

book 1, part 3, is excessively concrete and particularistic. Rosenzweig appears to have backed up and started again from an entirely nonidealist, materialist ground. Rosenzweig's reference to Jewish blood fails to take note of converts and conversion to Judaism and thereby brings him close to the most ethnocentric elements in the tradition. However, as part 3 unfolds, we will see that religio-cultural ideals emerge again, and they emerge in the form of Jewish liturgy.

In part 3, Rosenzweig will offer us a series of metaphors and images to bring together parts 1 and 2 and complete a new system of philosophy and theology in which eternity triumphs over time. Rosenzweig begins with the image of the Jewish people as a fire in the midst of the Star of David. But after the notion of Jewish blood is introduced, it is quickly expanded through discussions of Jewish history and its ritual representation and re-experiencing in the Jewish festival liturgies. Rosenzweig organizes Jewish festivals and holidays through a discussion of the liturgical calendar. The calendar creates the metaphor of time as a circle that takes a year to complete and that transforms linear time of history into an annual ever-repeating cycle. The cycle of liturgy focuses the light of eternity into the time of the year and thereby brings eternity into time.

Rosenzweig presents us with the image of the Jewish calendar as a wheel that turns inward and "counter-clockwise." The liturgical system moves Jews away from history and the world and is another form that preserves the eternality of the people, the purity of its eternal fire, and the power of its light. Rosenzweig could easily be charged with turning his back on the world here, and he could be faulted for failure to follow the very structure of part 2, which demands that humans turn from the infatuation with God's love to "love their neighbor." However, in a brilliant move of theological creativity, Rosenzweig places the inward-turning circle of Jewish liturgy in direct relationship to the larger outward-turning institutions of Christianity. We could imagine this relationship in Ezekiel's terms as a "wheel within a wheel." The smaller Jewish wheel that turns inward would then interface with a larger wheel of Christendom that then turns in the alternative outward direction. With the metaphor of interlaced wheels, Christianity then becomes responsible for the work of redeeming the world. Christianity is charged with motivating its faithful to work with the arts, government, and even with the force of the state to spread the light of redemption. Jews, then, still have a role in world redemption, but that role is presented as one step removed from the world. In part 3 of the *Star*, the eternal people safeguard and celebrate eternity within the cycle of their liturgical calendar. The fire, energy, and light from the liturgical "work" of the Jews then spreads out through Christendom to transform the world.

From Blood to Liturgy

Rosenzweig's notion of the eternal people that time has no power over may sound strange for its ethnocentrism and its touches of Jewish racial superi-

ority. Certainly, this could be seen as a result of the intense focus on "race" as a category of both science and culture at the turn of the twentieth century and an obsession of many German intellectuals of this same period.[24] Yet, I think that Rosenzweig, himself, provides a more fruitful context to understand Jewish blood than that provided by the pseudoscientific concept of race. This context is the structural form of the miracle, of prediction and fulfillment that we see Rosenzweig using throughout the *Star*. Here, the notion of Jewish blood signals the concrete sociological fulfillment of the promise of redemption. The notion of Jewish blood signals an anti-Hegelian and empirical move to the concrete, to a supra-rational principle or a given substance.

Another way to address the issue of Jewish blood is to see part 3 of the *Star* as a recapitulation of the beginning of the *Star* and a revisiting of the notion of creation. Here, Rosenzweig presents the creation of the world as a prediction of the creation of a special people, the Jewish people. We could then draw upon Rosenzweig's language of "naught" and "ought" to describe this creation. We could then understand the notion of Jewish blood as a nonrational, unknowable "naught." Jewish blood would represent a contraction of God's love in the particular form of Jewish blood. And this blood, as a contraction into intense particularity, remains unknown and concealed like the original concealment of every substance, every thing-in-itself. As a concrete "substance," Jewish blood has a kind of eternality to it that articles of culture do not have. Jewish blood, like the primary elements of part 1, serve to bring a level of concreteness and materiality to Cohen's neo-Kantian notion of peoplehood as only a representative of the ethical ideal.

However, if Jewish blood remains as "naught," as substance alone, it remains unknown; it remains mute and dumb. It therefore needs to unfold into expression. However, that expression needs a particular form that is able to communicate the eternality of the people. That form is Jewish liturgy. And as we read in part 3 of the *Star*, it becomes clear that it is liturgy, and not Jewish blood, through which the Jewish people's sense of their election, ethical ideals, and eternality unfolds.

The Liturgical Calendar

In one of his most memorable phrases of part 3, indeed, of the entire *Star*, Rosenzweig speaks of the liturgy in this way: liturgy "is the reflector which focuses the sunbeams of eternity in the small circle of the year" (*Star*, 1985, 308). Eternity shoots out beams of light, and those beams are captured and concentrated in liturgy. So the liturgical calendar creates a form into which eternity is invited. Like any circle, it has no beginning and no end, so as time takes the shape of a circle, the tenses of past, present, and future lose their elemental character. Through the calendar, what is past is not lost and what is future can be grasped. The annual calendar provides markers in the sea of undifferentiated

time that gives time shape and punctuation. The liturgical calendar is correlated to the natural rhythms of time given by night and day, moon and sun, months and seasons. It therefore allows for the renewal of time in festivals of the New Year and the arrival of spring. Because the Jewish calendar arranges its months according to lunar phases and its years according to the solar calendar, it is already a combination of two calendrical systems. This combination allows the Jewish calendar to reflect both the natural cycles of time in the rhythms of lunar and earthly movements *and* the linear movement of time in history. Through its ability to reflect the complexities of two systems of time, the Jewish liturgical system is able to reflect the complexities and interactions among the notions of creation, revelation, and redemption and human history as it also opens itself to the transcendence of time in eternity.

Liturgy as Theater

As I describe the particularities of the liturgical cycle of Judaism, it is helpful to keep in mind the parallels between liturgy and theater that Schechner and Turner highlight. Mendelssohn anticipated some of this when he suggested that we see Jewish law as a kind of "script for action." Since the behaviors that Jews are to follow are mapped out in detail through the various codes of Jewish law, we can see the festivals as a kind of annual theatrical cycle in which Jews play previously scripted parts. These parts proscribe certain behaviors on Shabbat that help Jews celebrate rest. The three pilgrimage festivals determine that Jews re-play and reenact slavery, desert wandering, the giving of the Torah, and redemption. And the high holidays reenact the drama of atonement rituals in the ancient Temple. As Schechner suggests in his expanded model for the ritual process, Jewish law not only gives the stage directions and scripts for enactment of past events, it also attends to the "warm-up" stage before the "performance" and to the "cool-down" stage afterward.[25]

Shabbat

Rosenzweig follows Jewish tradition in asserting that the holiday of all holidays is Shabbat. Upon it, the spiritual year finds its foundation, regulation, and sense of wholeness. Shabbat accomplishes this through its prohibitions against work, its commandments to rest and be refreshed, and its successive liturgical readings from the Torah. These are apportioned to each week so that the entire five books are finished in a year.[26] Shabbat extends the hypothetical and highly compacted seven divine days of creation out into the time of a year. As Rosenzweig puts it, "Shabbat reflects the creation of the world into the year" (*Star*, 330).

Through the liturgical reading of portions of the Torah, the *Parashah Ha-Shavuah*, the Jew moves through the week with the text and time of the Torah.

The Parashah Ha-Shavuah marks each week with the episodes, characters, and laws of the different Torah portions for that week. At the same time, the consistency of the Shabbat ritual and liturgy, which envelops the Parashah with its sameness, provides the year with a regularized spiritual base.

> In the circle of weekly portions, which, in the course of one year, cover all of the Torah, the spiritual year is paced out, and the paces of this course are the Sabbaths. By and large, every Sabbath is just like any other, but the difference in the portions from the Scriptures distinguishes each from each, and this difference shows that they are not final in themselves, but only parts of a higher order of the year. For only in the year do the differentiating elements of the individual parts again fuse into a whole. (*Star*, 1985, 310)

Following Rosenzweig's theme of the calendar as cyclical time, we could say that the weekly Shabbat Torah readings make time over into the form of the Torah scroll.[27] The circular form of the scroll means that there is no beginning and end to the Torah. At the end of the annual cycle of reading the Torah, the book of Deuteronomy is finished and Genesis immediately started. Thus, one could read Genesis as coming after Deuteronomy and as commenting upon it. Genesis's creation story could then be seen as occurring after revelation as it is told in Exodus, and then the creation story becomes a portrait of the hoped-for redemption.[28]

Rosenzweig suggests that Shabbat provides a peaceful and stable counterpoint to the other festivals that take the Jews back through the "suffering and bliss" (*Star*, 330) of Jewish historical time. Shabbat provides a "steady flow" of peace out of time through which "whirlpools of the soul are created" (*Star*, 330). These "whirlpools of the soul" provide a constant communal resource for the Jew to receive God's love that replaces the spontaneous love of God for the individual as Rosenzweig presents it in part 2. Like the created world that Shabbat celebrates, Shabbat itself is "always there, and is entirely there, before any event enters into it" (*Star*, 330). However, just as God did not create the world once and for all but must renew the creation daily, so Jews cannot observe Shabbat only once a year but must observe and renew Shabbat weekly. This parallel suggests that the "work," the "service," the *avodah* that Jews perform to make Shabbat a day of rest parallels the creative work that God performs in making the world.

The work of "making Shabbat," which humans do, recalls the preparatory state of ritual that Schechner attends to and that I reviewed in the introduction. The Shabbat preparation involves a combination of domestic and liturgical preparations in the profane time before Shabbat that allows Shabbat to be a time of rest. These preparations include domestic chores like preparing meals in advance, so cooking is not done on Shabbat, and arranging for lighting. The preparations also include learning the Shabbat Torah portion and

studying the exegetes. What these preparations mean is that when Shabbat is ushered in through synagogue prayer and the saying of the Kiddush prayer over wine in the home, profane time can be brought to a stop and life can be lived in a different quality of time. The time of Shabbat can foreground holiness, family, community, study of Torah, and rest. Participation in liturgical events in the synagogue and home make the field of relations between humans, God, and world come alive and allow for what Mendelssohn called "the contemplation of things holy and divine." The liturgical time of Shabbat is time unobstructed by secular aims of acquisition and goals of productive work. And this, Rosenzweig suggests, "grants existence (*Dasein*) to the year" (*Star*, 329). Rosenzweig does not explain exactly what he means by "Dasein" here, but it must be the Dasein, the existence or presence, the "being-there-in-the present-moment" that God's love brings to the world. Rosenzweig's reference to the Dasein of Shabbat reveals his difference from Hermann Cohen, who argues that Jewish liturgy and Shabbat serve the purpose of replenishing the soul for ethical work in the world. In an implicit rebuke to Cohen, Rosenzweig argues that "redemption should mean rest not composure for more work" (*Star*, 333). Rest has its own value. Indeed, the rest and completion of Shabbat may be considered the objective of work and not the other way around.

Since the central theme of Shabbat is the celebration of the creation of the world and humans as good, Shabbat is the celebration of created life. Shabbat prescribes the enjoyment of the senses through taste, sight, touch, and hearing. Sexual relations between spouses are encouraged, as are eating, singing, dancing, and social interactions. Rosenzweig recognizes that central to Shabbat are the three meals: evening, Shabbat day, and afternoon. These meals, eaten by families and their guests in homes, create a sense of *yedidut*, friendship, or *communitas*, by simultaneously satisfying the human bodily need for food and the spiritual need for community. He notes, "The sweet and fully ripened fruit of humanity wants, precisely in the renewal of bodily life, mutuality of man with man" (*Star*, 334).

Meeting basic bodily needs and celebrating the natural creation, Shabbat has a pagan quality to it. It expresses a pagan sense of satisfaction in the goodness and completeness of the created world. Shabbat recalls the creation of the world as simply good. It recalls images of Eden and of Eve's joy in seeing, touching, and tasting the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden. However, though Shabbat celebrates the natural world of creation and thereby has what we called a "pagan" element to it, it remains a festival of monotheism. This means that Shabbat also celebrates the role of the transcendent God in creation and the relationship between God and the world and humans. Rosenzweig notes that almost all of the temporal periods—the day, the month, the season, the year—correspond to divisions of time that derive from movements of the Earth and moon in nature. The week, however, aside from its weak relation to the phases of the moon, corresponds to a somewhat arbitrary

division of time into seven days. The seventh day of the week, as a day of rest for humans from work, is more of a marker for human culture than for nature. It signifies the imposition of human time on natural time. It also signifies the imposition of the divine on nature as it suggests that nature, as it is created, is not complete until it is supplied with the supernatural element of holiness that God "makes" for it in making Shabbat. Thus, Shabbat is not a pure celebration of nature.

I have suggested that the created world and Shabbat are somewhat fragile and thus require continual "work" by God and humans to be sustained. Yet Rosenzweig suggests that each of the primal elements—God, world, humans—exists through dynamic polarities, and Judaism, as a religion, must also be understood through polarities (*Star*, 325). When the primal elements are placed in relationship to each other, the dynamic tensions between them emerge more sharply. Depending on the viewpoint, a primal element may appear quite differently to us. Thus, on the one hand, the created world is fragile and in need of constant renewal, and on the other hand, it may be seen as stable, "always there," as Rosenzweig puts it. The created world may be considered "good" in its natural state and yet unfinished until it is made holy. The world may be viewed as incomplete, not only in need of renewal but of redemption, and *also* "wholly complete," or as Genesis suggests, "*Ki Tov*," simply good and whole and redeemed and revelatory of God.

I have already pointed to how the circular scroll of the Torah can make creation into a culmination of revelation in a redemption that comes after the Exodus. Rosenzweig also suggests this connection in his discussion of creation as a "miracle." The miracle of creation presupposes the creation of God as creator and predicts the further miracle of God as revealer and redeemer. The holiday of Shabbat, therefore, must reflect the themes of revelation and redemption that are implicit in creation; and it does all this by highlighting a particular theme in its three major services. The Friday evening service presents the overarching theme of creation (*Star*, 330), the Shabbat morning service highlights revelation through the reading of the Torah (*Star*, 331), and the afternoon service and following "third" meal looks toward redemption (*Star*, 331). Shabbat then holds within it the kernel of all the festivals of the year that will individually unfold each theme more fully. Shabbat follows Rosenzweig's overall methodological pattern by providing a concentrated form that will be fully made manifest and unfolded throughout the year. As the seventh day of the week, the Shabbat remains part of a weekly cycle, "the smallest cycle set by man" (*Star*, 332). The weekly cycle of Shabbat then becomes the smallest wheel within the wheels of time that sets the whole temporal movement toward redemption and eternity in motion. Shabbat provides a kind of microcosmic process for the year. Rosenzweig thus says that Shabbat is like "a preview that can only be further fulfilled" in the other festivals yet to come (*Star*, 332) and in the final redemption of the world that is to come. The rest of Shabbat is joyful

and replenishes the body and soul to make the congregation "feel as if redeemed—already today" (*Star*, 334). Yet Shabbat is also incomplete enough and self-contained in the Jewish ritual and liturgical setting as to suggest that it is a "dream of perfection" (*Star*, 333) not yet realized in the world.

The Festivals of Revelation

As rich and satisfying as the Shabbat rest is, Jews do not live in its Edenic time of creation and holiness. The Jewish people also live in and through the cycles of their historical existence from Exodus, to Sinai, to wilderness wandering. It is the task of the three "pilgrimage festivals"—Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot—to introduce every new generation of Jews into this history and into its central event of the revelation at Sinai. Rosenzweig speaks of these three festivals together as the "feasts of revelation," since the high point and purpose of the three festivals is the celebration of the reception of the Torah at Sinai. However, Rosenzweig also notes that each festival touches on the other two theological themes of creation and redemption. The three pilgrimage festivals are correlated to spring, summer, and fall and to the series of agricultural harvests that occur during these times. Thus, the historical dimension of Israel's experience of time is placed upon the natural cycle of time that follows the course of the seasons set by the solar year. This setting of Israel's historical experience upon its experience of cycles of planting and harvest is a marker of a complex interweaving of natural and historical notions of time in the liturgical system of Judaism.

Rosenzweig tells us that, in the three pilgrimage festivals, the notions of creation, revelation, and redemption receive interpretations geared to the historical experience of the Jewish people. But this is a not a secular history. It is a history that is touched by holiness. It is therefore a history that is intensified and elevated through poetic narration and images that attempt to relate the salvific and revelatory experiences that happened to the people Israel in the past. This past is never truly past but allows Jews in other times and places to participate in it. It is a holy history retold and re-experienced through liturgical narratives. Rosenzweig likes to refer to this history as "eternal history" (*Star*, 336). With this expression, he means that the events of this history are accessible to every Jew in the present. Rosenzweig underscores that this means that the festivals of revelation are not simply "holidays of remembrance" for "the history in them is a fully compact present" (*Star*, 336) that is "born anew" in each new generation.

Passover: Creation of the People

As I have said, the three pilgrimage festivals provide a historical frame to interpret the notions of creation, revelation, and redemption. For Rosenzweig, Pesach reinterprets the notion of creation, Shavuot thematizes revelation, and

Sukkot celebrates redemption. Through these three festivals, the people re-experience and act out the beginning, the middle, and the end, "the founding, the zenith, and the eternity" (*Star*, 1985, 317) of Jewish history. Rosenzweig refers to Pesach as a "feast of deliverance." In doing so, he means to stress the freedom experience through which the people Israel is created as a people at its founding. In stressing this aspect of the festival Rosenzweig downplays the theme of redemption that is also clearly part of the festival. Rosenzweig's interpretation of festival as a festival of "creation" picks up on the traditional designation of Pesach as *zman hayrutaynu* (season of our freedom) and follows the traditional view that the freedom from Egyptian bondage is an experience through which disparate tribes and the *erev rav*, the "mixed multitude" are welded into the one people Israel.

Thus, as I previously suggested, the creation of the world, which Rosenzweig speaks of in part 1 of the *Star*, is revisited and placed in apposition to the creation of the Jewish people in part 3. Although part 3 begins with the notion of Jewish blood as the substance of Jewish peoplehood, we see that this notion is developed liturgically through the celebration of Pesach. Rosenzweig suggests that the festival is meant to help the people reconstitute itself as a people and re-experience their communal bonds. He presents the Passover Seder as a kind of large-scale initiation rite, a kind of collective yearly "Bar Mitsvah," focused on children. Here, the goal is one of educating the young and entering them into the founding narrative of the people. Thus, the youngest child prepares the telling of the story of the Exodus by asking the four questions, and the directions in the Seder instruct the leaders to be sensitive to the different abilities and learning styles of children as they form their answers. The Seder includes stories, songs, drama, and games to amuse the children and keep their attention to the end of the Seder. Rosenzweig sees the focus on children as a leveling of status relations and a sign that the time of freedom is meant to include all members of the society. Again, we can consider the Seder as a kind of religious theater where participants are given parts to play in a tragic and comic narrative, where food and drink are not only symbolic props but powerful devices that make one literally internalize the various stages of disgrace and triumph in the drama.

Rosenzweig also notes that the Seder meal, being ruled by liturgy as it is, must be seen as a form of worship. This bridges the gap between synagogue worship and the home and symbolizes the extent to which the festival is meant to bring the people to its simultaneous transformation from slavery to freedom and from disparate tribes to peoplehood. The Seder meal, combining instruction, eating, singing, drinking, and symbolic behaviors, are calculated to re-create the founding event of the people so that the meal properly "dissolves into community" (*Star*, 1985, 318). In the communal eating of the Seder meal, the community is able to achieve a special form of unity as they eat the same foods that their ancestors ate and reenact the same story that their parents and

grandparents reenacted. Because every food that is eaten and every gesture has a symbolic meaning, the Seder meal is more than an ordinary festival meal. The act of eating symbolic foods represents a kind of bodily internationalization of the primal narrative through which Israel was born as a people. Through the ingesting of foods that signify Israel's founding events, the Jew herself becomes a kind of sign for the founding events. Thus, for Rosenzweig, the communal meal of the Pesach Seder is the central liturgical act of the festival.

As we would expect, we see all the themes of creation, revelation, and redemption at work in Pesach. Therefore, Pesach is shown to hold the themes of redemption and revelation in a "latent" form. It is clear that the freedom experience that Israel has is a kind of redemption from slavery, and the social equality celebrated in Pesach is an intimation of final redemption. Also, the ultimate purpose of the Exodus, the reception of the Torah at Sinai, clearly points to revelation. Rosenzweig tells us that the scriptures read in the synagogue—most notably the Song of Song—"points to revelation" (*Star*, 338). Here, I would suggest that we could reread Rosenzweig's interpretation of the Song of Song from part two of the *Star* to show how revelation is "latent" in Pesach. The Haftorah or additional synagogue Torah reading for the last day of Pesach is taken from the famous messianic section in the book of Isaiah (Is.10:32-12: 6). Here, we have references to the "shoot of Jesse," the "righteous remnant," and the famous image of the "wolf lying with the lamb," all of which are images of redemption.

Shavuot: Feast of Revelation

Seven weeks after the first day of Pesach, the festival of weeks celebrates the reason for which Israel was released from slavery, the revelation of God and the Torah at Mount Sinai. Unlike the festival that precedes it, Pesach, and that which follows it, Sukkot, which are each seven to eight days long, Shavuot is only one or two days long. Rosenzweig, therefore, sees revelation as a "moment of the present" sandwiched between "the long, everlasting was of the past and the eternal coming of the future" (*Star*, 338). Shavuot is the intense moment of God's disclosure of himself and his Torah to the people that the people could not bear for a whole week. This festival focuses the people's hearts and minds on God and the moment of revelation at Sinai alone and not the preparatory Exodus march to Sinai before or the wandering in the desert afterward. Rosenzweig tells us that "the holy day itself is absorbed quite exclusively in the one moment of the twofold miracle at Sinai: the descent of God to his people and the proclamation of the Ten Commandments" (*Star*, 338). Like lover and beloved in the Song of Songs, "the people is completely engulfed in its solitude of two with its God" (*Star*, 338). This solitude is intensified in the

Haftorah readings of the festival, which initiate an inward voyage toward God that is represented in readings of "Ezekiel's mysteriously shaped vision of the divine chariot and Habakkuk's stormy song of God's thunderings into the world" (*Star*, 338). Shavuot may be short and relatively scant on religious symbolism, but it is the centerpiece of the three pilgrimage festivals and gives these festivals their ultimate focus and meaning. Through Shavuot, all of the three festivals become festivals of revelation, and Israel becomes a "people of revelation."

Sukkot: Feast of Booths

The brevity of Shavuot also means that the people cannot remain in the shelter of the divine present. As we saw in part 2 of the *Star*, the beloved "must leave its clandestine solitude of twosome with its God and go into the world" (*Star*, 339). Thus, we have the festival of Sukkot, or booths, which celebrates and reenacts the wandering of the people in the desert after Sinai and before they enter into the promised land. This follows the pattern of the movement from revelation to redemption. However, Rosenzweig argues that the redemption that Sukkot celebrates is not a full redemption. It is a truncated and incomplete redemption that is able to reach only as far as hope for redemption. Sukkot's redemption is not full because the festival stands in the orbit of revelation in the "circle of the three festivals of revelation" and in the cycle of the seasons and the year.

Redemption is simulated in Sukkot by the fullness of the fall harvest and also by the commandment to dwell in Sukkot, in temporary huts or "booths." Living in Sukkot is a reenactment of dwelling in tents after the Exodus. Dwelling outside the permanent house in the open air of the flimsy *sukkah* signifies life in which Israel was protected only by God's clouds and pillars of fire. Sukkot prescribes the enjoyment of the fruits of the harvest and the enjoyment of resting and eating with family and friends. Yet the joy is tempered by the fragility and impermanence of the hut and the sense that permanent and complete redemption is not yet here. The festival thus infuses Israel with hope for ultimate redemption without securing the experience of it: "Redemption is not present in this holiday of redemption; it is only hoped for, it is awaited in the wandering (*Star*, 340).

Just as the holy day of Shabbat must return Jews to the workday world, Sukkot, the last festival of the year, must return Jews to the unredeemed world. This is why the reading of the book of Kohellet (Ecclesiastes), with its message of the vanity of human toil and striving, is prescribed for Sukkot. The circles and cycles of the Jewish week and the Jewish year are never completely closed. The completion must remain a dream, an anticipation. Even the liturgical representation of the future "cannot be the last word."

The Incursion of Linear Time

In his discussion of the sobering element represented by the book of Kohellet that is read during Sukkot, Rosenzweig points to a peculiarity of the liturgical circle that Judaism establishes. The liturgical circle of Judaism must have a "flat" place or even an open space in them that prohibits complete closure. The opening plays a crucial role, in that it signals that completion has not yet come. Redemption is not yet here. Perhaps it is this place of opening that distinguishes Jewish liturgies from pagan rituals and myths. The opening also means that the liturgical circles of Judaism are open to the incursion of the nonliturgical, the incursion of human and divine freedom into the liturgical moment. This opening also allows for the insertion of linear time in the repeating cycles of Jewish liturgy. The opening suggests that something new can and will yet occur and that cyclical time will come to an end in the future redemption.

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Rosenzweig certainly has liturgical warrants in circumscribing the festival of Sukkot to the orbit of the three pilgrimage festivals and the central theme of revelation. However, one could argue that Rosenzweig has excessively limited the joy of a festival that the Talmud saw as so important as to refer to it simply as "*Ha-Hag*"—*The* Festival. But it becomes clear why Rosenzweig "short-changes" the joy of Sukkot if we consider his discussion of the high holy days of Judaism. By limiting Sukkot to three festivals that revolve around the revelation at Sinai, the *Yomim Noraim*, the days or awe of the high holy–day period, can become the true holidays of redemption. The high holy days return Jewish liturgy to the ahistorical, apolitical struggle for purity, repentance, and redemption.

Rosh Hashanah circles time back to the time of the beginning, to the "birthday" of the world. Yom Kippur, often referred to by tradition as *Shabbat Shabbaton*, the Sabbath of Sabbaths, recalls the time before and after time, the time of creation and the time of final redemption. Yom Kippur speaks directly to human concerns about the end of time, about death, and about eternity. Certainly, the issue of moral purification that was so central to Cohen is an important theme of the high holy days, but Rosenzweig sees that moral purification is central to the festivals not so much to prepare the individual for moral action in the world as to prepare her for death and for life after death. In other words, the judgment that occurs in these holidays is a prefiguration of the ultimate judgment that God makes on all persons at the end of life and the judgment that is made on the communities, indeed, all communities, at the dawn of redemption. As Rosenzweig writes, "The judgment that is otherwise set at the end of times here is placed immediately into the present moment" (*Star*, 344).

This shows that even with its references to the creation of the world in the past, Judaism relies on liturgy to perform what Rosenzweig considers to be its

unique function and that is to bring about the awareness of the future. This is what gives the liturgical atmosphere of the days of awe their quality of seriousness. The liturgy aims to bring the time of the end into the time of the liturgy.

What stands out most vividly for Rosenzweig in the high holy days is not the words that are uttered but the liturgical acts, the gestures that the congregation performs and the clothing that is worn. After stressing the linguistic character of liturgy and the power of the communal chant, Rosenzweig suggests that it is the nonverbal gestures of the high holiday liturgies that make them so effective in anticipating eternity. Rosenzweig moves us from sensitivity to what is spoken and heard in the festivals of revelation to what is performed and seen during the high holy days.

Rosenzweig declares the high holy days are "distinguished from all the other festivals by the fact that here and only here the Jew kneels" (*Star*, 343). The gesture is a form of communication that reveals that the community is ready to move beyond words. In the silent gesture, believers and doubters are united. Sinners and the righteous join together in the same movements. Rosenzweig tells us that the communal silence of the gesture is not a silence of ignorance but a shared silence, an awe-filled silence in the face of the presence of God. Like Moses, who immediately falls to his feet and kneels in the presence of God, the community kneels during this one time of the year when the presence of God is clearly manifest. The collective act of kneeling during the high holy days, Rosenzweig points out, does not occur, as we might expect, during the Vidui, the confession of sins, but, rather, in the recitation of the Aleinu prayer that is said in the *Mussaf Amidah* prayer during Rosh Hashanah (and, for some, in the reenactment of the service for the High Priest on Yom Kippur). The Aleinu prayer, of course, is said at the end of every service during the year. This is a prayer for the final redemption "when every knee will bend before God, when all idolatry will have disappeared from the earth, when the world is fortified in the Kingdom of God" (*Star*, 343). Yet during the year, Jews only bow—they say the words of the Aleinu but do not prostrate themselves. When they sing the prayer at the end of a service during the year, they sing with hope about a future judgment and redemption. However, the fact that Jews kneel all the way to the ground in the Rosh Hashanah means that, during the high holy days, God is palpably present to the community. The community kneels "in beholding the immediate nearness of God" (*Star*, 343).

The White Shroud

The other nonverbal element of the high holiday liturgy that Rosenzweig comments on is the clothing that men wear to synagogue. Traditionally, men wear white robes that are actually shrouds worn at death. Some also follow the custom of wearing the robes at marriage and during the Pesach Seder.

Rosenzweig's discussion of the white robes is fraught with rather stereotypical portraits of the differences between men and women and their corresponding different spiritual needs. But this need not stop us from appreciating his central point, and that is that clothing is an important nonverbal element of the liturgical theater. The white clothing that men and some women wear (and one could extend this to white robes that the prayer leaders wear and the white Torah and the ark coverings) are significant aids to the liturgical process.

Rosenzweig summarizes the central meaning of the white robes with the phrase from the Song of Songs: "love is as strong as death." At the time of marriage, the man and woman join together in a love that is at once human and divine. At marriage the couples are inserted in the chain of the generations that, through procreation, ensures his life after death. Pesach carries this theme forward as the celebration of the creation of the eternal people in the Exodus. At Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the white robes take on additional meaning. Here, they signify suffering and death as a process of atonement. Here, the robe means that, like the dead person who confronts his maker alone, the penitent on Yom Kippur confronts God alone. He confronts God as ultimate judge and is judged "according to his actions" (*Star*, 344). The death shroud heightens the sense of the intimacy of the judgment that occurs in the high holiday period. Rosenzweig says the sense of ultimate judgment erases all distance between time and eternity.

> In the [annual] yearly return of this the "latest" judgment, eternity is freed from any otherworldly distance; it is now really here, tangible and graspable for the individual and touching and grasping the individual with a strong hand. It is no longer in the eternal history of the eternal people, no longer in the eternally changing history of the world. No waiting counts, no hiding behind history. The individual is directly judged. (*Star*, 344)

But the ultimate power of the Yom Kippur liturgy is this—that the judgment turns to mercy, and the liturgy communicates that God is, above all else, merciful. Thus, the congregation chants the repetition of the merciful attributes of God that God revealed to Moses after the sin of the Golden Calf. These are the attributes known as the "glory of God" and recorded in Exodus 34:6–8. God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abounding in kindness and faithfulness, assuring love for a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin and granting pardon."

The Dance of Redemption

To heighten further what he sees as the nonverbal element in the high holy day liturgies, Rosenzweig presents the participants as a troop of dancers and sees the dance of liturgy as "poetry become gesture" (*Star*, 394). Dressed in white

robes and moving with silent gestures, the dancers' dance is relatively simple. Rosenzweig suggests that the high holiday dancers express a collective sense that death has no sway over them, that redemption is present, and God and eternity is in their midst. And so, as the day comes to a close, the last words of the closing "Neilah" service are "The Lord is God: This God of love, He alone is God!"

Liturgy as a Means of Reasoning

In the introduction to part 3, Rosenzweig expresses the theme of our entire book when he suggests that he intends to use liturgy as a logic or an *Organon*, a "means of reasoning" (*Star*, 312). He distinguishes the form of logic of liturgy from that of mathematics and binary logic, which he used in part 1, and from grammar and language, which he used in part 2. Whereas mathematics refers to an a priori "pre-world," and language refers to the manifest and existing world, liturgy has an anticipatory relationship to a future world (*Star*, 312). So, liturgy, as I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is a kind of liminal activity that exists between time and eternity and in a pretend space that is between the unredeemed world and the redeemed world of the Kingdom of God.

I have shown how the high holiday liturgy culminates for Rosenzweig in gesture, costume, and dance. This suggests again the theatrical nature of liturgy. The tools and strategies of liturgical reasoning are the tools of theater: address, song, costume, stage, symbol, gesture, and silence. And we may very well call liturgy the theater of the redeemed. As theater, liturgy is a kind of spectacle that opens up the field of perception as a form of sacred or spiritual seeing. As well as using the notion of "enlightenment" in a perceptual sense, Rosenzweig also uses the notion of perception in the cognitive sense. Rosenzweig suggests that one of the central themes of prayer is "enlighten my eyes" (*Star*, 1985, 267), "*Erleuchte meine Augen*" (*Stern*, 298). In his *User's Guide to Franz Rosenzweig's "Star of Redemption,"* Norbert Samuelson picks up on the reference here to Psalm 13: "Behold answer me O Lord my God, enlighten my eyes."[29]

Rosenzweig speaks of the concentration of love in liturgy as the generation of light, as a glowing that generates a healing energy that permeates and goes beyond the synagogue and the Jewish community to the world. Rosenzweig will often refer to liturgy as a conduit to help participants in the liturgy see the light of eternity. Liturgical forms "are the light by which we behold the light, calm anticipation of a world shining in the silence of the future" (*Star*, 312).

It is difficult to see the path of eternal light of redemption with the "naked eye" and outside the community of believers. Revelation allows for a momentary glimpse, but cannot present the overarching path and direction of the

light of revelation toward redemption. Therefore, Rosenzweig speaks of liturgy as a kind of perceptual tool, like a telescope that both brings the light into focus and also reveals its path. "As long as we know only the elements of the path and laws of the path of a star, our eyes have not seen it; it is only a material point that moves in space. Only when a telescope or spectroscope draw it near to us do we know it" (*Star*, 313).

As well as using the notion of enlightenment as a special form of spiritual sight, Rosenzweig uses the term as a form of knowing. This way of knowing expands upon the experience of revelation as love. Norbert Samuelson argues that this experience needs expansion since "love is a non-cognitive act."[30] The experience of divine love pushes the human soul to love thy neighbor, and this begins a process of redemption. However, even the act of loving the neighbor remains blind. The "enlightenment" that liturgy adds to love includes an element of distance and an opening to a larger horizon. Samuelson puts this well: "The human who prays sees, i.e., becomes cognitively aware of, something beyond the nearest [the neighbor]."[31] Liturgy, as a form of logic, allows for the one who prays to place the act of loving his neighbor in a larger context. Liturgy allows the pray-er to view her love as an extension of God in the world and to extend beyond this to the horizon of redemption. Thus, liturgy cultivates knowledge of a redeemed world.[32]

Liturgy cannot grasp this knowledge directly because this knowledge sits beyond its limits, but liturgy supplies a kind of "substitute" for direct knowledge of redemption. In Rosenzweig's words, liturgy "substitutes for the redeemed world in terms of knowledge; knowledge knows only them; it does not see beyond them; the eternal hides behind them" (*Star*, 312). If we take this image of God hiding or standing behind Jewish liturgies, we can draw further sense from the notion of liturgy as theater. The fact the God stands behind the liturgical performance suggests, however, that unlike secular forms of theater, where a specific theme is developed, religious liturgy must remain open. Liturgy must remain open; it must be filled with petition, invitation, gesture, and silence because the audience for liturgy is God.

We may even push the metaphor further and say that the audience for liturgy is open on both sides of the stage. In front of the Bimah, the raised platform on which liturgy is performed, is a human audience, but, also, behind the Bimah is the divine audience. Liturgy must remain open to the participation of both these audiences. And because of this, every liturgical performance is new and every performance is fraught with the possibility of the unexpected.

As I have said, liturgy has limited power. It is limited by the ultimate impossibility of its tasks—to express a redemption and an eternity and address a God that is beyond it. Yet liturgy is not entirely impotent. Indeed, it possesses extraordinary power, and in the face of this power, both time and God can indeed be possessed by it! In addressing the power of Jewish liturgy, Rosenzweig first speaks of it as another type of miracle. Liturgy is miraculous, in

Rosenzweig's terms, because, like the miracles of creation and revelation, liturgy points to and "predicts" redemption.

But Rosenzweig is also not adverse to the idea that liturgy has a coercive power. This power is neither magic nor some supernatural power. Rather, it is the power that animates the entire *Star* and that is the power of love, or as Rosenzweig puts it, "the irresistible power of love for the neighbor" (*Star*, 326). Communal prayer is a concentration of this power through the coming together of the community of believers. Since the love that the community concentrates has its origin in God's love for the human, when this love is concentrated it has the coercive power of God who originated it (*Star*, 311). The gathering of the believers shows their love for God and humans not only in the words of liturgy but in their comportment and attitude. Rosenzweig mentions at the end of part 2 the significance of the harmonizing of melodies in the liturgical chanting of the psalms. Where the yeshiva, or school environment, encourages Jews to argue, dispute, and disagree, liturgical theater requires singing in unison and in ordered refrain. The stage direction of liturgy requires decorum and respect. At the peak moment of praying the central prayer of all worship services, in the *kedushah*, or holiness section of the Amidah, worshippers are instructed to climb up on their toes to mimic the actions of the angels when they acknowledge God's holiness. Thus, the participants in the kedushah section of the Amidah, literally take on the celestial comportment and loving goodness of the angels!

Rosenzweig presents liturgy as a communal performance in which unity and harmony are stressed. The goal of the sermon is to cultivate the skill of quiet listening "without the contradiction" (*Star*, 328) and back-and-forth of dialogic speech. The community is forged into a unified group that is able to listen to the repetition and interpretation of the text of the Torah.

Rosenzweig explains how the liturgy brings redemption, eternity, and God into the time with a simple linguistic correlation. When God, as the eternal one, *Das Ewige*, enters into the liturgical community, eternity—*Ewigkeit*—enters with it (*Stern*, 326). Liturgy invites redemption and eternity and God into the congregation by showing that the love concentrated by the liturgy ultimately comes from God. As Rosenzweig puts it, liturgy "achieves the redemptive coming of the eternal within time by showing to love that what is nearest is the eternal one *Das Ewige*" (*Star*, 311). Just as the beloved soul of God is able to bring the power of redemption to the world by turning its love to it, so the community of believers concentrates that power to the unbelievers in their midst. This power also has a coercive power to bring belief in God to the unbelievers.

However, although Rosenzweig acknowledges coercive elements in the words, actions, attitude, and comportment required for liturgy, he is clear that this coercion can be taken too far and can become counterproductive for the redemptive aims of liturgy. Prayer for the coming of the Kingdom is necessarily

prayer for others, prayer for the neighbor, for the unbelievers. Counterproductive, or "bad," prayer falls into two categories—the prayer of the sinner and the prayer of the fanatic. The prayer of the sinner is prayer that is directed only toward the self. It is prayer that neglects the neighbor and the other. The prayer of the fanatic also neglects the neighbor, but the fanatic neglects the other, not out of infatuation with the self, but because of an infatuation with God.

In both the case of the sinner and the fanatic, there is a sense that the participant in the liturgy fails to appreciate the time of liturgy. This time, which is often referred to as a time of grace, an *et ratzon*, has its own rules and exigencies, its own rhythms and pace, that can be neither rushed nor slowed. The time of liturgy is built upon the time of nature: sunset to sunset, the time of the months, seasons, years. This creates the first series of exigencies that liturgy follows. But on top of these times, liturgy has its own time, its own rhythms and pace, and this time is structured to invite eternity and God into it. The sinner and the fanatic both want to manipulate liturgy to hasten redemption. Yet, in the very act of manipulation, the et ratzon of liturgy is impaired, and redemption is thereby impeded. Rosenzweig explains that the only thing humans can do is follow the temporal exigencies of liturgy. In doing this, Jews anticipate the future redemption well.

Liturgy is the art of anticipation. It takes the time of humans and the world and forms it into the time of waiting for redemption. Liturgy helps the waiting for redemption by making itself into a form of mediation between time and eternity. It does this in the multiple ways in which it acts upon the past, present, and future of time. When it is at its height, it even brings redemption close—so close that it can be glimpsed. At this point, we can see that liturgy has its own et ratzon within which the divine suddenly intrudes to illuminate it and its participants. But liturgy is, finally, limited by the fact that ultimate redemption is a matter for God and not humans or even their liturgies to bring about.

Part 3: The Jewish Liturgical System and Christianity

Having outlined the contours and temporality of the Jewish liturgical system, I now turn to the relationship of that system to Christianity. As traditional as Rosenzweig may appear to be in his respect for Jewish liturgy, he becomes exceedingly bold and even revolutionary in his discussions of Christianity. For Rosenzweig not only develops a Jewish interpretation of Christianity and Christian liturgy but makes a place for Christianity in the redemptive process of Judaism! I have attempted to track a series of "contractions" throughout the *Star*, and in part 3 we see, perhaps, the most dramatic act of contraction. Here, Judaism undergoes a tsimtsum, through which it retracts itself from the world and is limited to liturgical action alone. As Rosenzweig puts it, "The

eternal people purchases its eternity at the price of temporal life" (*Star*, 1985, 323). This retraction of Jews from the temporal world allows Christianity to take on the role of spreading the redemptive message of monotheism globally. It is important to point out, however, that it is not only Judaism that undergoes a contraction, but Christianity also "contracts" because it must rely upon the eternal people and Judaism to preserve a direct relation to God. In a letter that Rosenzweig wrote to his cousin Rudolf Ehrenberg in 1913, he said that "the synagogue and church are mutually dependent upon one another."[33] He seems to follow this up in the *Star* by developing a radical and mutual dependence between Judaism and Christianity.

Art and Monotheism

Throughout the course of the *Star*, Rosenzweig includes discussions of art. Given that art was often pointed to by the German Idealists as the most adequate expression of the ideal, and given the fact that many modern intellectuals had proposed art as proper substitute for religion, Rosenzweig had to comment on art and its place in his system. The issue of the dangers of arts for monotheism has a long history because the Torah prohibits the production of "graven images." Rationalist Jewish philosophers like Maimonides and Hermann Cohen interpreted this prohibition fairly strictly and therefore sought to highlight reason and limit the use of the arts to represent God. On the other hand, Yehuda Halevi took a more generous view of images because he sees the prohibition on images as only a proscription of worship of images in themselves. When images and the arts are used as transparent forms and signs that point to the one God, they can be immensely powerful aids to monotheism. Rosenzweig's position on the arts, as Leora Batnitzky has shown, is closer to that of Yehuda Halevi.[34]

In his discussions of art, Rosenzweig opposes the modern idea that art can substitute for monotheism. Art cannot take the place of monotheism, since art remains tied to the sensible and to the genius of its human creators. Art is unable to be a pure expression of the notion of God's creation, since it remains limited to the artificial worlds of the concert hall and the museum. But art still has great value because it does provide the most sophisticated means of expression that we have. Art is so sophisticated that it is able to give articulation to what is "otherwise inexpressible" (*Star*, 205). Art, indeed, can provide the conduit for revelation. Rosenzweig says that art "provides the language prior to revelation whose existence alone makes it possible for revelation one day to enter time as historical revelation" (*Star*, 1985, 190).

If we consider what makes liturgy so powerful, it is precisely the ways in which it uses the arts to move beyond pure conceptual formulations to engage the entire human being in her body, intellect, and spirit. Rosenzweig's discussion of the Shabbat and Pesach Seder meals, the gesture of prostration

during Rosh Hashanah, the attire of the white robes worn during Yom Kippur, and the silent dance of the worshippers, shows that he recognizes that, aside from the content of the words uttered, liturgy gains its power through the ways in which it employs the full panoply of arts from music, to poetry, to dance.

Art and Christianity

Where art is an important aid to the expression of revelation and the liturgical experience of redemption for Judaism, it takes on an even stronger role for Christianity. Rosenzweig argues that, unlike the Jew, the Christian lacks the intrinsic connection to peoplehood and community that Jewish blood supplies. To make up for this, Rosenzweig suggests that Christianity relies further on the arts.

Christianity is a collection of individuals before it is a Christian community. Every Christian has a unique story to tell about her own journey to Christ. Bearing witness, as Rosenzweig says, is an "individual matter." Therefore, Christianity, in Rosenzweig's view, must find ways to generate that sense of community that will allow it to gain the strength to expand throughout the world. Rosenzweig suggests that the way to prepare the Christian self for uniting with other selves is found through art (*Star*, 375). This explains why Christian architecture, music, painting, and sculpture are more developed than the Jewish arts.

To anchor itself in the world, which is first of all geography, locality, and place, Christianity must leave its mark in space. This it does by creating sacred space, and the art of creating sacred space is architecture. Christian architecture creates a "common space" that helps unify various Christian individuals. Through Christian music, Christianity is able to bring together individual Christians with their own unique testimonies to Christ. The harmonious chords of music both prepare individuals for community and help integrate them into community by giving them different parts to sing in the common symphony of church music. With the "common room" and harmonious music as preparation, the Christian community is further established through the preaching of the word in the sermon: "Here, the word truly takes the individual by the hand and guides him on the way which leads to the community" (*Star*, 1985, 358).

The Eternal Way

Since a Christian is not born with the eternal fire deep within her, she must set out on a journey to find it, she must learn to see the world in a different way, she must be transformed by the revelation of Christ as God. Christian revelation both occurs in time and transforms time. Through this transformation, time is slowed and given a definite shape and direction. Christian revelation

gives the Christian the energy to want to bear witness to Christ and spread the Gospel throughout the world. Through Christian arts, Christianity not only builds its community, it helps to extend redemption that "shoots forth from the fiery nucleus of the *Star*" ruled by the eternal people. Thus, Christianity takes on the task that the Jew may not. The Jew must remain within the *Star*, glowing with the fire generated by her liturgies of redemption. The Christian then takes the power of the rays of redemption out into the world to further the cause of redemption while gathering more and more people under her wings.

Like Judaism, Christianity must find a way to gain power over secular time, but it cannot opt out of time in the way that Judaism does and still retain its ability to affect the redemptive transformation of the world. Christianity gains power over time, not by inviting eternity into time but by creating a special period of time within time. Christianity rules over time by creating the "Christian epoch" (*Star*, 358). The epoch is the time ruled by the expression "ad domino." It is the time after the incarnation of Christ and before the Second Coming. The Christian epoch is sustained by the power of the belief that God has entered time in the form of Christ.

The Christian epoch stops the normal progression of time as fleeting instants and gathers them into what Rosenzweig calls *Haltepunkte* (*Stern*, 374), stopping points or "stations in time" (*Star*, 1985, 337). These stations take the moment out of the swift stream of time and transfers it to a long, stable stopping point, the long present point between the past before Christ's birth and the future of his return. Thus, Christians live "in that one great present, that epoch, that standstill, that extension of times, that between over which time has lost its power" (*Star*, 359).

Rosenzweig suggests that the Christian epoch was initiated by the insertion of God into time in the incarnation and the revelation of God's love in the person of Christ. The Christian epoch is sustained by the belief in spreading the word of Christ through the work of testimony, evangelization, and proselytizing. Christianity gives the Christian epoch a specific character, a kind of temporal "substance." But this substance, sustained as it is by Christian culture, does not have the stability of the eternal people that is sustained through blood and birth. The Christian epoch is sustained only through the growth of Christian culture through its successive conquest of the mind and hearts of humans and in the long march toward the end of its epoch in the Second Coming. As Rosenzweig puts it, Christianity "as eternal way, must always spread further. Simple preservation of its continuance would mean for it the renouncing of its eternity and hence death. Christianity must be missionary" (*Star*, 362).

The Christian epoch is inaugurated by a nontemporal event of revelation of God in Christ, and it will end with a nontemporal return of Christ in redemption. Carving out a path through time, Christianity has managed to stop the fleeting moment of secular time and stamp time with an unchanging substance of Christian belief. This belief helps give Christianity its measure of

eternity. But because Christianity travels alongside the time of the world and lives through the incessant growth and expansion of Christianity, Rosenzweig refers to Christianity as the "eternal way." As the Christian bears witness to her belief, she "generates the eternal way in the world" (*Star*, 363). Thus, belief produces eternity with the Christian. And this is different than the case with the Jews, where belief "follows after the eternal life of the people as a product."

Because the Christian must set out on the way to help redeem the world, the Christian always exists in a tension between eternal time and secular time, between the Church and the nation, between Church and State. Unlike the synagogue, which must close her doors to preserve her eternal circle, the Christian Church must keep her doors open to the world. Christianity's eternal way intersects with the world clock, but it cannot close its circle. Rather, it forms a spiral that moves inexorably toward redemption without reaching it. Christianity attempts to pull the world clock toward redemption often by interacting with and giving its blessings to the nations of the world. Christianity even adopts secular holidays like national foundation days, memorial days, and New Year days. Yet precisely because Christians interact with the world, they are constantly tempted by its pagan practices and ideologies of worldly power. Therefore, Christians depend upon sacred liturgies to remind them of the message of revelation and the mission of redemption. The Christian "clerical year," then, circles the secular year and bestows upon it a "halo of eternity." Rosenzweig engages in a lengthy discussion of the way in which the themes of creation, revelation, and redemption emerge from the Christian liturgical year. But because the terms of analysis he uses are taken from Judaism, the analysis is necessarily stunted.

Rosenzweig closes his discussion of Christianity with a quotation from the *Book of the Kuzari* by the medieval Jewish philosopher and poet Yehuda Halevi. This text displays the relation of Judaism to Christianity and to Islam that is at once very beautiful and also a species of Jewish apologetics.

> Thus, God has a secret plan for us, that is like his plan for a seed-kernel that falls into the earth and seemingly changes into earth and water and manure, and nothing remains of it by which the eye may recognize it; and it is yet, on the contrary, precisely it that changes earth and water into its own essence and gradually decomposes their elements and transforms and assimilates them into its own matter, and so it forces forth bark and leaves and when its inner core is made ready . . . then the tree brings forth the fruit like the one out of which its seed once came. In this way the Torah of Moses attracts each who came later, truly transforming him in accordance with himself, although each seemingly rejects it. And those people are preparation and being made ready for the Messiah for whom we are waiting, who

> will then be the fruit and all will become his fruit and confess Him, and the tree will be one. (*Star*, 402)

In this most beautiful of images, the Torah of Israel is the radiant source, the essence and kernel of truth and redemption for all the world. The Torah animates and "transforms" the world "even though to all appearances everyone rejects it." There is a significant element of Jewish apologetics here, but there are also a few other important points to be made. First, this quotation shows that Halevi and, by extension, Rosenzweig, sees intricate connections between the three monotheistic faiths. And second, Halevi and Rosenzweig show that, even in their devotion to the particularities of Judaism, they see the final goal of Judaism as the redemption of not just the Jews but, through Christianity and Islam, the entire world. Thus, here we see that far from abandoning the world and history, Rosenzweig maintains his concern for it and in so doing proves his allegiance to the central principle of Ethical Monotheism that Mendelssohn initiated and Cohen represents most clearly.

Critique: The System of the *Star* and the Cultural–Linguistic System of Jewish Liturgy

Using Rosenzweig's understanding of liturgy as a hermeneutical key to understanding the *Star*, we can see how Rosenzweig moves beyond Kantian ethics and Hegelian idealism to craft a philosophy of Judaism that brings us into what Amos Funkenstein has called the "heartbeat of Judaism: community, procreation, ritual life."[35] Liturgy brings us to the most particular symbols of Judaism and utilizes song, costume, and ritualized behavior to dramatize and initiate Jews into the atemporal realm of eternity. As a communal activity, liturgy moves the individual beyond herself to engage with Jews in collective acts of self-transcendence. Liturgy clearly moves beyond pure philosophical reflection to engage the body and the spirit. The liturgical act takes place in an intermediate space between the private and public realms, between the everyday and the historical moment of crisis and event, between philosophy and brute existence, to deliver its participants into a moment of sacrality and communitas that is a taste of redemption.

In focusing on the specifically sacred character of liturgy, Rosenzweig adds a new dimension to the meaning of Jewish liturgy in Ethical Monotheism. Rosenzweig's focus on the sacred character of liturgy not only brings a corrective to the enterprise of German Ethical Monotheism and the Science of Judaism but also helps counter the anti-institutional, antinomian, and anticultic thrust of early twentieth-century Jewish and Protestant thought. Indeed, it is instructive to continue to follow out the strands of relationship between Rosenzweig's *Star* and early twentieth-century philosophy and theology. It is

also important to place the *Star* in the context of Jewish and Christian polemics that have run from Saint Paul to medieval disputations and into the present day. Rosenzweig's *Star* is certainly more open to Christianity than any Jewish philosopher who preceded him. As the "religion of the way," Christianity is charged with the mission of spreading the redemptive message of monotheism to the world. Christianity, thus, takes on a messianic role without which Judaism remains incomplete, locked into itself, and divorced from the process of ultimate redemption of the world.

Clearly, there are theological reasons that Rosenzweig assigns Christianity such an important task, but there are deeply personal reasons as well. We know, for example, that Rosenzweig very seriously considered following his cousins Hans and Rudolf Ehrenberg and his friend Eugen Rosenstock in converting to Christianity. Although he decided against this path, the *Star* shows the traces of Rosenzweig's attraction to Christianity. Still, Rosenzweig's appreciation for Christianity does not prohibit him from a critique of it, and we can clearly see the *Star* as a "corrective" to Christian polemics against Judaism. Rosenzweig's focus on the sacred and redemptive dimension of Jewish liturgy could be seen as a response to age-old Christian charges that belief, faith, and grace were more important than laws, behaviors, and rituals. Rosenzweig's focus on liturgy could also be seen as an answer to the Christian charge that the Jewish denial of Christ as the messiah robbed it of a spiritual center and a direct access to God. Rosenzweig's formulation of this answer to Christianity is found in his now-famous letter to Rudolf Ehrenberg of November 1, 1913.

> Christianity recognizes the God of Judaism, not as God, but as the "Father of Jesus Christ." It embraces the "Lord," but only because it knows that he alone is the way to the Father. What Christ and his church mean in the world we agree: no one comes to the Father save through Him (John 14:6). No one *comes* to the Father—but it is different when one no longer needs to come to the Father, because he *is* already with Him.[36]

Since Jews are already with the Father, Rosenzweig argues that they cannot be seen as lacking in "the power of God." But Rosenzweig does concede that to retain that power Judaism must "renounce all the work in the world and concentrate all its energy on its own life . . . by works of ritual."[37] This means that Jewish worldly powerlessness (represented aptly by its depiction on the Strasbourg cathedral as a woman with a broken staff and blindfold over her eyes) is a spiritual necessity. On the other hand, because the church is not "with the Father," it is dependent not only on Christ but also on the synagogue to supply it with divine light so that it can "bring salvation for all heathens, for all time, . . . by works of love."[38] Rosenzweig also takes on the old charge of Jewish particularism and Christian universalism. Here, he argues that the Jews hold on to their particularistic blood covenant with God and their par-

ticularistic laws and liturgies for the sake of the preservation of the sacred in the world. The synagogue is a "silent admonisher" to the worldly power of the Church and of Christianity, which, in venturing out to convert the world, is always tempted by heathenism and the "universally human." Because of its position in the world, Christianity is forever tempted with idolatry and distracted from its task of redeeming the world.

Amos Funkenstein argues that what Rosenzweig has done is answer Christian charges against Judaism through a "transvaluation" of its supposed weaknesses. Thus, lack of power in the world, tribalism, and particularism become virtues and sources of critique and spiritual power upon which the hope of the world stands. Funkenstein points to yet another text of Augustine's that has influenced Rosenzweig, *The City of God*. Funkenstein argues that Rosenzweig has artfully adapted Augustine's "City of God" motif as the appropriate metaphor for the synagogue rather than for the Church. Just like the City of God, the apolitical, historical synagogue "has no essential link, no involvement in the 'earthly city' in which it dwells." It is not Augustine's Christians but the Jews who are "resident aliens" and who live in a "wandering city of God."[39] Alternatively, it is the Christians who inhabit the earthly cities and seek the goal of "world domination and pacification."[40]

Our foray into the classic Jewish Christian polemics is not only instructive for our understanding of the *Star* but also points to the extent to which the *Star* is rooted in early twentieth-century German Jewish and Christian tensions. This brings us to the issue of the apologetic nature of the *Star* and to its relevance to the issues and tensions of early twenty-first-century Judaism and Christianity.

Rosenzweig's Apologetics

The reader will recall Mendelssohn's attempt to fashion a Judaism that could overcome charges of tribalism and particularism and contribute to eighteenth-century Enlightenment culture. Almost 150 years later, it is clear that Rosenzweig is still fighting that battle; yet we can also see how the battle lines have changed. Instead of apologizing for and downplaying the particularistic nature of Judaism and arguing for the rational and ethical dimension of Jewish liturgy, Rosenzweig has made Jewish particularism and the private and opaque nature of Jewish liturgy a positive virtue. Instead of transforming Judaism and its liturgies into neo-Kantian rituals of ethical purification for the individual and inspiration for action in the world, Rosenzweig proudly and unabashedly displays the communal, aesthetic, mythical, and even mystical aspects of Jewish liturgies. Yet despite the freedom that Rosenzweig felt to give expression to the particularistic aspects of Jewish liturgy, the apologetic agenda of the *Star* is still clearly present. Judaism must be shown to not only equal Christianity in spiritual power but to exceed Christianity in that power.

Given this apologetic agenda, we could then level Rosenzweig's own criticism of apologetic theology as he expresses it in his essay "Apologetic Thinking."[41] In this essay, Rosenzweig declares that the problem with apologetics from Maimonides to Ethical Monotheism is that its formulations "never reach the state that independent thinking in a culture regularly attains."[42] Rosenzweig's transvaluation of Jewish powerlessness and Christian power in the world may bring deep theological insights into the nature of the Jewish Christian debate, but it does nothing to alter the power imbalance. Indeed, it provides only one more series of legitimations for it. In addition to this, it creates a dichotomy between Judaism and Christianity that, despite its consequence of making the two faiths mutually dependent on each other, also robs each system of the virtues of the other. Many commentators have said this before me, but it is no less true: Rosenzweig's ahistorical apolitical, atemporal diaspora Judaism clearly flies in the face of the historical, political, land-centered elements embedded in Jewish tradition in general[43] and in liturgy in particular. Similarly, it is hard to deny that Christianity has its own nonhistorical and nonpolitical side, and we need only look at the aforementioned Christian classic, Augustine's *City of God*, to find an exposition of those dimensions.

One can see that Rosenzweig's operations upon Judaism and Christianity were done for a variety of philosophical, theological, and personal reasons that made sense in the context of early twentieth-century Germany. However, we still might rightly ask if there is another way to express a post-liberal notion of redemption that is not built on Rosenzweig's radical surgery and reduction of both Judaism and Christianity. We might ask if there is a kind of cooperative work for redemption of the world that allows both for a fuller expression and flourishing of Judaism and Christianity and, even more expansively, welcomes the third monotheistic religion, Islam, into the redemptive party.

A common theme in all Ethical Monotheism is that modernity requires a fundamental re-visioning of Judaism and places Jews in a new relationship to non-Jews. Rosenzweig took this further and argued that Jews and Judaism needed to take Christianity seriously and that Jewish philosophy and theology had to be done in relation to Christian theology. Although Rosenzweig did not adequately understand Islam and, thus, he presents it in mainly stereotypical and negative portraits, the fact that he comments on it throughout the *Star* provides precedent for further development of a relationship between Jewish and Islamic theology. Thus, Rosenzweig provides us, today, with a resource to argue that Jewish thought in the contemporary period cannot be done in isolation but must be done in concert with Christian and Islamic thought.

For this expanded project to be enacted, I believe it requires two stages. The first is an inner religious move to express the cultural–linguistic systems of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in their own inter-textual terms, shorn of attempts to dilute the traditions into modern philosophy and translate them

into the terms of modernity. The second stage involves an interpretive process that requires much of the courage and creativity of the Ethical Monotheists but is attuned to the contemporary postmodern twenty-first-century realities and the current world situation. This double-pronged agenda has provided the direction for two contemporary movements: the movement of post-liberalism in Jewish and Christian thought, and the movement called "Scriptural Reasoning." This book is largely the expression of Jewish post-liberalism, and we continue to follow its dictates in the next two chapters. The book closes with a brief discussion and description of the promise of Scriptural Reasoning.

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4

Liturgical Space in the Post-Shoah and Zionist Era

> Holy, Holy, Holy, The Lord of Hosts
> His Glory Fills the Entire Earth.
> —(Isa. 6:3)

In this chapter I consider the ways in which Jewish liturgy helps develop responses to the two central events of the contemporary Jewish era: the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel. These remain our "orienting" or "epoch-making" events. As a new form of Jewish thought, liturgical reasoning must be able to respond to them, and I will argue that liturgy allows thought to respond in a most constructive manner. The issue of the Shoah has mainly been phrased in terms of theodicy. That is, the Shoah challenges God's goodness in the face of the suffering of the innocent. While acknowledging the importance of this issue, I will argue that the more central issue is the issue of the fragmentation of the "cultural–linguistic system" of Judaism and the resultant loss of the tools of discourse—scripture, liturgy, and theology—to deal with the issue of theodicy. As I have already suggested, this fragmentation and this loss of discourse-tools had started before the Shoah. Franz Rosenzweig attempted to respond to it in his *Star of Redemption* with a renewal of the relationship between God–world–human and the theological notions of creation, revelation, and redemption. Peter Ochs's work suggests that the issue of theological discourse is largely a matter of the narrowness of modern philosophical logic and the need to retrieve a "logic of scripture" that can rejuvenate contemporary theology. I will add to Ochs's suggestions a focus on

theological resources that exist in Jewish liturgy specifically, in the Passover seder and in the synagogue sermon.

Although Rosenzweig's thought is helpful in developing responses to the Shoah, I will argue that the relation of his thought to the issue of the meaning of the founding of the State of Israel is more complex and requires more extensive interpretation. This is true not only for Rosenzweig but for Cohen and the other "Ethical Monotheists" as well. The reason for this is that the spatial element of liturgy is poorly articulated in the work of the Ethical Monotheists. The emphasis on time, whether it be the historical and messianic time that Cohen focuses on or the eternal time outside of history that Rosenzweig focuses on, serves to downplay the importance of the dimension of space in its religious form as sacred or holy space and in its concrete form in the land of Israel. I will suggest that the interpretation of Judaism in a post-Holocaust world in which there is a Jewish state requires Jewish thinkers to retrieve notions of sacred space, but I recognize that this is an immense task, fraught with problems of the idolatry of the land, power, and nation. Thus, the constructive task of developing notions of sacred space that serve the task of understanding the meaning of Zionism also requires a critical theory to fight the idolatrous temptations of Zionism. For this, I argue that Rosenzweig, Cohen, and the Ethical Monotheists remain relevant as sources of critique. I also argue that notions of "liturgical space" are helpful for understanding the relation of sacred space to the land of Israel precisely because liturgy offers sacred space in liturgical theater and not in the Earth and land and the processes of history. This helps avoid the danger of the idolatry of the land and the misplaced sense that, as the well-known prayer for the State of Israel suggests, Israel is the "dawn of our redemption." Liturgy preserves the messianic character of Israel and Jerusalem as representations of the time and space of redemption.

Thinking through Liturgy and Scripture after the Shoah

The Failed Logic of the Death of God

Since 1966, when Richard Rubenstein proposed that, after Auschwitz, God and the concept of the chosen people were "dead," post-Holocaust theology, or theology after the Shoah, has been a central part of contemporary Jewish and non-Jewish theology. Rubenstein states the problem in terms of a simple syllogism: "If *X* then *Y*." "If I truly believed in God as the omnipotent author of the historical drama and in Israel as His Chosen People, I had no choice but to accept . . . [the] conclusion that Hitler unwittingly acted as God's agent in committing six million Jews to slaughter. I could not believe in such a God, nor could I believe in Israel as the Chosen People of God after Auschwitz."[1]

Rubenstein's logic is simple, and since few would accept the position that Hitler was the agent of God, Rubenstein assumes that he has an open-and-shut

case. He therefore proposes a new form of Judaism in which there is no God and no chosen people, but merely a "Jewish paganism." In his pagan Judaism, diaspora Jews join Israelis in a drive to procreate and survive in their ancestral homeland with no transcendent God, no higher calling, and no purpose greater than survival. That Rubenstein struck a resonant chord with many Jews was born out by sociologists of contemporary Jewry like Jonathan Woocher, who labeled the post-Shoah American and Israeli secular symbiosis as "sacred survivalism."[2] Woocher describes this as an overarching worldview that unites Jews in Jewish Federation fund raising, political lobbying for Israel, building Holocaust Memorials, and defending Israel from its enemies. Yet some rabbis, Jewish philosophers, and many lay Jews simply could not abide the dissolution of the more-than-two-thousand-year tradition of Jewish transcendent ideals, practical ethics, and divine love into the crass terms of fund raising, political lobbying, and building museums alone. Without any real theological or scriptural warrants, Emil Fackenheim struck a defiant note of response to Rubenstein when he proposed the 614th commandment: "Thou shall not give Hitler any Posthumous victories." After Hitler's death, one could not give up on God, the chosen people, or Jewish ideals and let Hitler win more victories from his grave. Thus, we could say that the issue of sacred survivalism of the Jewish "race" was tied by Fackenheim and many others to the "survival of the sacred in Judaism."[3]

Yet, perhaps the wisest statements were made by those who looked at the actions of the survivors themselves and saw many of them committed to a life of mitsvot and *tsdekkah* (charity) and utterances of prophetic warning against the evils of genocide for all minorities. When asked, countless survivors said that they did not lose their faith in God or Judaism or the Jewish people in the Shoah.[4] The most famous survivor, Elie Wiesel, expressed the sentiment of many when in a conference with Rubenstein he quipped, "How strange that the philosophy of denying God came not from the survivors. Those who came out with the so-called God is dead theology, not one of them had been in Auschwitz."[5] Wiesel expressed his own faith in the now-classic survivor-witness account *Night*: "In spite of myself, a prayer rose in my heart to that God in whom I no longer believed."[6] This is followed by Wiesel's well-known novels, each of which investigates the Shoah through layering characters and plots against biblical themes of exile and sin, covenant and defiance. And these novels culminate in his most direct biblical and midrashic responses to the Shoah, *Messengers of God*.[7]

What interests me about Rubenstein's death of God theology and Wiesel's faith in God and Judaism after Auschwitz is the different logics that these two figures use. Rubenstein uses the propositional and syllogistic logic of early modern philosophy and science, and Wiesel points to an empirical and pragmatic logic of how people actually live with faith. His statement "In spite of myself, I said a prayer to the God in whom I no longer believed" is a logical contradiction that is nonsensical in modern philosophical terms yet believable

in the terms of the human faith experience. That Wiesel follows his witness account with novels that explore biblical themes and books of commentary that directly engage the Bible, Midrash, and Hasidic tales suggests that the roots of the empirical logic of faith can be found in scripture and that it is precisely Wiesel's early Yeshiva training in Jewish traditions of commentary, law, and mysticism that sustained him through the Shoah and beyond.[8]

The Logic of Scripture

When the cultural–linguistic system is fragmented, when the God–world–human relationship is shattered, and when all knowledge, theological and scientific, is translated into the terms of propositional truths and syllogistic logic, the sphere of theological, ethical, and even scientific knowledge is radically reduced to a tiny circle of certainty. Peter Ochs has argued this point forcefully in his *Peirce and the Logic of Scripture*. In a recent essay, "From Two to Three: To Know Is Also to Know the Context of Knowing,"[9] Ochs presents his position with exceptional clarity. Here he argues that propositional truth claims like the table is black, the dog is quick-tempered, God is living, and God is dead are not so much useless as they are narrow. They work well to assess color of tables and temperament of dogs but are simply too crude to assess the character and existence of God and the life of faith. Like the structure of the universe, or the nature of light, God and the life of faith simply require a more complex logic. To say that light and God cannot be expressed in syllogistic logic and propositional terms is thus not to say that light and God are nonexistent, or false, or even nonlogical. Ochs argues that already in the early twentieth century, physicists and philosophers began developing more complex logics to address more complex problems. "The error is not, therefore, to trust in formal reasoning and thus logic, but simply to have nurtured too limited a view of how to practice formal reasoning and of what logical models we can build. As physicists, philosophers, and logicians have learned since early twentieth century discoveries in quantum theory, standard propositional logics are useful for mapping only a limited range of behaviors and beliefs. In briefest terms, one could say that they are useful for mapping only those things about which we have potentially little or no doubt."[10]

Adapting Ochs's analysis to a discussion of God and faith, we could say that there is a logic of God and faith, there is a way of "describing patterns or rules that can be seen or imitated"[11] that is different from propositional logic. First of all, this logic is a "descriptive" rather than a prescriptive activity. Like Wiesel's reflections on the faith lives of survivors, this logic is applied after events and therefore often takes the form of a narrative of a sequence of events in a particular context and a reflection upon that narrative. This logic does not exclude normative discussion. Indeed, it must include norms and values if it is to adequately describe the elements of the faith event. But the norms and

values are known pragmatically, after the fact; they are "determined a posteriori, by their effects and usefulness, rather than by a priori criteria."[12]

If we are to speak of God and the life of faith in the Jewish context, the obvious place to look is scripture. Indeed, scripture may be seen as displaying most clearly the "logic of God" and the "logic of faith." In scriptural narrative, we have a description of the creative, revelatory, and redemptive events of God and an assessment of the values and norms that those events give rise to in the forms of sayings and laws. So scripture itself offers a logic of descriptions and rules that readers of scripture, like chemists with a formula in a lab, can "see and imitate." Thus, the faith events become "repeatable" and, in this sense, scripture functions to not only describe but provide a template for more faith events. But the unique quality of scripture as a logic of God and faith is that the descriptions of events include within them the *transformation* of events. In reflecting on the special character of the logic of scripture, Ochs underscores this transformative dimension. As he puts it, "Scripture does not introduce logics, but it transforms them, which is to say that it does not introduce concepts (icons, products of human self-awareness) but transforms them."[13] Perhaps another way of saying this is that scripture usually establishes, through narrative, the everyday context of human life—the context of working, traveling, rearing young, being sick, and sinning. Into this human context, God then enters to transform the situation from the mundane to the sacred, from work to rest, from sickness and sin and death to healing and life. Thus, the transformative character of scripture is to address a real situation of suffering and attempt to heal it. Indeed, Ochs likes to points out that the paradigmatic logic of scripture is displayed in the lines of Exodus 3: "I have surely seen the suffering of my people . . . and heard their cry," and *ehyeh imakh*, "I will be with you."

I will have more to say about the transformative and healing capacities of scripture and of its relationship to liturgy and the Shoah but would now point to a final quality of the logic of scripture that Ochs identifies. This is the "vagueness" of scripture, the fact that the meaning of a scriptural passage is often unclear and even written so as to defy simple understanding. In this regard, we need only look back at Exodus 3:14 to God's self-naming as *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, "I will be what I will be." Now, again, this unclarity and vagueness could be taken as a sign of the illogical, or even irrational character of scripture. But Ochs asks us for the patience to see the logic in it. "I will be what I will be" means God cannot be defined in any straightforward way. It means God has infinite freedom and humans are unable to grasp or control him. The vagueness of God's name also signifies that the logic of God and the corresponding logic of scripture require interpretation and tradition and commentary. Scripture is, in a sense, humble, unfinished, and hypothetical and requires readers to interpret it to yield its meaning.[14]

The call for patience and interpretation to "finish" or establish the meaning of scripture for the contemporary reader brings us to one more element of

the logic of scripture. And that element involves practice and experience. This is an element that Lindbeck stresses. Knowing God through a cultural–linguistic system requires languages and skills that need to be mastered. Belief in God issues then from practice, use, and performance in religious language as in a language game. If one spends most of his waking hours enmeshed in the logics of propositions and in meeting utilitarian objectives, it will be very hard to understand the logic of scripture and the discourses of God and Judaism. It is thus not at all strange that so many contemporary Jews find it hard to believe in God and to participate in Jewish liturgies. God and Judaism come to one neither through birth nor through a momentary flash of revelation but through a long education and disciplined use of special discourses and practices. This rule is nicely put by Rabbi Yose in chapter 2 of *Pirke Avot* (*The Saying of the Fathers*): "Give yourself to the studying of Torah, for it does not come to you automatically by inheritance."

The Logic of Scripture and the Shoah

If we return to the Shoah with the logic of scripture instead of the logic of the syllogism and proposition, it should already be clear that scripture offers immense resources for a response.

From Genesis through Chronicles, the Jewish scriptures are fundamentally concerned with issues of human fallibility, exile, murder, famine, genocide, slavery, persecution, generational continuity, and survival. As one reads the text of the Bible, there is little sense that Israel ever feels safe and secure from harm and threat. There is also little sense that everything bad that happens to Israel is caused by God and that all enemies of Israel are controlled by God. There is the Deuteronomic view that Israel's failure to follow the commandments will result in negative consequences (see Deut. 11). And many of the prophets do present world history as controlled by God and ultimately revolving around the destiny of Israel. Still, these views are contrasted with the principle of human free will that is underscored in Genesis. And the notion of a covenant suggests that human history is in both God's and human hands. The Bible therefore suggests opposed and conflicting views of the responsibility for human and Jewish history. Given this, the assumptions in Rubenstein's formulation that "God is the omnipotent author of the human drama" so that therefore 1) no evil and no destruction should come to his chosen people, and 2) if there is destruction, God is responsible for sending that destruction are too simple and clear-cut and not adequately warranted by biblical narratives.

However, if God cannot always secure the protection of Israel, what seems to be true in the biblical narratives is that He can provide hope and trust in the midst of the insecurity of human existence. Hope and trust do come from God—but they come from God who presents himself, not before the human crisis, as its "omnipotent author," but in the midst of and after the crisis to

save, console, and restore Israel. Thus, as God himself refers to himself in his most public revelation, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:1). This can be paraphrased to mean "I am the God who you know through my saving acts, through my compassion that you see in the midst of your suffering." The theologian Janet Soskice, from the University of Cambridge, has argued that many of the theological characteristics of God—like omnipotence and omniscience—come not from the Bible but from Greek philosophy.[15] This philosophy begins the long tradition of Western propositional thought; but this thought, for all its power and influence, is unscriptural in its form and logic.

The genius of the biblical text is that the narrative manages to represent the real terror and insecurity of human existence at the same time that it also gives hope and healing and redemption. But redemption, as we see it in scripture, never delivers finality, tranquility, and security. As the people learn very quickly after they have been released from slavery and even after Sinai, the journey to redemption has barely begun. Thus, the logic of the theodicy of scripture cannot be said with the simple proposition "God is the author of history." The logic is something like "God is with you in your suffering" or even better (and closer to Ex. 3:14), "I am with you in your suffering now and I will be with you in your future suffering." Here, in my paraphrase of Exodus 3:14, we see that scriptural theodicy comes not as a statement or proposition but as an address, a presence of God that is related in the first person. Job, the archetypal innocent sufferer in scripture, receives God's response to him precisely in this way, by way of a direct first-person address (Job 38:1). Note that scriptural theodicy does not eradicate suffering, and it does not provide particularly good explanations for suffering. It does provide some explanations, but they are multiple and contradictory and sporadic and therefore vague. Thus, at times, it is human sin that causes suffering; at times, it is God's test or trial, or the sins of the fathers. But we do not know, for example, why the child is orphaned, the poor thrown into poverty, or the widow widowed, and Job does not really know why he suffered his many indignities. Scripture stands in front of human suffering like the humble scientist stands in front of the origins of the universe and the doctor in front of the incurable disease; scripture stands with humility and yet with ever new hypotheses and constant hope. Like the physicist who doesn't have the luxury of saying, "Since I need two contradictory explanations to explain it, light doesn't exist," scripture cannot say, "Since I can't explain innocent human suffering, it doesn't exist." Scripture says, "This is the best I can do in explaining it, but it exists, and, moreover, I must respond to it not fundamentally to explain it, but to heal it, and if not to heal it, to help people cope with it." And scripture takes the same approach to its ultimate mystery that is God. Scripture cannot say that because it cannot adequately explain or describe God, God does not exist. Like human suffering, God is an assumed reality for scripture. Scripture tries with humility and

perseverance to describe God and the consequences of God's actions as best it can. And the "as best it can" is complex, hypothetical, contradictory, and vague; but in its complexity and vagueness, it is, what Ochs would call, more "rational" and more "logical," more "scientific" and more exact than the exacting and clear logic of Greek and modern philosophy.

After the most radical event of destruction that happened to the Jewish people before the Shoah, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, the rabbis offered some reasons that it occurred. The most well-known rabbinic explanation was that the destruction occurred because of *sinat hinam*, "needless hatred" of Jew for Jew. This explanation for one of the most monumental events of destruction in Jewish history is so paltry that it suggests, at least to me, that the rabbis really did not understand why the Temple was destroyed. It is furthermore remarkable that they expended so little effort, at least from the textual evidence we have, trying to understand it. Instead of developing a theodicy for the destruction, they focused on building up new life-giving texts, laws, and institutions. These new texts, laws, and institutions sustained Jews through countless events of persecution, pogroms, inquisitions, and expulsion up until the Shoah. This brings us to back to the Shoah and to a related question. Given that Jews experienced so many disasters before the Shoah, why was this event deemed new and different? This brings us to the issue of what is unique about the Shoah and why it was that it challenged the post-Shoah Jewish community so deeply.

The Shoah and Modernity

I agree with the philosophers Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman,[16] and the theologian Irving Greenberg[17] when they argue that what makes the Shoah unique is not the hatred of the Jew that fueled it, but the uniquely modern institutions of government, civil bureaucracy, industry, science, and technology that were used to carry it out. The Shoah is thus inextricably tied up with modernity. And what the Shoah reveals is the dark underside of the "value-free," and the utilitarian and economic ethic of modernity that could so easily turn the Jew into a nonperson. What the Shoah reveals about modernity is its cool capacity for dehumanization. Thus, the age that was the first to produce a notion of the inviolable "rights of man" was also the first to deprive humans of not only their rights but the dignity of their humanity. Once dehumanized, the Jew was equated with animals, insects, bacteria, things. They could then be dealt with as a troublesome excess commodity that had to be disposed of or a disease that needed to be eradicated as quickly, cheaply, and efficiently as possible.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi has also addressed the issue of the connection of modernity and the Shoah. He does this, however, through discussing the anti-Judaism of the Church and the racial anti-Semitism that was developed in

modernity.[18] For all its hatred of Jews, the Church never committed genocide against them. The Church clearly had bad things to say about Jews, and at times the Church segregated or expelled Jews; but it did not commit mass murder against them. In the main, the Church recognized Jews as ensouled beings and creatures of God.

Irving Greenberg develops the issue of the Shoah and modernity in a specifically theological manner by taking up Rubenstein's issue of the "death of God." Greenberg suggests that God did not die after Auschwitz, but that the modern person had abandoned God before the Shoah. If God was dead, as Nietzsche proclaimed, "Everything was possible." Humans could become supermen or devils, Gods or executioners. Greenberg refers to the most significant consequence of the abandonment of God before the Shoah as the loss of the "fear of God."[19] The fear of God means the recognition of God as the ultimate all-seeing eye, final judge, and last arbiter of justice. Therefore, the loss of fear of God before the Shoah contributed to an atmosphere in which Jews could be dehumanized and their "industrial killing" could occur.

Greenberg argues then that, after the Shoah, the issue is no longer whether or not God is dead, but how to restore and repair the "image of God," and "the fear of God" as a moral necessity. The issue is how to rebuild a civilization in which genocide is no longer possible. After the Shoah, those who would place their trust in humanism, in the human institutions of government, economics, and culture, must explain why it is that the great secular and humanistic institutions of modernity could not prevent or stop a genocide from occurring in the heart of the most "civilized" nations of the world. Greenberg argues that we must, of course, rebuild humanistic institutions, he is not advocating a return to medieval society, but he argues that, after the Shoah, we must equally rebuild religious institutions and find ways to re-imagine God.

God and the Cultural–Linguistic System

The process of "abandoning God" before the Shoah was fueled by new modern ideologies of secularism and powerful arguments launched by the likes of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche. However, to return to our discussion of God and the logic of scripture, Ochs would argue that it can all be boiled down to an issue of logic. Western intellectuals abandoned God before the Shoah because they were following a propositional logic that simply could not account for God. In some way, Kant paved the way for this in the eighteenth century, when he said that pure reason can achieve knowledge only of the phenomenal world; it cannot know the noumenal realm of God, freedom, immortality. Kant, of course, did not say that the noumenal realm did not exist; indeed, he argued that one had to assume it to make ethical life possible. But a more positivist mind could easily say that since we cannot know it, it does not exist, or it is irrational to claim that it does. What Ochs suggests is that knowledge of God is

possible, but it requires a different logic than does propositional logic. Ochs argues that different logics are not only possible but that they now exist. Indeed, they had to be created if physicists were to continue to understand the physical properties of the universe and the laws of basic science. I would suggest that creative theologians like Mendelssohn, Cohen, and Rosenzweig faced an analogous situation in relationship to God and ethics in their day and that we face the same problem today. Like physicists, theologians do not have the luxury of saying, "Since I cannot explain it, it does not exist." *Rather, after the Shoah and in a world in which genocide and ethnic violence continues to occur, we must continue to meet the challenge of formulating the logic of God.* By pointing to the Shoah here, and linking the challenge to theology that it poses, I am, in a Kantian fashion, moving away from the model of scientific discovery to the moral domain. But unlike Kant, I do not have to turn God and theology over to some impossible noumenal knowledge. I can turn, instead, to an alternative nonpropositional logic. This logic is available in the quantum theory and uncertainty principle of physics but, as we have already seen throughout this book, this logic, especially as it pertains to God, is available in scripture.

When we move to scripture to learn about God, we quickly come to understand that God cannot be known in the abstract or in the individual mind. In George Lindbeck's terms, God requires a particular cultural–linguistic system to be expressed. Perhaps this is another way of saying that God is not omnipotent. God requires, texts, liturgies, and institutions to support him. In Peter Berger's terms, God requires social "plausibility structures"—rituals, liturgy, schools—to sustain Him. So, rebuilding the "image of God" after the Shoah for Jews is a matter of rebuilding the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. In this regard, I find Rosenzweig's *Star* to be extremely valuable. Part 1 of the *Star* may be considered an attempt to establish the philosophical *possibility* of God and the possibility that there is a relationship between God, World, and Human. With part 1 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig uses a nonpropositional logic to establish, for the Western intellectual, that God language is possible, that belief in God does not require suspension of the cognitive and theoretical mind. Parts 2 and 3 of the *Star* establish the *plausibility* of God and of the relation of God, world, and human through the notions of creation, revelation, and redemption.

In Rosenzweig's terms, scriptural theodicy is predicated on a "relational logic" that places God, world, and human first in separation, and then in connection with one to the other. The separation establishes uniqueness and difference and also isolation, aloneness, and exile. But the terms of the connection—creation, revelation, redemption—mean that the three elements are not ultimately foreign from one another and, indeed, enjoy a fundamental relatedness. Creation means that world and humans issue from common sources and have a common purpose and direction and meaning. Revelation means that God cares fundamentally about humans. And redemption means that humans

are responsible for both the redemption of the world and God. Separation and exile establish the conditions of suffering that remain, but revelation and redemption means that exile is not the final word and condition, but only a temporal pre-condition. In part 3 of the *Star*, Rosenzweig uses liturgy as a theater of the redeemed in which Jews participate in redemption before redemption. In liturgy, Jews act out and perform redemption. In liturgy, Jews come to know redemption as an experienced eternal reality that they will know again, in a far deeper way, in messianic redemption.

Rosenzweig's *Star*, as I have already said, includes the re-formulation of the God–world–human relation. What this does is establish the context within which a theodicy of hope can be developed. This relationship is understood through the terms "creation," "revelation," and "redemption." This means that the world is the primary home and locus of the human being, not some other reality beyond the world. The relation God–world, as it is realized in creation, means the ultimate goodness of the world and the continued living vibrancy of the world. Creation means that even in the blood-stained grounds of Auschwitz–Birkenau, which will be forever remembered by survivors with images of excrement mixed with red blood and black mud, grass will grow and the land will become as it is now, full of green flowering plants. The God, world, human triadic relationship is the assurance of a future redemption for the world and humans despite all suffering. Redemption means that in the span of time, exile and separation from God is not the permanent condition. Redemption means that Israel has experienced redemption (from Egypt) and will persist and will experience redemption again. But since the span of time is long and redemption is assured yet not here, Rosenzweig points us to the experience of redemption available now in liturgy.

Liturgical Theodicy

The liturgical experience is essentially an experience of transformation that works through a logic of transformation. Ochs refers to this as a feature of scripture, and it is not clear whether or not Hebrew scripture learns this feature from cultic-liturgy or vice versa. But certainly the transformative dimension is a central characteristic of all liturgy. As Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner have taught us, the logic of liturgy includes a path or movement from one state to another. The most-obvious liturgies of transformation are those that accompany puberty, marriage, and death. Judaism, like all culture, has these liturgies, and they remain central vehicles of knowledge and socialization.

All of the Ethical Monotheists saw the transformational dimension of liturgy, and each presented a unique interpretation of it. Thus, Mendelssohn points us, in his comments on idolatry, to the cognitive transformations available in liturgy. Fixed "idolatrous" conceptions of God and life are questioned through liturgy, opening up a representation of the dynamic quality of God.

Cohen stresses that the transformation in liturgy is primarily ethical. In liturgy, the guilty and sinning self regains itself as pure and capable of ethical action. Rosenzweig suggests that liturgy is largely about time. Through liturgy, the Jew moves from time to eternity. What I want to suggest here, however, is that Jewish liturgy has an important theodic component. Liturgy addresses the individual and the community in the situation of crisis and pain and takes that individual and community through a transformation in which there is an experience of hope and healing. This transformation is available only to the individual and the community through the performance of liturgy.

The theodic dimension of Jewish liturgy can be seen as part of all Jewish worship if we look at the central Amidah, or standing prayer. In the petitionary section of the Amidah, in the requests for knowledge, repentance, forgiveness, health, sustenance, justice, and so on, Jews at once admit their lacks and needs. In the transition to the last section of the Amidah, forgiveness, healing, justice, and redemption is given, and in the last section of the prayer the congregation thanks God and acknowledges his healing power. This theodic structure is less obvious in Shabbat, where petitions are not allowed, but we could speak of Shabbat itself, as Rosenzweig does, as the transformation to the experience of redemption. The high holy days have significant theodic components as well. These holy days constantly refer to the suffering caused by human sin, forgetfulness, and guilt. They employ liturgical processes of confession, repentance, and fasting that attempt to cleanse and renew both the individual and community and move them to a new state of purity. The crucial thing to understand about a liturgical response to suffering is that it is not mainly thought but is performed and enacted by the human body. What this means is that the problem of theodicy cannot be solved with simple logic but it can be expressed, addressed, and resolved liturgically.

The Theodicy of the Passover Seder and the Shoah

For a more extended example of a liturgical event that can respond to the Shoah let us look again at the Passover Seder. The Passover Seder clearly displays a theodic structure for it begins, "Now we are slaves," and ends, "We have been brought from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy." Yet the Seder meal will only work as a redemptive experience if the participants, like actors in a play or method actors in a film, allow themselves to see themselves as slaves at the beginning of the Seder. The crucial point is the beginning point, as participants must really see themselves as slaves in Egypt. They must eat a piece of cardboard cracker like the slaves did, taste the bitter herb and horseradish, and then the liturgy itself will carry them to redemption in which they will drink wine and eat a feast like a free person. Thus, what the Seder meal does is to reenact suffering and spiritual despair and then take the sufferer through a process in which freedom is won, redemption granted, and hope

restored. This process is not only represented but it is also experienced through corporeal acts of eating, through a collective process of storytelling, and through singing and performing symbolic actions. But a crucial feature of this redemption is that it is granted in religious theater and not in reality. At the end of the Seder, the American Jew remains in America and says next year in Jerusalem. The poor widow remains poor, and the world remains unredeemed, but hope is restored because hope was performed in the theatrical context of the Seder. Hope is restored because the Seder illustrates that there was another time of great suffering and despair when Israel was redeemed from slavery to freedom.

Now if we look at the Passover Seder in relation to the Shoah, there are a number of points to be made. First of all the most chilling thing is to realize that despite the Enlightenment, and the granting of civil rights in the modern world, Jews were enslaved again and they were reduced to a condition that was worse than enslavement to Pharaoh. This makes the words of the Haggadah strikingly relevant. "Not only one has risen up against us to destroy us but in all ages they rise up against us to destroy us." Thus, for survivors of the Shoah, it is certainly not hard at all to identity with the Israelite slaves at the beginning of the Haggadah. And even for the Jews who did not experience the Holocaust the plethora of witness accounts, films, and books like Wiesel's *Night* gives the words of the Haggadah a frightening power. And many contemporary Haggadot make the connection between the Exodus and the Shoah explicit by including actual and symbolic references to it.

Now there is a crass and overly simplistic interpretation of the Shoah that utilizes the Passover story to suggest that not only did modern Jews experience another slavery but they also experienced another redemption in the return of the Jews to the land of Israel. Thus, God redeemed modern-day Jews by giving them the state of Israel in 1948 and this state represents the fulfillment of the ancient promise given to Abraham and to Moses. However, the easy counterargument to this is that 98 percent of the Jews at the camps were murdered and were not redeemed and six million Jews were murdered and most of the Jewish communities of Europe were destroyed. Thus the Shoah looks more like an anti-redemption moment, an Exodus with no exit, rather than an experience of salvation.

But here again I think that liturgy can be helpful. For what the Passover liturgy and, indeed, all Jewish liturgy says is that the real and actual world in which humans live remains in exile. That is a fundamental assertion of Judaism. We have not yet been redeemed; the messiah has not yet come. Thus, we should not be surprised that horrible events like the Shoah and genocide will occur and slavery, poverty, illness, and injustice will persist in our world. But in the meantime and before redemption comes, there are liturgies of hope, like the Passover Seder and the Sabbath and the High Holidays, that not only preserve our sense of humanity but also inspire us with ideals and dreams of justice and motivate us to go out and do our part to repair the world until the messiah comes.

In summary, what I am suggesting is that both the scriptures and liturgies of Judaism are structured less to provide neat answers to questions such as why the innocent suffer than to provide strategies for the preservation of hope and the motivation to continue to fight for justice in a world that suffers from the condition of exile. For Judaism, hope and justice cannot be separated from God. But God is that which cannot be said in clear language and cannot be seen with the naked eye. The representation of God requires complex linguistic and logical expression and a series of actions and communal performances. The entire structure of Jewish scriptures and liturgies then becomes an elaborate signifying system that gives witness to the unsaid and reveals the unseen as it fortifies the human spirit.

The Sermon and Jewish Theology

I have argued that the goals of a post-Shoah theodicy should be to provide hope, healing, and the motivation to rebuild Judaism and prevent further genocides. Doing this requires an effort to rebuild the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism, with its various scriptural resources, so that it can articulate a language of God. The theodic structures of Jewish liturgies like the Passover Seder provide an important resource for this. That the Jewish community is at least intuitively aware of the healing powers of Jewish liturgy can be seen in the extensive effort to create new liturgies of commemoration and healing after the Shoah. Thus we have the new holy day, Yom HaShoah, added to the Jewish liturgical calendar, and references to the Shoah added to the High Holiday liturgies and Tisha B'Av (the ninth of Av) and communal Yiskor (memorial) liturgies. Although an investigation of these liturgies would be very interesting in the context of the argument of this book, a full treatment would require another book-length study. I will therefore take just one more example of a common liturgical element in modern and contemporary liturgy. Concentrating on the often-overlooked theodic resources for post-Shoah theology that we have in the sermon, I will suggest that the sermon not only offers resources for post-Shoah theodicy but could also be important for contemporary Jewish theology and philosophy more broadly conceived.

Among the host of important changes that German Reform Judaism brought to liturgy in the nineteenth century was the insertion of the rabbi's sermon. There is a long tradition of a *dvar Torah* ("word of Torah") in Jewish liturgy, but this was usually a brief explication of the weekly Torah portion.[20] German Reform Jews expanded this to a full-blown sermon given in the vernacular language of the congregation. The sermon had the effect of making the liturgy relevant to contemporary events and contemporary Jews and was adopted by virtually all forms of Judaism in the twentieth century.

What intrigues me about the sermon as a locus for a response to the Shoah is that the preacher can bring this horrible series of deadly events that occurred

outside the liturgical world into that world for healing. If the God–world relationship is undetectable in everyday life and human history, that relationship is still vivid in liturgical theater. If the vocabulary of theology is difficult to use in the contemporary world, that vocabulary is still intact in Jewish liturgy. If propositional logic is ever present in the work life of most Jews, Jewish liturgy is not only built upon scriptural passages and logic but has the reading of the Torah as a central liturgical act. Beyond this, the theodic structure of Jewish liturgy provides a context of healing and hope into which the Shoah, with its radical challenges, can be inserted. This means that the despair, doubt, and absence of meaning we find in the Shoah finds a healing answer in the deep theodic structure of the liturgy into which it is inserted. A sermon on the Shoah can be given any time of year without having to conform to the limitations of the holy day of Yom HaShoah. For one example of a very powerful post-Shoah sermon, I offer excerpts from Eugene Borowitz's "Auschwitz and the Death of God." Borowitz begins by articulating the challenge to Jewish faith that the Shoah represents:

> The Jews have known God from their history but what shall we say of his presence in Jewish history in recent years? Where was he when Hitler did what no man should ever do? Why did he not reveal himself to a supplicating, forsaken people who might have died in triumph if only they could have been certain that they died in his name?

Borowitz responds:

> The Jewish people knows [*sic*] that history is more than the house of bondage. We came into being as a people in Egypt and pledged ourselves to God at Sinai so that the message of redemption, dim and obscure as it may be in one era or another, will never be forgotten among men. As long as we are in history, faithful to him, men cannot ignore God.[21]

Borowitz's "answer" to the Shoah is built on recalling the Jewish communal memory of the slavery and redemption from Egypt and exhorting Jews to retain their commitment to the "message" of redemption. This means that the context for understanding the Shoah is the fundamental founding event of redemption that is recalled in every Jewish liturgical service. The message here is the fundamental one that God is with you and will be with you. Now, if that message does not make sense of the Shoah as a historical event, it does make sense now, at the moment that the sermon is given, as a liturgical event. It therefore functions to renew "basic faith" in God and even to allow Borowitz to add a further exhortation to remain faithful in and through history, so as not to "ignore God" and thereby give Hitler a posthumous victory.

Borowitz's assertion of hope does not stand as a proposition or argument; rather, it functions for healing, theodically, in the giving of the sermon orally to

the attentive audience. Especially for the postmodern Jewish intellectual, it is hard to hear words of God and faith. But within the synagogue, and in the context of liturgy, the healing power of God can still be activated. Outside the liturgy, even as written word, Borowitz's sermon may sound trite, shallow, or blind to the immensity of the challenge that the Shoah represents. But, with the music, texts, sacred space, and goodwill of the people present in the liturgical moment, Borowitz's words take flight and ring with a truth that emboldens the audience to reassert their faith and position as God's witness.

Given that the preacher has at her fingertips the full resources of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism, it is interesting to think of the sermon as a place for teaching and developing Jewish theology and Jewish thought. Mendelssohn suggests that liturgy provides signs that lead its participants to contemplate ultimate questions and seek wisdom from wise teachers. He explains this as an aftereffect of liturgical practices. But the sermon provides a context, in the heart of Jewish liturgy, for the preacher to help participants raise their questions and explore answers and responses in a public forum. If Mendelssohn is correct in asserting that the synagogue opens people to different forms of thinking and behaving than they are used to in ordinary life, the sermon can help articulate what those differences are and what difference they can make for thought and life. If may be hard to use God language in everyday life, but that very language is expected in liturgy. Thus, the sermon can activate a theological and philosophical and healing potential that may be only a hidden and obscure and unknown reality for even the regular participants in liturgy.

Post-Shoah Theology and Postmodernism

Up to this point I have focused on propositional attempts at Jewish theodicy on scriptural and liturgical alternatives. However, another form of post-Holocaust theology was developed after the first wave of post-Shoah theology in the 1960s and 1970s, often in tandem with postmodernism. The postmodern "death of the subject" has often been paired with the post-Shoah "death of God" and gave rise to a whole literary and philosophical culture,[22] along with a theology of absence. This form of post-Shoah theology takes advantage of the discourse of deformation, deconstruction, and radical expressions of negation in art, literature, and architecture. Some post-Shoah thinkers have turned to kabalistic and mystical notions of nothingness and contraction and medieval forms of "negative theology" to express the absence of God at Auschwitz. Zachary Braiterman has helped collect these varied theological expressions under the term "anti-theodicy." Braiterman describes the central thrust of anti-theodicy as "any religious response to the problem of evil whose proponents refuse to justify, explain, or accept as somehow meaningful the relationship between God and suffering."[23]

The first thing we see in "anti-theodicy" is an attempt to move beyond syllogistic and propositional logic. This it shares with postliberal and pragmatist logic. Yet anti-theodicy attempts to move even beyond nonpropositional logic and scripture to a kind of nonlogic or a-logic.[24] Anti-theodicy shares with postmodernism the attempt to deconstruct all propositions, dualities, ambiguities, and narratives about God after Auschwitz, whether they follow logic or contradict logic. Anti-theodicy employs deformed and empty narratives told by empty subjects, artworks that deconstruct themselves as the onlooker watches, buildings in which openings erupt in public spaces, music that pierces silence, all in an attempt to represent absence itself and to bring the viewer, reader, listener, back to the nonmeaning experience of the victims of the Shoah. There is no doubt that anti-theodicy is powerful and valuable. But anti-theodicy is precisely nontheodic, it is not restorative, it is not hopeful, it does not aim to rebuild after the Shoah. In this sense, it carries the danger of plunging those who come after the Shoah back into its despair. It thus carries the danger of a debilitating nihilism that cannot contribute to the rebuilding of the God–world–human relation and the cultural–linguistic systems of goodness that are required for the prevention of future genocides.

Anti-theodicy does have an ethical objective. The ethical thrust of the denial of meaning or value to suffering is to marshal all efforts to eradicate human suffering instead of developing justifications, especially theological justifications, for it. While this is a laudable objective, it is not clear that postmodernism and anti-theodicy is capable of supporting the kind of ethical agency and activity it says it desires. The death of the subject and the death of God and meaning offer the individual no supports and no sense that her activities will be effective or successful or "meaningful." Indeed, in so forcefully declaring the absence of meaning and goodness, anti-theodicy radically questions the efficacy of ethical action and agency. It, thus, threatens to carry all hopes for ethical action into a black hole. Anti-theodicy, with its connections to postmodern art, offers an interesting and creative aesthetic that can be fascinating and thought provoking. But, where it fails is in the ethical and theological domain. Anti-theodicy as an apophatic or negative moment in a larger theodic continuum can be productive in disclosing the radicality of the ethical and theological challenges that the Shoah represents. But on its own, anti-theodicy makes an empty statement of nonmeaning, nonethics, nonlogic, and nontheology.

Liturgy, Sacred Space, and the State of Israel

The Cultural–Linguistic Critique of Ethical Monotheism

In the cultural–linguistic approach, religions are seen as complete social, cultural, and ideational systems that endeavor to shape a human world that is infused with a sense of ultimate meaning and value. To sustain this world,

Berger suggests that both ideologies of legitimation and institutional "plausibility structures" must be constructed and maintained. The systems of religion must be resistant enough to endure crisis yet flexible enough to adapt to change. In order to respond to change, religions are reinterpreted in accordance with the needs of time and place.

We may say that the German Ethical Monotheists performed a series of acts of interpretation to adapt Judaism to the exigencies of life in the modern European diaspora. However, given the ubiquity of spatial references in the Bible, Talmud, and Jewish liturgy, it is remarkable how little attention the Ethical Monotheists paid to it. The most compelling explanation for this is that the Judaism of the Ethical Monotheists is a Judaism of modern diaspora Jews that assumes the landless, stateless, and native language–deprived character of diaspora Judaism. Given these real limitations, Ethical Monotheism attempts to make religious virtues out of them. Thus, in the hands of the Ethical Monotheists, the deprivations of Judaism become its spiritual strengths. Without land, state, or native language, Jews can concentrate on spiritual and ethical ideals. Without material power, Jews suffer for the sake of their ideals, for the sake of the poor and powerless, and for the sake of God. Yet to accommodate this interpretation, the "sacred canopy" of Judaism is significantly restricted and the cultural–linguistic system significantly truncated.

We know that the Ethical Monotheists felt challenged by modern philosophical and Christian charges that traditional Judaism was excessively particularistic and too tied to the people and land of Israel to be an active force in either the individual nations of Europe or the creation of a new modern universalistic culture. Thus, we can also explain their legitimations for a Judaism without space and power as a counter to the charge of Jewish particularism. The Ethical Monotheists downplay the importance of Jewish nationhood and the land of Israel to Judaism to ease the fears of their non-Jewish hosts that Jews are a "nation within a nation," a foreign element in a Christian world.

Aside from their ideologies of Jewish homelessness, we can see the limitations of Rosenzweig's and Cohen's presentations of Judaism in the canon or circle of Jewish liturgies on which they choose to concentrate. This is a canon that focuses almost exclusively on the biblical holidays of Shabbat, the three pilgrimage festivals, and the high holy days. In this canon there is almost no attention to the postbiblical historical festivals of Hanukah and Tisha B'Av and the quasi-historical festival of Purim.[25] Most importantly, however, they fail to give significant attention to the most frequently performed liturgies of the daily morning, afternoon, and evening services. Rosenzweig's choice of liturgies accomplishes his desire to circumscribe Judaism around an ahistorical, eternal core. His liturgical canon also takes Judaism out of the flow of contemporary history, politics, and statecraft and delivers these realities to Christendom and its missionary work.[26] Cohen is certainly concerned with history, politics, and statecraft, but it is not Jewish history, politics, and statecraft that concern him.[27]

Rather, Jewish liturgy prepares Jews to serve the larger social ethics and new religio-philosophical, cultural consciousness that is to be formed through the politics and historical processes in modern Europe and throughout the world.

Given the radical surgery that the Ethical Monotheists performed on the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism, a contemporary Judaism must begin with a "hermeneutics of retrieval" of the fullness of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. The ultimate purpose of a cultural–linguistic approach is not to initiate retrieval for retrieval's sake alone. But retrieval is a first step, to display the full range of resources and possibilities in the cultural–linguistic system, so interpreters can make the most-appropriate and meaningful adaptations of the system to the contemporary situation. With the contemporary return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel, one could easily argue that the situation calls for insight from the cultural–linguistic system on the nature of sacred space.

One way to embark on such a retrieval and interpretation of Jewish liturgy would be to fashion a more complete ethical monotheist theory that would bring Mendelssohn, Cohen, and Rosenzweig together. This would display both the ways in which liturgy opens Jews to a sense of eternity and also show how liturgy prepares and motivates Jews to work in the world of history and politics for the world's redemption. Similarly, a Christian thinker could articulate the twofold foci of Christian liturgy as consisting of both an inner ahistorical dimension and an outer thrust toward the world. But, on the Jewish side, a fuller Ethical Monotheistic theory of liturgy would still lack the full exposition that a cultural–linguistic approach would give it. A cultural–linguistic critique of the Ethical Monotheist's view of liturgy would be that the intertextual grammar of liturgy gets replaced or overruled by the "supergrammar" or "metasystem" of the ideas of Ethical Monotheism. Liturgy then becomes an expression of or vehicle to transmit Ethical Monotheism, and the inner dynamics of the cultural–linguistic system gets lost.

As a yearlong cycle of ritual behaviors, the system of Jewish liturgy has its own intrinsic movement that brings the worshipper through a series of spiritual and moral transformations. The system of Jewish liturgy is constructed as a form of spiritual discipline; it is a journey that engenders a spiritual *askesis*. It is a semiotic code that holds the key to a meaningful and good life. Each festival itself involves a dynamic that attempts to transform the psychological, social, spiritual, and moral state of its participants. Rosenzweig was certainly attuned to some of this, but his focus on eternity limited him from a full exposition of the dynamics at work in Jewish liturgy. Similarly, Cohen brings new insights into liturgy as a process of individual moral purification and as an inspiration to the work of redemption in the world. Yet, even given the insights into Jewish liturgy that the Ethical Monotheists develop, there are still dimensions and depths that are left out and that a cultural–linguistic approach to liturgy can help retrieve.

Cohen's and Rosenzweig's Powerless Jew after the Shoah

Included in both Cohen's and Rosenzweig's portraits of the Jew is a religious figure who is a spiritual giant and physically powerless. Both Cohen and Rosenzweig expressed the peculiar diaspora view of Jewish power that might be best summed up by Elijah as "the still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12) that operates "not by might, nor by power, but by spirit" (Zach. 4:6). Cohen has a clear explanation for Jewish suffering throughout history that can be traced back to Isaiah's "Suffering Servant" (Isa. 53):

> Jewish history, considered as history, that is, insofar as it exhibits moral ideas, is a continuous chain of human, of national, suffering. These servants of the Lord have always been despised and pierced through, cut off from the land of life. . . . The messianic people suffer vicariously for mankind. This opinion about the mission of Israel cannot be an exaggeration, if the messianic monotheism is the historical task of the religion of Judaism. The vicarious sufferer is the solicitor who intercedes for the sin of the peoples. (*RR*, 267)

As spiritually powerful as the image of the Jew as the suffering servant of humanity is, and as ethically elevating as it is as an explanation for Jewish suffering, it falters in the face of the Shoah. This mission not only condemns Jews to a kind of eternal victimhood and suffering but also places Jews outside the sources of material, social, and political power through which they could secure their lives and also act with greater ability to heal the suffering of the poor and the oppressed.

One could use Cohen's own neo-Kantianism against his view of the Jewish suffering self. Cohen specifically argues that it is not enough to be "for the other"; one must also be "for the self." This is the meaning of Yom Kippur to Cohen. In order to fulfill its ethical mission in the world, the self must be purified, strengthened, and rendered whole before God. The construction of the self as an autonomous "I," through the liturgies of atonement, suggests that personal autonomy and integrity is a necessary condition for the work of social healing. This follows the simple saying of Hillel in *Pirke Avot*: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, what am I?" (1:12). Hillel's principle is directed toward the individual, but it could apply equally to the people Israel as a whole. The need for Jews to obtain a modicum of autonomy and power to assure their autonomy, their independence, their identity, their liturgical and ritual practices, and their ability to act in the world to heal it is all the more obvious after the Shoah.

Rosenzweig's passive ideology, in which Jews must keep themselves out of the stream of world power, politics, and history, is likewise called into question after the Shoah. Rosenzweig's argument for the need to preserve Jewish

eternality and purity and not be sullied by the processes of world history, politics, and nationalism is made clear in the third part of the *Star*.

> The people of eternity must forget the growth of the world; it may not think about it. The world, its world, must be locked up and finished, only the soul may still be on the way but it arrives at what is outermost indeed, also, only in one bound. And if it does not arrive, it is solely a matter of waiting and wandering. . . . Waiting and wandering are affairs of the soul; only growing falls on the side of the world. And the eternal people forgo precisely this growing. Its peoplehood is already at the place to which the peoples of the world aspire. It is already at the goal. (*Star*, 348)

Eternity, in Rosenzweig's view, is already available to the Jew. The processes of history and growth toward the goal are unnecessary for her. The Jewish soul may seek a spiritual goal, but this goal is available only through spiritual activity. In the meantime, the soul does not work in the world, but eerily, like the classic Christian portrait of the wandering Jew, she passively "waits and wanders." Rosenzweig's logic does not place the blame for the Shoah on Jewish shoulders, but he also offers Jews few resources with which to protect themselves from further victimization at the hands of those who would attempt to destroy them.

After the Shoah, in which two-thirds of European Jewry was destroyed, the pacifist ideologies of the Ethical Monotheists take on both a fanciful and dangerously naïve quality. If the Jewish people represent a witness to Ethical Monotheism—if the Jews represent the "planting of the eternal in the midst" of the world—the eternal cannot be made manifest, and Ethical Monotheism cannot be properly championed if the Jewish people are destroyed. Neither Cohen nor Rosenzweig imagined the Shoah and its serious threat to the very existence of the Jewish people. Therefore, they could maintain a diasporic vision of Judaism without land, space, and material power. But for most contemporary Jews, the Shoah and the establishment of the State of Israel that followed have meant an end to the unquestioned acceptance of the justifications for a diaspora Judaism developed in the Babylonian Talmud and by the Ethical Monotheists. The post-Shoah and Zionist situation changes the dynamics of the presence of the Jews in the world. We need not call this situation messianic, but we certainly recognize it is revolutionary. The revolution involves massive new opportunities and challenges—material, spiritual, and ethical—that have often been summarized as a "Jewish return to history."[28] Time, text, exile, minority status, spiritual power are now challenged by revived categories of space, land, home, majority status, and material power. We may say that the crucial issue for the reinterpretation of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism in the post-Shoah and Zionist period is to revive its

categories of space, land, and power without jeopardizing its spiritual power and the ideals of universal human redemption that were so articulately presented by the Ethical Monotheists. In this regard, I will now look at one piece of Jewish liturgy in which the categories of space, land, and power are placed in the center.

Sacred Space in the Daily Hallel

There are countless places to look in liturgy for references to sacred space. The most basic prayer of the Shema contains important references to the land of Israel (Deut. 6, Deut. 11). One could also look to the Amidah for it includes specific prayers for a return of Israel to the land and for the reestablishment of the Davidic Kingdom, the Temple, and its liturgies. One could also point to Hanukah as a holiday that is solely focused on Israel's dedication and rededication to the Temple, Jerusalem, and the preservation of a Jewish presence in Jerusalem.

However, for our discussion of sacred space in the liturgical system of Judaism, I have chosen the series of psalms (145–150) that are chanted each morning and often referred to as the "Daily Hallel."[29] I chose these psalms because they are chanted every day, showing their importance. They are also brief and easily analyzed. Finally, they exhibit what I see as a common pattern, in regard to sacred space, that we see throughout the liturgical system of Judaism. This pattern starts with God, moves to the larger world, then moves to Israel and Jerusalem, before returning to the larger world. In this movement, the sacred space of the land and Jerusalem is alternatively prioritized and relativized, centralized and marginalized in relation to the greater world. This mimics the very processes of God's creation and election of Israel because both are potentially holy and meant to serve God and the world.

The daily Hallel begins with the *Ashrei*, the acrostic Psalm 145. This is a prayer of praise for God, which is a summary of the basics of biblical theology. God is presented as a just and merciful King. This is the God who is known by "his works"—"the creation of the world", and by "his acts"—"deeds of salvation and redemption." God may be the glorious supreme King, but he is also "near to all that call on him." He is thus ready "to uplift, feed," and "save" the needy in body and in spirit.

The rabbis regard the Ashrei as one of the most important of all the psalms. A famous rabbinic dictum has it that "those who say Psalm 145 three times daily can be certain that they will receive a share in the world to come" (Btal Berakot 4b). This psalm is remarkably universal in its scope and content. The psalm focuses on God's Kingdom, in which all who call on him are citizens and gain a hearing. God is the central actor in the world, and humans take on the liturgical duty of singing, praising, and blessing his "holy name

forever and ever." In Psalm 145, it is not clear where and at what time humans are praying. It could be the beginning or the end of time, it could be in the Temple; but it could also be in God's heavenly Temple and in his kingdom. We could say that these things are unimportant, for the main purpose of the psalm is to establish what Abraham Joshua Heschel has called the "ontological presupposition"[30] of God as origin and end, the creator and redeemer of all space and time, of all humanity.

The next psalm of the daily Hallel, Psalm 146, continues with the theme of God's power and expands upon this through attention to the oppressed, the hungry, the captives, and the socially forgotten ones. But the psalm also inserts references to God as "God of Jacob" and "God of Zion." This suggests the intricate connection between the land of Israel and the people, the children of Jacob, the people Israel. Indeed, the two are inseparable throughout the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. The theme of the connection between Israel and sacred space and Israel as God's people is carried forward in Psalm 147:

> The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; he gathers together the dispersed people of Israel . . .
> Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!
> He has indeed fortified your gates; he has blessed your children within. He establishes peace within your territory, and fills you with the finest wheat.
> He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes, his ordinances to Israel.
> He has not done so with the heathen nations; his ordinances they do not know.

This psalm brings us from the larger world to the specific land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem as the place of refuge for the dispersed people of Israel, and to the city as home, place of peace, plenty, and security. This psalm, thus, assumes that not all lands are the same. Indeed, outside, the land and city is dangerous and hostile. The dispersed people are scattered and homeless, food is scarce, the children are ill nourished, and the people in constant danger.

Here, Jerusalem appears in the function that Berger calls the creation of a "sacred canopy." This sacred canopy builds a home in the inhospitable natural world. However, in Psalm 147, it is not clear if Jerusalem is the actual city of Jerusalem or some idealized representation of the earthly city. It is likewise unclear if the children of Jacob to whom the psalm refers are all the people or only "those who revere him." So, as it turns to the particular people, Israel, and the special sacred place of Jerusalem, the psalm appears to "idealize" the people and the city. In this way, the sacred people and city hover in the space and time of the between, between the real and the ideal, between the potential and the actual, between the given and the yet to be achieved.

In Psalm 148 we move back out toward the larger world and to the creation of all space by God. Here the very existence of the world is presented as a proclamation of praise for God.

> Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights. Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars of light. Praise him highest heavens and waters that are above the heavens.

The fact that the natural world praises God means that nature itself is not to be praised, for that is a form of idolatry. Yet nature, itself, reveals the creative power of God. As the Qur'an and Islamic theologians suggest, nature is a sign that points to God. Nature reveals the order and lawfulness of God and nature; its beauty, harmony, and power reveals the order, harmony, and power of God.

> Let them praise the name of the Lord; for he commanded and they were created. He fixed them fast forever and ever; he gave a law which none transgresses. Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea-monsters and all depths, fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind, fulfilling his word.

That the natural world is a declaration of God's power, order, and majesty is presented in dramatic fashion in Heschel's *God in Search of Man*.[31] Like Mendelssohn, who argued that nature, in its "internal relations" (*J*, 93) stands as a revelation to the truth of God, Heschel points to nature as the first point of entry to an appreciation of God. Heschel specifically correlates the appreciation of nature to Jewish worship. Here, there seems to be no limits to the sacred quality of space as all the world, the earth and the heavens, the sea and its creatures, even the snow and the air declare the handiwork of god.

In the last two psalms of the daily Hallel, it becomes obvious that the Hallel is a liturgical celebration of both the time and space of redemption. This is suggested by references to the time in which a "new song" is sung and by references to a time of dancing and triumph of the meek, a time of judgment in which punishment is meted out to those who know not God.

> Sing a new song to the Lord, praise him in the assembly (*b'kahal*) of the faithful.
>
> Let Israel rejoice in its Maker; Let the children of Zion exult in their King, Let them praise his name with dancing. . . . For the Lord is pleased with his people; he adorns the meek with triumph. . . . Let the praises of God be in their mouth, and a double-edged sword in the hand, to execute vengeance upon the nations, punishment upon the peoples.

Finally, Psalm 150 makes the connections clear: the connection between the space of liturgy, the space of the sanctuary, the space of heaven, and the redeemed space of redemption.

> Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his glorious heaven.
> . . . Praise him with the blast of the Shofar, Praise him with the harp and the lyre. Praise him with drum and dance. Praise him with strings and flute. . . . Praise him with resounding cymbals; praise him with clanging cymbals. . . .
> Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord.
> Blessed be the Lord forever. Amen. Amen.
> Blessed out of Zion be the Lord who dwells in Jerusalem.
> Praise the Lord. . . .
> May the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen. Amen.

Certainly, one of the most insightful aspects of Rosenzweig's interpretation of Jewish liturgy is his argument that the high point in the moment of liturgy connects worshippers to eternal time, to the time beyond time. But as Psalm 150 shows, the liturgy that occurs in the space of the sanctuary is also connected to the space beyond space, the space in which the earthly and heavenly Jerusalem merge. This is redeemed space in which space opens up to accommodate the captives and the exiles and the dispersed of and faithful of Israel. This is the "fullness of space" that is filled with dancing, singing, resounding and clanging sounds. This is the space that opens out from Jerusalem and the people of Israel to encompass the whole earth. And this is the space that opens up infinitely so that it can hold the infinite presence of God, which fills the whole earth with glory!

Sacred space in Jewish liturgy moves back and forth from profane space outside of Jerusalem carefully through the gates of Jerusalem to the Temple to a process of purification and transformation whereby humans become "little less than angels." From this point the transformed ones look out on the world with a new perception in which all space is God's creation and therefore all space is sacred space. God's glory then can be recognized not only in the synagogue, Jerusalem, and the Temple, but everywhere. The experience of being in sacred space, like being in sacred time, has a potentially transformative effect on the ways in which Jews see themselves and their relation to the world.

One of the truly remarkable aspects of the daily Hallel for our reflections on sacred space is that it clearly shows that sacred space is made sacred precisely because of its connection to God. The natural world is potentially sacred because it was created by God. Yet the natural world is sacred only when it is in relation to God. Jerusalem will be the sacred city when God dwells there in the end of time and space as we know it. Jerusalem will be sacred when it is the receptacle for God's *kavod*, his weighty glory, at the end of time and space. The daily Hallel is carefully structured to avoid any sense that the world or the

land of Israel or Jerusalem are intrinsically sacred in themselves, without relation to God.

This explicit theological perspective on sacred space means that we must be careful in applying sociological theories to describe sacred space in the Bible. Certainly, a sense of a "home," a sense of security and order and orientation characterize the sacred space that any cultural–linguistic system creates, but the Bible and the Jewish cultural–linguistic system adds another element here. For the space under the sacred canopy very easily becomes fetishized and objectified as holy in itself, and then the holy life becomes equated with merely being in contact with the special space. This, of course, is a species of idolatry that monotheism opposes.

It is also instructive to note that the original context for the chanting of the psalms in the Hallel was the Ancient Temple in the periods of the Israelite monarchy. What this means is that even when the Davidic monarchy and its successors and the holy Temple stood, the psalms referred to neither of them as representing the Kingdom come. When chanted in their "original context," the psalms served the function they ought to retain today—to relativize the sacrality, holiness, and redemptive significance of the actual earthly Temple and Jerusalem and turn the Temple and Jerusalem into signs that point backward to the creation of the world as very good and leap forward to the space and time of the future redemption.

Conclusion: The Legacy of Ethical Monotheism

Idolatry and Its Discontents

As I conclude this section on sacred space, it is helpful to glance back to the Ethical Monotheists. Although these thinkers did not anticipate the Shoah or the State of Israel, and although their thought was deficient in developing notions of sacred space, there are aspects of their thought that remain relevant precisely in a time of heightened attention to issues of sacred space, material power, and Jews' deep involvement in the political affairs of the modern world.

In looking back at the thought of the Ethical Monotheists, the central theme of idolatry and the need to combat it stands out in high relief. One could easily charge contemporary Jewry with idolatry. The nation, the people, material power,[32] and survival[33] have replaced God as the central concern of modern Jews. Here, the work of Hermann Cohen retains its relevancy precisely because of his notion of prophetic Messianism. Hermann Cohen's interpretation of Messianism was built around the fears that materialism in the popular cultural forms of the plastic arts and in the political form of nationalism was to be opposed at all costs. Cohen saw the ideals of the prophets as necessarily beyond any "empirical sensibility" (*RR*, 249). For Cohen, Messianism meant an acetic ideal of humankind that had to be "in opposition to

actuality" (*RR*, 249). The ideal that the prophets struggled to imagine and describe was not the myth of a past Golden Age or paradise—it was to come in the future. To relate the notion of the Messianic ideal as ever in the future, Cohen refers to the notion of Messianism as leading to "a new heaven and a new earth" (Isa. 65:17).

Cohen expressed a high and pure form of prophetic monotheism that was not to be affected by the positive and negative historical realities of his day and, given his own professed anti-Zionism,[34] would not have been changed by the actualities of a return of Jews to the land of Israel. Cohen's Messianic monotheism declares that any present manifestation of divine presence in the world, any manifestation of the sacred in this space and time, even in the land in Jerusalem, will be eclipsed by the true redemption that will occur only as the future "Day of the Lord" at the "End of Days" (*RR*, 250). For Cohen, we might also say that the institution that preserves the ideal of humanity and the idea of a new future for humanity was precisely the institution of synagogue liturgy.

As I tried to illustrate in chapter 2, liturgy provides the "language of reason of the congregation." This language provides the congregation with a view of an ideal future that simultaneously places the ideal of redeemed space and time beyond any present place and moment and also places that place and moment in the midst of the people as a liturgical experience. As I suggested in chapter 2, Cohen finds the simultaneous "not yet" and "present" of the ideal in the liturgical singing of the Aleinu prayer that concludes every religious service. In this prayer the congregation bows and says in the time and space of the liturgy, "The world will be perfected under the reign of the Almighty." The congregation sings what is written in scripture: "The Lord will be King over all the earth, and on that day the Lord shall be One and his name One" (Zach. 14:9).

Liturgical Wonder and Liturgical Joy

Hermann Cohen's orientation toward the future is certainly one interpretation of prophetic Messianism that helps avoid any idolatry of the present moment of accomplishment, be it material success, ethical accomplishment, or the establishment of the State of Israel. Yet Cohen's monotheism is so austere and so sensitive to the human attraction to idolatry that it easily misses the sensual pleasures, the communal joy, and the presence of God that is sought in Jewish liturgical celebrations. As I tried to show in chapter 1, Moses Mendelssohn was also concerned about the temptations and dangers of idolatry. Yet Mendelssohn had an acute sense of the human attraction to idolatrous behaviors and ideas. So, instead of following the classic philosophical move to attempt to ban all representations of God, he explored the power of liturgy to fill the strong needs and spiritual longings that idolatry represents. We can interpret Mendelssohn's position on the power of liturgy to be that liturgy at once quenches

the desire for a concrete representation of God *and* sublimates that desire into a spiritual form through a series of communal behaviors and "speech acts." Because the liturgical event is tied to the specific time and place in which it occurs, it suggests that both sacred time and space belong to the time and place of the liturgical event.

Mendelssohn also stresses the eudemonistic quality of most Jewish rituals and liturgies and also the capacity of liturgy to preserve social cohesion and Jewish identity. Mendelssohn develops a dual sense of what I would call "liturgical wonder" about the nature of God and the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism and "liturgical joy" through the performance of Jewish rituals. The necessity to experience this joy, which is commanded in the Torah (Levit. 23), is often lost in the battle of Cohen's suffering servant to achieve the ethical ideals of the Torah. Mendelssohn could not imagine a return of Jews to Israel in his day, but one could certainly argue that both the liturgical wonder and joy that he imagined in Jewish liturgy is enhanced by the performance of Jewish liturgies in the land of Israel. I need only supply one example. Since most Jewish liturgies are keyed to the seasons of the land of Israel, festivals celebrated outside the land often mean a celebration at the wrong time and place. So diaspora Jews in northern climates are forced to celebrate the Israeli fall harvest festival of Sukkot in cold rain instead of in the balmy breezes and warm nights of Israel's climate. Likewise, the spring festival of Pesach is often celebrated in the snow instead of among the first blooms of spring.

Zionism and the Star of Redemption

Despite his opposition to the involvement of Judaism in matters of statecraft, Rosenzweig's *Star* with its liturgical reasoning can be used as a resource to address a number of issues that arise with the Jewish return to Zion. Rosenzweig can be seen as both carrying forward the eudemonistic character of Mendelssohn's view of liturgy and balancing Cohen's focus on the future with a sense of the centrality of the past. Rosenzweig accomplishes both these objectives through a strong theology of creation. Creation for Rosenzweig means both that the sensual and physical world are good and that there are essential resources from the past to sustain Jews into the future. This means that the new Heaven and new Earth of redemption is also a retrieval of the goodness of the original creation.

In relation to the sacred space of liturgy, Rosenzweig tries to show that it is the community, the chanting, the costume, the gestures, and the architecture of the synagogue that create the dimensions of sacred space. This, however, need not undermine the connection of the Jewish people to the land of Israel. Indeed, I believe that Rosenzweig supplies us with an important strategy to move between the Zionist insistence on the fundamental importance of the land of Israel to Jewish survival and the flourishing of Jewish life in a world of

nation-states, and the ideal status of Israel as the pointer and receptacle of the space and time of future redemption. This is found in the relation that Rosenzweig establishes between Jewish blood and the Jewish sense of eternity.

Similar to my presentation in chapter 3 of Jewish blood as an unknowable "primary element" in part 3 of the *Star of Redemption*, we could say that the land of Israel establishes a primary element in the Jewish cultural–linguistic system. As a primary element, it cannot be gainsaid, undermined, or overcome. But the land of Israel, as primary element, is also mute and opaque in its meaning. The land itself is rock, sand, soil, and water. The land of Israel receives its meaning only as it is unfolded in the system of Jewish texts and liturgies. In that system, the land is placed in a dynamic relationship that runs from the earthly to the heavenly, from the human to the divine, from exile to redemption. As Martin Buber continually stresses in his Zionists writings, the presupposition of all statements on the relation of the people Israel to the land of Israel is that the ultimate ownership of the land is God's: *Ki li Ha-Aretz* (Levit. 25:23).[35] The land of Israel is promised as a gift to the people as they live up to the ideals of the commandments. The conditional relationship between the people and the land is made clear in the fundamental Jewish prayer of the Shema.

The Post-Holocaust and Zionist Epoch

Given his messianic idealism, it is fairly clear that the return of the Jews to history would have had little effect on Cohen's Ethical Monotheism. However, we can imagine a different view of Judaism and its relation to history through a new appropriation of Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*. But this is possible only if Judaism and Christianity are released from the symbiotic relationship to which Rosenzweig had confined them. The "decoupling" of Judaism and Christianity would allow both traditions to recapture their own unique senses of themselves as religions of both eternal time and historical time.

If the Shoah and the State of Israel have truly returned the Jews to history then, in Rosenzweigian terms, this means that the "eternal people," now, like the Christians, have entered the condition of a people of "the way." This does not necessarily mean that Judaism gives up its foothold in eternity, for it still retains its liturgies of sacred time. Yet the return of Jews to history means that time, space, nationalism, power, and war are no longer irrelevant to Jews. Like Christians, Jews must travel along the stream of historical time and endeavor to enrich it with a sense of holiness and eternity even as it combats the ever-corrosive effects of time on its spiritual power.

Judaism, like Christianity, is not pagan; therefore, its spiritual energy colors its experience of historical time and marks it as an "epoch." This epoch, like the Christian epoch, places a stopping point, a series of "stations" in time, on the fleeting ever-moving quality of time. Although Rosenzweig uses the

notion of the "Christian epoch" to refer to the entire period between the incarnation of Christ and the Parousia, he also breaks the period into specific eras, using the Christian theological divisions into the Petrine, Pauline, and Johannine periods (with the latter term describing the Church of Rosenzweig's day). Given this periodization, we might want to refer to the contemporary period of Jewish return to history as a specific epoch.

It was Emil Fackenheim who first spoke of the Holocaust as an "epoch-making event"[36] for Jews and Judaism. Irving Greenberg had used the similar yet less dramatic term of "orienting event" to refer to the Holocaust, but the meaning is similar.[37] Both the terms "epoch-making event" and "orienting event" have entered the discourse of Jewish thought and theology as they serve to designate the series of radical challenges and transformations that the Holocaust has wrought upon not only Jewish life and thought but also the moral conscience of the West and Christianity. Although many Jewish thinkers believe that the Holocaust alone marks the contemporary Jewish epoch, I again follow Fackenheim and Greenberg who add to the epochal event of the Holocaust the establishment of the State of Israel. Greenberg speaks of the State of Israel neither as the answer to the Holocaust and God's renewed presence in Jewish history nor as some redemptive answer to the Holocaust but as the "resurrection of hope" in God, in Judaism, and in the world.[38] Greenberg speaks of the Holocaust and the State of Israel as standing in dialectical tension—neither answering the other, but each, in its own way, marking the time of the contemporary Jewish epoch as a time of simultaneous doubt and hope, despair and faith, death and renewed life. Most fundamentally, we could say that the State of Israel marks Jewish time today precisely because it is through it that Jews have returned as actors in world history. Through the State of Israel, Jews have become responsible for their power, their wars, their citizens and strangers, and the suffering and healing that they bring into the world.

From the postliberal perspective, the State of Israel certainly opens Jews to the possibility of an extensive celebration of the liturgical and textual system of Judaism. As members of the majority culture in the State of Israel, Jews can fully explore and develop their cultural–linguistic system without immediate need for the apologetics that minority status requires. The State of Israel, as a Jewish state, allows for a retrieval of the notions of sacred space and time through the agricultural and territorial aspects of Jewish liturgies. Given that Israel has welcomed Jews from all corners of the Earth, the state has provided a home for the large variety of forms of Jewish cultural–linguistic systems (both Ashkenazic and Sephardic) that have existed around the world.

At the same time that the State of Israel secures the cultural–linguistic systems of Judaism, however, Israel increases the possibilities for abuses wrought by those systems. In Israel, Jews can easily come to see the Jewish world as the only and "true" world, a world divorced from or in opposition to the

world that Christians or Muslims or Europeans or Americans build. As the State of Israel secures the people and its cultural–linguistic system in the land, it also runs the great risk of fostering Jewish triumphalism, fundamentalism, and ethnocentrism.

To say that Jews have returned to history and to a more encompassing celebration of their cultural–linguistic systems through the Jewish state, however, does not mean that the cultural–linguistic systems of Judaism need to be sublated into the Jewish state, which, after all, is a secular state. In his discussion of the "Christian way," Rosenzweig allows that Christian involvement in history necessarily involves it in a relationship with the Christian states. Like Christianity, Judaism can and will necessarily "grow into" Israeli history and culture. Judaism will enter into Israeli "civil religion," but it can also "cast its transfiguring light upon the branches of [Jewish] national life" (*Star*, 391), and in this way it can "sow eternity into the living" (*Star*, 391). But as a religion of redemption with a foothold in eternity, Judaism must necessarily come into conflict with the state (*Star*, 374), which is always tempted and corrupted by power and is, ultimately, fleeting.

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5

Liturgical Theology

The Semiotics of the Preliminary Morning Service

If one were to set out to find the textual locus for Jewish theology, one could do no better than to look at the *Siddur*, the prayer book. Where the Talmud puts laws and legal reasoning at its center and pushes God talk to the margins, theology takes center stage in prayer and liturgy. Indeed, a cursory glance at the Siddur provides a clear refutation to common assertions that Jews are preoccupied with law, history, and their own chosenness to the exclusion of theological concerns. However, if God is the central figure in the text of the prayer book, God also presents a significant challenge to that text. Indeed, God is a challenge to all linguistic and semiotic systems. How does one express and name the inexpressible? How is the transcendent God and creator of the universe to be addressed in human language? What is the meaning of the names and terms that are used for God? My argument in this chapter will be that the prayer book is very aware of these issues and that it possesses both a sophisticated theology and a series of avenues to express knowledge of God and approach his presence.

In focusing on theology, we will return to some of the issues that were opened up in our discussions of the representation of God in chapter 1 and attempt to take those discussions further by developing a semiotic analysis of one piece of the daily morning *Shaharit* liturgy.[1] I choose the morning service because not only is this service used every day of the year (when there is not a Shabbat or festival) but even on holy days the Shaharit liturgy provides the structure for the service. Indeed, the structure of the Shaharit service is evident in

the afternoon and evening service, and it therefore provides the basic template for all Jewish liturgy.

Postbiblical Jewish liturgy is constructed, at least partially, as a substitute for the major form of Israelite worship that was based on animal sacrifice. The act of sacrifice itself is a semiotic act since the animal to be sacrificed "stands in" for the sinner, and the sacrificial animal is a substitute death that expiates the sin of the sinner. Beyond this however, the consequence of sacrifice brings us to its final objective, which is given in the root—*kuf*, *resh*, *nun*—of the Hebrew word for sacrifice, *korban*. The root meaning here is to "draw close." Thus, the korban brings the individual and community that have been distanced by sin close again to God. Sacrifice assumes a condition of distance from God, and animal sacrifice functions to expiate that sin and thus open the way for an unobstructed relationship between person, community, and God. The major tool of substitution for the activity of animal sacrifice by priests, as the prophet Hosea suggests, is language uttered by the whole community: "Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him: . . . 'Instead of bulls, we will pay [with the offering of] our lips' " (Hosea 14:3). Therefore, words take on the functions of sacrifice. In semiotic terms, the verbal sign "stands in" for the act of sacrifice, and prayer becomes a kind of "substitution" for sacrifice. As with all forms of substitution, there is a translation from the act of sacrifice to the uttering of words that involves a process of interpretation and even transformation. If actions are the most basic form of semiotic expression, the movement to the language of prayer accomplishes a kind of sublimation of the activity of sacrifice and moves the sacrifice toward linguistic expression. Yet, even in this act of sublimation, prayer must still fulfill the basic function of sacrifice, which is to bring worshippers close to God. As I already mentioned, this poses a significant semiotic challenge because God, as the unknowable and unsayable, lies beyond words. Indeed, to refer to God with a sign flirts with the sin of idolatry.

We know that Mendelssohn believes that the performance of liturgy was a strategy to bring its participants close to God without their falling into idolatry. Because the liturgical event is fleeting and unique and different every time it is enacted, it suggests that God, himself, cannot be represented in fixed formulations. In this chapter, I attempt to take Mendelssohn's insight further and utilize semiotic theory to delineate, much more specifically, how liturgy brings worshippers close to God. My argument will be that the preliminary section of the Shaharit liturgy functions, to use a phrase of Peirce, through a "perfusion of signs." I will attempt to map out the elaborate series of associations that the liturgy attempts to arouse in the worshipper and provide a sketch of the patterns and rules of those associations. But going beyond this, I will argue that the uniqueness and triumph of the preliminary Shaharit service and, indeed, all Jewish liturgy, as a semiotic system, is the way in which it frustrates the nature of semiosis itself so that, through a series repetitions of synonyms for

God's name and praises to the name, the very act of signifying is exhausted. And out of this exhaustion and frustration of the act of naming, the unnamed one appears and is brought near.

Peirce's Semiotic Theory

Before we engage in a semiotic analysis of the preliminary Shaharit liturgy, a brief review of semiotic theory is in order. Although there are a number of theories one could use, I will employ the theory of C. S. Peirce because of both the originality and breadth of the theory. As Urszula Niklas has said, Peirce "offered the first systematic account of the nature of sign in general and formulated a coherent theoretical framework in which signs of any sort can be embedded."[2] In addition to showing the comprehensive quality of Peirce's semiotic, Peter Ochs has shown that Peirce's theory of signs is particularly congenial for analysis of scriptural traditions.[3]

I already mentioned in the introduction that Peirce offers us a triadic theory of semiosis. Peirce tells us that semiosis requires "cooperation of *three* subjects . . . a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in any way resolvable into actions between the pairs."[4] In this view, the sign is a vehicle of meaning that stands between the object and the interpreter or community of interpreters. In his early discussions of the semiotic process, Peirce argues that the sign "translates" the object represented to the interpreter so that something of a mental facsimile appears in the mind of the interpreter. Peirce calls the sign or series of signs created in the mind of the interpreter or community of interpreters the "interpretant." He writes, "The sign . . . creates in the mind of a person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign—the sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign."[5] The threefold process of semiosis maintains basic semantic constancy between different uses of signs by different people in different times and places. In this way, signs provide relatively stable vehicles for human communication. Yet, precisely because the situation and person of the interpretant changes with each usage of a sign, meaning will undergo subtle variation and development that depends on the particularities and needs of the time in which it is used. This latter phenomenon of semantic variation, in accordance with use, brings us to the pragmatic element in Peirce's semiotics. Thus, he tells that "a word has meaning for us in so far as we are able to make use of it."[6] Peirce continued to develop the pragmatic element in semiosis. And in his later work he downplayed the purely cognitive aspect of the interpretant as an "equivalent sign" of the object in the mind of the interpreter, to attend to the meaning of a sign that appears through its use in communal processes of communication. Here, the interpretant takes on the character of a system of implicit meanings, patterns, and rules that shape the meaning of signs through

communicative enactments and performances in life. Because both the simple cognitive and performative senses of the term "interpretant" illuminate the process of semiosis, I will be making use of both in the analysis of liturgy that follows.

Peirce presents us with three types of signs: Icons, Indices, and Symbols. These range from concrete material signifiers, like pictures and images, to signs that point to or indicate that a thing exists and where it is, to abstract concepts and relational practices articulated in words, sentences, and larger textual units. Peirce tells us that a sign is iconic when it "represents its object mainly by similarity."[7] Thus, paintings, photographs, and images described in words are iconic signs. The power of these signs is their closeness to the objects they represent. The iconic dimension of a sign means that "direct observation" of it can bring us surprising "truths concerning its object."[8] But precisely because of its concreteness, the meaning of an icon hovers below the threshold of clear linguistic expression. An icon is a powerful and generative semantic tool, but it is not easily translatable, and its interpretant varies widely with its usage.

An index is a sign that designates its object not by similarity but by physical and existential proximity. Thus, a sign on a building tells us what and where the grocery store is, and the white picket fence that surrounds the house can be used as an index of that house. An index is helpful in letting us know that a thing is and in designating where that thing is. It is less helpful in telling us what a thing means. Indices "furnish positive assurance of the reality and nearness of their objects. But with this assurance there goes no insight into the nature of those objects."[9] The power of indices is that they "direct attention to their objects." Peirce uses, as an example of an index, the knock on the door. The knock interrupts our present activity, calls our attention to the door, and compels us to answer it. Peirce also includes demonstrative and personal pronouns in his category of indices since these words focus our attention on particular objects or people. However, despite their obvious signifying power, Peirce tells us that both iconic and indexical signs "assert nothing" about their objects. They need to be placed in the larger linguistic context of "symbols"—words, sentences, and concepts—that language provides. Peirce sees symbols as both providing us with concepts and opening up the realm of relations between objects, between signs and the environment, and between person and person. The symbolic is the realm of grammar, rules, laws, institutions, and social continuities. It ties objects and people together into living wholes, fashions reliable communication, and thereby makes social life and a human world possible. Although Pierce divides signs into three categories, an individual sign can display iconic, indexical, and even symbolic characteristics. Thus, the sign for a shoe store might contain within it an iconic image of a shoe and an indexical arrow that points to the location of the store. Symbols necessarily employ iconic and indexical signs, and the three dimensions of signs—icons, indices, and symbols—are employed together in the act of speech.

By far the most complex and difficult element in the semiotic process to theorize is the interpretant. The dimension of the interpretant brings us to the crucial element of what signs mean. I already mentioned the two notions of interpretant that Peirce developed in his early and later works. Peirce attempted to further clarify the semantics of the interpretant by providing a tripartite categorization that loosely correlates with his icon, index, symbol distinction. These distinctions are, in turn, all grounded in Peirce's fundamental categories, which he refers to as "firstness,"[10] "secondness,"[11] and "thirdness."[12] Peirce suggests that there is an "emotional interpretant," an "energetic interpretant," and a "logical interpretant." The emotional interpretant refers to the feelings that a sign generates in its viewer. Here, we can think of the feelings that a well-known icon such as a menorah, national flag, or sunset over water may elicit from its viewers. The emotional interpretant refers to the pre-reflective level of interaction between the sign and its interpreter. Aesthetic experiences in which the viewer is taken away into enjoyment and dynamic movement of the work of art are good markers of the category of "firstness," to which the emotional interpreter belongs.

The energetic interpretant concerns how the sign leads to action, whether muscular or cognitive. Here, the flow of feeling and impressions actually leads to some kind of movement. Using the example of aesthetic experience, the energetic interpretant emerges when the flow of feelings moves one to tap one's fingers, to begin to put the music together in patterns, to makes connections to other pieces of music. In a symphonic performance of a piece of music, the crash of the cymbals might be an index of an interruption in which attention is drawn to individual notes and to the time and place of the performance. The energetic interpretant ushers us into the realm of "secondness" in which we are aware of presentness, actuality, and reality.

The "logical interpretant" in the semiotic process involves the reflective moment. It includes a recognition of relations and structures, rules, and patterns. The logical interpretant of the musical performance involves an awareness of the patterns of relations between the notes, the harmonies and discordances. This may include knowledge of the musical score, but it is more attuned to the unique "logic of the performance" we just heard. As a "third," it attends to the whole—to the iconic, indexical, and symbolic dimensions of the performance. As the third, it attends to the spaces between the score and its being played, between the symphony director and the musicians, between the players and the audience, and between this performance and other performances of the piece in the past. The logical interpretant allows us to come to a judgment of performance as a novel interpretation of the piece of music and as a performance that speaks to us in our situation and thereby brings the music alive anew. Finally, the logical interpretant engages the critical rational faculty that acts back upon the symbol to change it and make it more responsive to the pragmatic needs of the community that uses the symbol.

The Semiotics of the Preliminary *Shaharit* Liturgy

In this book I have tried to make use of the metaphor of theater to understand liturgy. We could also use the metaphor of a symphonic performance for the Shaharit service as a whole. The Siddur is like the musical score, the rabbi and cantor take the place of the conductor, and the worshippers are at once the players and the audience. The Shaharit liturgy, like a symphony, is divided into parts or movements that include an overture and a summary, and certain musical and conceptual themes can be tracked through the larger piece. The semiotic analysis that follows will attempt to map out the significant rhetorical and semantic devices, themes, and discordances present in the preliminary Shaharit service. The Shaharit service is made up of biblical verses, psalms (many of which come from ancient liturgies of Temple worship in Jerusalem), rabbinic prayers, and postrabbinical *piyyutim* (liturgical and philosophical poetry). These elements serve as keys and mnemonic devices that call to the mind associations to others images, texts, and concepts in the larger cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. Mapping all these associations would require a lengthy study. I will do some of this but limit myself to the references I consider crucial to analysis of the "logical interpretant" of the liturgy.

As we move through the preliminary service, I will give particular attention to the names and simple interpretants used to refer to God. As I have already suggested, "God" is a significant challenge for semiosis, since "God" is unlike any of the objects or references that signs usually represent. As "God" lies beyond reference, signs for God do not or should not evoke interpretants like ordinary interpretants. If the sign for "God" evokes the interpretant "a bearded man in heaven," we might easily claim that this is overly concrete, simplistic, or even idolatrous. On the other hand, if there are no interpretants for the word "God," then the word is virtually meaningless.

George Lindbeck offers us an "intertextual method"[13] to discern the meaning of the word "God." In this view, the "God" is known through the terms that are used to refer to him in the particular cultural–linguistic system. Thus, the meaning of the term "God" is known through the terms that are used to describe him and the various contexts in which the terms are found in texts and liturgies. This provides us with a fine beginning point for a discussion of the meaning of "God," but it has the potential problem of limiting God to one cultural–linguistic system and does not adequately explain how a semiotic system refers to God as the one who transcends all signs. My argument will be that the Siddur negotiates the semiotic problem of referring to God in a particularly artful and ingenious manner.

The following semiotic analysis will attempt to outline the particular art and genius of liturgy. However, it must be said that, with all I will do in the way of analyzing the preliminary service, our study cannot be considered a full-

blown analysis of the "logical interpretant" of the morning liturgy. This is so because my analysis will depend more upon the Siddur, the score for the liturgy, than any living performance in a particular time and place. This study should be seen as something of a propadeutic to a semiosis of the Shaharit service that would properly be done after an actual performance occurred.

Using Peirce's semiotics as my analytical guide, and intending a theological analysis, the present study will focus more on the synchronic structural features of the preliminary service rather than on a historical or comparative analysis. There are multiple resources for the latter type of scholarship readily available in the Wissenschaft tradition.[14]

For this study, I will use the classic American Orthodox Ashkenasic prayer book edited by Philip Birnbaum, *HaSiddur HaShalem* [1949], 1977. I use this because it is well known and accepted as a reliable version of the traditional liturgy. The Birnbaum prayer book traces its origins to the pattern for the Ashkenasic rite set forth in the Sefer Maharil of Rabbi Jacob Halevi Maharil (1360–1427). The Birnbaum Siddur is not taken as authoritative for all Jews or even for all Ashkenasic Orthodox Jews. Other Orthodox prayer books add or subtract certain prayers or psalms, or place them in slightly different orders—especially in the less formal preliminary section.[15] But I use the Birnbaum as one representative attempt to be faithful to the outlines of the morning service as it is first presented in the Mishna and then in the Talmud and later developments by the Geonim of Babylonian Jewry (sixth through eleventh centuries) and the historical experience of Jews in the Ashkenasic diaspora. As a "traditional" Orthodox Siddur, Birnbaum is neither particularly attuned to issues of women's experience nor to the events of the Holocaust or State of Israel. Indeed, it requires the communal process of conserving, reforming, and reconstructing that has been going on for two hundred years. I will, therefore, freely insert or note some of the variations that appear in the more gender-sensitive *Sim Shalom* prayer book of the Conservative Movement.[16] The Reform prayer book reduces the preliminary service to a few prayers, so I will not refer to it here. But it must be said that many of the contemporary and ongoing transformations in liturgy and ritual observance in the Reform Service are consistent with the postliberal sensibility that I have been outlining. Thus, we see attempts to recover many traditional ritual objects and forms that were cast aside in classical Reform. These are then integrated with postmodern, post-Shoah, Zionist, and feminist sensibilities. A review of the postliberal moves in contemporary Reform Judaism is beyond the scope of this book, but the Reform movement offers many examples and resources on its Web site.[17] I present the following semiotic analysis of the preliminary morning service as another source for postliberal Jewish liturgy.[18]

A brief look at the Birnbaum Siddur reveals the structure of the morning service to include the following: (1) *Birkhot Ha-shahar*, the preliminary service, literally "morning blessings," (2) the *Psukei Dezimrah*, introductory prayers

consisting largely of psalms and biblical texts, (3) the formal public service beginning with the *Borakhu*, the call to worship, and including the central prayers of the Shema and the Amidah and ending with Tahanun, (4) the Torah service (said only Monday and Thursday), and (5) concluding prayers. Thus, by focusing on the preliminary service, I will review only one small piece of the larger morning service. However, I will argue that this small piece contains within it, as in a nutshell, the essence of the other four sections.

The Preliminary Service—Birkhot Ha-shahar

As a preliminary service, the Birkhot Ha-shahar fits the role as a kind of preparation for the obligatory communal prayers after the Barakhu. In Richard Schechner's theatrical terms, this service is a kind of "warm-up" that parallels the stage of putting on the costume and makeup, reviewing lines, testing out one's voice or instrument, and preparing oneself mentally for the upcoming performance. The preparatory nature of this service accounts for the large variety that we see in Ashkenasic and Sephardic versions of the service. There are few obligatory elements, and prayers can be easily added or subtracted. The beginning of the service, however, is fairly stable, and that is the recitation of the words of Balaam from the book of Numbers.

Coming into the synagogue, the worshipper says, "How goodly are your tents O Jacob, your habitations [*mishkanotekha*] O Israel" (Num. 54:5). These words of the non-Israelite prophet who viewed and admired the tents of the Israelites from a distance are appropriate for the early-morning worshipper who is distanced from the synagogue and its liturgy by sleep and who enters into the liturgical space from profane space. These words also serve the indexical function of locating the house of worship as a "Jewish space" and the worshipper as a Jew. Liturgy is perhaps the most intimate and particular form of religious expression and, as such, is about particular people with their particular history and traditions. The liturgical space is as particular as is the personal space of the family home and as intimate as the love relationships in that home. The morning liturgical preparations, therefore, begin with the indices that point to the particulars of the Jewish people.

Beginning with words from the Torah, the worshipper is placed in the context of the particular revelation of God to Israel. Beginning with words, the book of Numbers makes the Torah the first context for the morning liturgy. But the words of Torah quickly become redirected and reinterpreted by virtue of being placed in the context of the morning liturgy. Thus, the semantic horizon of the words "tent" (*ohel*) and "dwelling place" (*mishkan*) will become limited to the house of worship. This is a preliminary and basic hermeneutical operation that liturgy performs on all biblical and rabbinic texts. The liturgy creates a kind of separate "hermeneutical tent" that preempts the original contexts in the Hebrew Bible and Talmud from which texts are taken and

provides those texts with a new context that gives the texts new meaning. By virtue of this second, liturgical context, verses receive a whole new series of associations that follow from the surrounding liturgical texts and the whole liturgical calendar. Liturgy recreates a kind of "liturgical canon" of texts that sets up a new series of associations and patterns for them. Beyond the new associations, liturgy lifts up the utterance of words from the written and oral Torah and bestows upon them the character of command. As you are required to pray Shaharit, you are required to utter the words taken from the oral and written Torah every morning (Btal Berakhot 2–5a). By saying that the words of Torah are redirected to a new series of meanings shaped by the liturgy, we do not mean to say that words from the Torah lose all of their former associations in their former contexts. Indeed, these associations remain and give the liturgy its infinite semantic depth.

If we return to the first prayer in the Birnbaum Siddur, we can see how the words of Balaam explicitly receive their new meaning by means of the verse from Psalm 5 that follows it: "I enter thy house in the multitude of your love" (Ps. 5:8a). Now the tents and dwelling places of Israel become the most intimate house of God, the holy Temple. The house of God is a space that God and Israel share. The speaker changes from the non-Israelite prophet Balaam to the Israelite and then the Jew who does not just view the tents but enters into them, into their sacred space. The prayer follows with more verses from Psalms, all taken out of context and strung together in a new unity.

I will worship toward/before your holy Temple with fear/reverence. Ps 5.8b
O Lord, I love your abode, the place where thy glory dwells. Ps 26.8
I will worship and bow down; I will bend the knee before the Lord my maker. Ps 95.6
I offer my prayer to thee O Lord at this [et ratzon] time of grace/worship. Berakot 8a
O God, in thy abundant kindness, answer me with the truth of your salvation. Ps.69.14

These verses take on an indexical function that interrupts profane space and time and orients the worshipper in sacred space and time. The direction of prayer is established as "toward your holy Temple." But from here, a movement occurs wherein the space between here and Jerusalem "shrinks"[19] and the worshipper, who is outside the Temple and Jerusalem, is placed within Jerusalem and the sacred precincts "where God's glory dwells." The prayer now becomes particular about the temporal index, with the expression "et ratzon," the prayer refers to *this very moment* of worship. Therefore, the worshipper at this time and place finds herself "before the Lord my maker"! The Talmud tells us that the et ratzon is the time when God's ears are open to prayer (Btal Berakhot 8a). With God listening, the worshipper can come close

to Him and even imagine salvation. Because we are in the pre-stage of Jewish liturgy, the worshipper prays for herself, for her individual salvation. When the formal worship begins and there are ten Jews[20] present, the prayers will be about the redemption of the whole community, and then the whole world.

Having oriented the worshipper in space and time, the worshipper now dons the appropriate dress for prayer by putting on the *Tallit* and *Tefillin*, the prayer shawl and phylacteries. The Tallit and Tefillin are symbols that bring about a series of feelings, emotions, and thoughts whose meanings are both varied and multiple. As actual things placed on the body, they function first through iconic and indexical modes. But Tallit and Tefillin also initiate reflection and thus also function on the logical and reflective mode, especially as they are accompanied by words, blessings, and biblical verses.

If we start at the level of the emotional interpretant, we can ask the question "What does it feel like to be in God's space and God's presence?" It is like having your entire body wrapped in a warm and soft flowing white cloth. It is as if the tent of Jacob were to collapse around you and perfectly conform to your body shape, to enwrap and protect you. What is the meaning of the Tallit? I have just suggested that it is an emotional interpretant for being in the presence of God. The Siddur itself helps the worshipper develop other interpretants—emotional, energetic, logical—with the first sentences of Psalm 104:

> Bless the Lord, O my soul, Thou are very great.
> Thou art robed in glory and majesty, You wrap yourself in light as in a garment.
> You spread out the heavens like a curtain.

Now the Tallit is the very garment of God. Now the Tallit is divine light. Then the Tallit expands from the narrow personal garment adjusted to the body to become the wide heavens that covers the Earth. With this image, the Tallit is an icon for all of creation, created with God's creative first word: Let there be light! And now, all of creation is God's house, and the distinction between enclosed and open, between house of God and house of Israel, between sacred and profane space melts away to the realization that all of creation is very good.

The fringes with the system of threads and notes are reminders of the 613 mitsvot that are given in the Torah. Thus, the Tallit is a sign of the entire system of mitsvot that creates a covering over the individual Jew and the collective of the community. The Tallit is a sign of the "sacred canopy," the human world and the cosmos of order that the cultural–linguistic system spreads over the entire life of the Jews.

The dimension of divine command in the mitsvot underscores the ultimate unknowability of the commands. Coming from the unknowable one, the meaning of the commands is never fully known. Like an icon in which the meaning lies in the sign itself, the meaning of the mitsvah is found in

searching out the mitsvah itself, in doing it and thinking with and through it. Like an icon, its meaning is both inexhaustible and indeterminate. At the moment of use, a meaning may be disclosed; but that meaning will not necessarily reappear in the next moment of enactment. Yet because the icon is so packed with and generative of meaning, it continues to inspire more meanings. Thus, the Siddur continues:

> Even as I cover myself with the Tallit in this world, so may my soul deserve to be robed in the beautiful garment of the world to come, in Gan Eden.

So now the Tallit is opened up even wider beyond the expanse of the Earth to encompass salvation, eternal life, the world to come. Perhaps this association is brought about by the verse from Psalm 104, "Bless the Lord O my soul." The Tallit then represents the eternality of the soul that is covered by the world to come. Or, alternatively, the soul is eternal life replanted in Gan Eden. Finally, the Tallit becomes the soul itself that once was inside, vulnerable, and in need of protection by a mere piece of cloth and now is turned outside and becomes itself the source of protection and is so strong as to withstand the passing of time to embody eternal life.

With these introductions, worshippers open the Tallit, say the blessing, and enwrap themselves in the Tallit: "Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with your commandments, and commanded us to enwrap ourselves in the fringed garment."

Since the Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative movements began ordaining women as rabbis in the 1970s and 1980s, and the movements began putting all Halakhic requirements on men and women equally; women have not only started wearing Tallit but also adding to their meaning. Nina Beth Cardin sees each Jew as a kind of weaver, and the Tallit as a symbol of the larger community of Israel and Judaism. She writes, "The world of Judaism is filled with shawls of different weaves, from loose to fine, filtering the larger world in or out to a greater or lesser degree. . . . Every now and then we add a thread or two of a new hue and texture that serves to enrich and extend our wardrobe."[21] Cardin tells us of her own experience of putting on the Tallit: "When I put on a tallit, . . . I place myself in the folds of my people. Donning the Tallit is a daily, visual symbol of my identity; reminding me to whom I belong. . . . It protects me, shields me and defines me. Falling around my shoulders and arms, the Tallit provides me with a secure awareness of my body. . . . I fill up my Tallit. No matter my size, I always will. And it is in that fullness that I am counted as a member of the congregation."[22]

Having donned the Tallit, the worshippers now put on Tefillin, or phylacteries. These are small black leather boxes that contain scriptures and are bound with leather straps to one arm and to the forehead. The Tefillin are not only semiotic markers in themselves, but because they contain verses from the

Torah, they literally bind signs upon the worshipper and make the worshippers themselves signifying subjects.

The Tefillin suggest that an essential function of liturgy is to be a form of pedagogy. In binding words on the arm near the heart and upon the head and placing them between the eyes, the Tefillin attempt to fulfill the commandment in the Shema, "You shall teach them." The object of the Tefillin is to put signs of God into the mind and upon the body of the Jew so that the mind and body are totally occupied with love and knowledge of God. The Tefillin are the most concrete tool of socialization whereby the external cultural–linguistic system is internalized and habituated.

The fact that this act is routinized in liturgy suggests that humans are ever prone to forget the words of the cultural–linguistic system. But one of the problems of liturgy is that precisely because it is routinized and habitually performed, daily worshippers can allow themselves to "go through the motions" without realizing what the meaning of their actions are. Thus, the Tefillin are often hurriedly and thoughtlessly placed on the arm and head so that the prayer service can begin. Done in this manner, the worshipper loses a sense of the spiritual meaning of the liturgy. In Peirce's terms, the words of prayer become signs without interpretants. Or, we could say, they become signs with only mute emotional interpretants. They relay some ill-defined feelings but have no linguistic registers, no correspondents in the minds of the worshippers. When this happens, liturgy can easily be turned into a dead fetish.

The Birnbaum Siddur, however, is aware of this problem, and it is constructed to consistently fight off the dangers of empty and thoughtless performance of the liturgy. Therefore, it supplies the following words that are to be said before the Tefillin are put on:

> By putting on the Tefillin I intend to fulfill the command of my Creator, who has commanded us to wear Tefillin, as it is written in the Torah: 'You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" [Deut. 6:8]. The Tefillin contain four sections of the Torah [Deut. 6:4–9, 11:13–21, Ex. 13:1–10,11–16], which proclaim the absolute unity of God, blessed be His name, and remind us of the miracles and wonders which he did for us when he brought us out of from Egypt.

When the Jew fulfills the commandment "You shall bind them to your arms to be a sign" (Deut. 11), the binding of the Tefillin becomes another sort of physical sign of covenant that is like male circumcision. Just as the words of the love of God in the Shema are placed in a container and fixed to the doorposts of houses in the *mezzuzah*, so are the same words bound on the arms of Jews. The connection between mezzuzah placed on the door and the small box of the Tefillin placed upon the arm might open up connections to maternal imagery and familial love. The mezzuzah, the Tefillin box, the home—all could

be seen as signifiers of the womb. Enclosed within these containers are the words of love of the Shema that animate the home, the person, the entire community with the nourishment of love.

The additional scriptural texts in the Tefillin that refer to the Exodus add another layer to Jewish identity. The Exodus says that a Jew is a former slave who was set free by God. This of course occurred in the past, but the words of Exodus only really become efficacious when the worshipper realizes that it was not her ancestors who were enslaved and redeemed. Thus, the Jew today, this morning, is enslaved to sin and false truths. And the power of putting on Tefillin as symbol is that through the performance of the mitzvah of putting on Tefillin, the Jew who is enslaved to sin and falsehood is now redeemed. The blessing of the Tefillin is recited as the Tefillin is placed on the bicep and bound to the arm by leather straps. Binding the Tefillin upon the arms keeps the arm in an outstretched position that is an index of the verse "with an outstretched arm the Lord brought us out of Egypt" (Deut. 26:8). After the Tefillin of the arm is bound, the blessing is said on the Tefillin for the head; the Tefillin are placed on the head and then the Birnbaum Siddur supplies these rather curious words: "May you pour the good oil into the seven branches of the Menorah so as to bestow they goodness upon your creatures. You open your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor" (Ps. 145:16). The oil and the Menorah sets off a whole new series of associations from the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism that include the Davidic Monarchy, the Jewish nation, and the messiah. These signs suggest that placing the Tefillin on the head is like anointing the king, and the Tefillin then becomes a kind of crown. Ending with the verse from Psalms, this act recalls the hope for the coming of the Kingdom of God when God will satisfy every living thing with favor.

Returning to the hand, the worshipper now winds the straps around the fingers and utters these words from Hosea: "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and justice, in kindness and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord" (Hosea 2:21, 22). From the grand sweep of the monarchy, the nation, and the messiah, the verses of Hosea bring the worshipper back to the most personal and intimate iconic imagery of marriage. Winding the straps around the fingers like a wedding ring, recall once more the theme of love of God. Now the binding of the Tefillin every morning becomes a renewal of the vows of love and the covenant between God and Israel. But the lover and the beloved are joined not only through the feelings of love but also through the concepts of righteousness, justice, kindness, and mercy. And these concepts appear not as abstractions but as consequences of the righteousness, justice, kindness, and mercy that flows to the worshipper through the liturgy as it is enacted.

Perhaps because women often wear shawls, the practice of wearing the Tallit has been rather easily adopted by women. However, the black leather Tefillin have retained a strong male association, and women have been more

reluctant to adopt the practice of putting them on. Rabbi Susan Grossman explains that she literally had "Tefillin-phobia." This phobia occurred both because Tefillin signaled "maleness" to her and because they "seemed to epitomize the antithesis of spirituality." She adds, "They seemed to bind their wearer to earth when I wanted to fly up in search of *devekut*, spiritual union with God."[23] Grossman explains that she got over her Tefillin-phobia by forcing herself to continue to put them on, without having clear reasons beyond that fact that she felt herself commanded to. Then, the breakthrough came suddenly one morning as she recited the words of Hosea: "I will betroth you to myself forever." She recalls, "It is with great wisdom that the Rabbis compared the relationship between God and Israel to that of a husband and a wife. . . . I felt like a bride who selflessly sought to discover and then to fulfill any desire of my groom. Between husband and wife this feeling is rekindled monthly at the end of the woman's menstruation when she returns from the mikveh. . . . Wrapping myself in the Tefillin now provides a daily rekindling of my feelings for serving God."[24] Given that the Birkhot Ha-shahar is a preliminary "warm-up" service that is open to additional materials, this service offers particular opportunities for women to add materials that reflect their experiences with prayer and liturgy. Adding these materials would both enlarge the signifying scope of the liturgy and extend the range of its interpretants to men and women.

In the short time of preparation for communal prayer in which the worshipper enters the synagogue and puts on Tallit and Tefillin, a "perfusion of signs" and a complex process of semiosis has been called forth. The morning liturgy fashions a canon within the canon of biblical texts beginning with the Deuteronomic texts that declare God's oneness and demand Israel's love, Numbers 15, that commands the wearing of *Tstitsit*, and the text of Exodus 13 that succinctly relates the story of the Exodus. Having been dressed in Tallit and Tefillin, every worshipper is covered in signs of the Jewish cultural–linguistic system and possesses semiotic keys to that system. We could use Rosenzweig's notion of contraction and unfolding to suggest that all of the morning service exists in concentrated form in the first, most preliminary part of the morning service, and the rest of the service is a matter of repetition, unpacking, and explicating what has already been given in a nutshell.

Rabbinic and Philosophical Theology

If the preparatory service is meant, at least in part, to refresh the memory of the worshipper of the Jewish liturgical system in particular and the cultural–linguistic system in general, it makes sense that texts beyond Deuteronomy 6, Numbers 15, and Exodus 13 need to be recalled. The liturgy has mainly dealt with biblical texts and utilized the associative patterning of thought well known in midrashic practices of exegesis.

Now, however, the liturgy changes its rhetorical strategies by calling upon a series of rabbinic blessings and texts that present summaries of rabbinic theology, ideals, and values. We also have more-explicitly conceptual presentations of the nature of God and Jewish faith in the theological summaries found in the *Adon Olam*, "Lord of the Universe," and the *Yigdal*, "Exalted is the Living God." These piyyutim strike a dissonant chord from the texts that precede them as they are taken from the medieval period, are written in a different Hebrew style and idiom, and employ abstract and conceptual terminology that is foreign to biblical concreteness and midrashic associative patterns of thinking. Here, we have examples of the kind of proposition theology that we have referred to in opposition to scriptural expression.

The Adon Olam, normally ascribed to the eleventh-century Spanish philosopher–poet Solomon ibn Gabirol, presents a view of God as existing before and after time. The *Adom Olam* insists on the utter transcendence of God. Perhaps it is placed here as an index, a kind of warning from the philosophers to assure that the names and images for God that have been and will be presented later in the liturgy will not be understood in an idolatrous manner. However, in the context of the overall liturgy, with its multiple references and associations with scripture, the Adom Olam adds another strategy in the attempt to represent God. It appears here not so much as a foundational attempt to use propositional theology to establish theology but as a poem that clarifies aspects of divinity after scripture has been spoken.

In the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, the pragmatist colleague of Peirce, William James, speaks specifically of the aesthetic and pragmatic value of the "scholastic lists of attributes of the deity,"[25] of which Adon Olam is a good example. James refers to the Catholic use of these lists and not the Jewish use. However, the parallel to the Jewish case is obvious. James argues that the proper use for lists of God's attributes is to "intone them . . . in a cathedral service" where they have a "high aesthetic value." James argues that the extended list of God's attributes "enriches our bare piety to carry these exalted and mysterious verbal additions just as it enriches a church to have an organ. . . . Epithets lend an atmosphere and overtones to our devotion. They are like a hymn of praise and service of glory."[26] Thus, James argues that recitations of poems to God's philosophical qualities have more aesthetic than philosophic value.

Here is the text of the Adom Olam that is found in the preliminary morning service and will reappear at the conclusion of the whole morning liturgy.

He is the eternal Lord who reigned
Before any being was created.
At the time when all was made by his will
Then his name was proclaimed King,
And at the end when all shall cease to be,

The revered/dreaded one shall reign
He was, He is, He will be
In his glory
He is One, and there is no other
To compare him to or to place beside him
He is without beginning and without end
Power and dominion belong to Him
And He is my God, And my living redeemer
My Rock in my time of distress,
He is my guide and my refuge.
The portion of my cup on the day I call.
Into his hand I commend my spirit
When I sleep and when I wake
And with my spirit and body
The Lord is with me, I have no fear.

This poem, filled with rhyme and alliteration as it is, cannot be adequately captured in English. But the theology is clear. God is the self-sufficient, all-powerful, single deity who exists beyond time and who will exist after the end of time. He was, is, and will be forever. The Adom Olam appears as a philosophical gloss on the Shema that replaces the concrete imagery of the Bible with philosophical concepts. This presentation gives us God as beyond time and the world as an ex nihilo creation. Dispassionately the poem tells us that this world had a beginning and will have an end and that God will remain after that end.

After the poem tells us that God is unique and beyond comparison, it is hard to see where and how the human could form images and words, icons, or indices or symbols to grasp him. At this point in the poem, the worshipper rightly might express frustration. And then, suddenly, in the last four lines, the tone of the philosophical poem changes, and the worshipper breaks in, *v'who ayli, v'hai goali* ("And he is my God and my living redeemer"), *V'tzor hevli, b'et zorah* ("My rock in my time of distress"). This transcendent, majestic, incomparable God, in the space of a line, becomes the close and intimate one who is "my God"—not a cool transcendent unknown one, not a series of philosophical concepts, but "my living redeemer." God then becomes the deity who, like the worshipper, is alive, and like a parent and physician and friend, is concerned with the worshipper's existence.

This God, who is beyond time, reaches into human time, the human moment of pain, to provide strength, guidance, comfort. God then assures the human in the moment of pain that he will be with her, and because he will be there, fear can be overcome. It is hard to find a better symbol for the complex relationship of transcendence and immanence, of the eternity and temporality,

of universality and particularity than the Adom Olam. The poem artfully and existentially shows how these two aspects of God are interwoven in the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. Perhaps, for this reason, we find the poem both in the beginning and the end of the daily morning service.

The Adon Olam is followed by the Yigdal, which is based on Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith. The Yigdal repeats the themes of a transcendent monotheism that we saw in the Adom Olam and is the closest Judaism comes to doctrinal statements on Jewish beliefs. This includes the notions of reward and punishment, the coming of the messiah, and the resurrection of the dead. Many of these themes are taken up in the prayers and texts that follow. That these theological statements written by Jewish philosophers appear in the morning liturgy again shows the theological and philosophical nature of the liturgy and gives further evidence for the claim of this book that liturgy is a form of philosophical and theological reasoning.

After presenting us with philosophical and theological statements from the medieval period, the Siddur returns us to earlier rabbinic texts (Berakot 11a, 60b, Mishnah Peah 1:1, Shabbat, 127a). These texts give a pragmatic meaning to the theology presented in the Adon Olam. They suggest that theology may involve a dimension of philosophical contemplation of the nature of God but is also a form of action in the world. These rabbinic texts stress the importance of giving to the poor, being kind, honoring parents, being hospitable to strangers, and making peace between neighbors. The texts give us models for ethical piety and show us how acts of *tzdekkah* or charity are constituents of the building of an ethical character. The rabbinic texts clearly state that the sustaining link for these acts of kindness is the study of Torah. Without denying the importance of Torah study, I would also suggest that the morning liturgy itself is a link to a life filled with acts of kindness. The texts that are repeated in the morning liturgy suggest that liturgy is not only a form of pedagogy and socialization into the cultural–linguistic of Judaism but is also itself a link between the abstract process of labeling the transcendence of God and the living process of identifying God in the process of lived life.

The Blessings

Up until the point when the worshipper is dressed in the Tallit and Tefillin, all the blessings have been said privately. The first public utterances in the morning liturgy consist of rabbinic blessings said by the *Shaliah Tzibbur*, the prayer leader.[27] These blessings continue the indexical process of identifying the particular worshippers of the liturgy and the complex process of identifying God. The identification process in the Orthodox prayer book employs a negative process of Jewish self-identification that is based on a negating all that

is other to the male Jew. Therefore, we have a string of negations: "Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who has not made me a non-Jew. . . . Blessed art thou . . . who has not made me a slave. . . . Blessed art thou . . . who has not made me a woman." The relatively recent Orthodox attempt at including women with a prayer for them ("Blessed art thou, Lord our God . . . who has made me according to thy will") does not really overcome the pejorative connotation of men thanking God for not making them women. Therefore, for both the purposes of relations of Jews to non-Jews, to women, and to their own processes of positive self-identification, the version of the blessings in the Conservative Sim Shalom prayer book is preferable to the Orthodox version. It reads: "Blessed art Thou . . . who made me in his image, Blessed art thou . . . who has made me a Jew, Blessed art Thou . . . who has made me free." The blessing "who has made me in his image" recalls the Genesis 1:27 version of the creation of the human—"male and female he created them"—and thus nicely conveys the equality of man and woman before God.

If we look at the blessings that follow the indexical blessings about Jews, in both the Orthodox and Conservative prayer books we see a theology that continues in developing the themes from the rabbinic texts and presents God as the paradigm of acts of loving-kindness: "Blessed art thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who opens the eyes of the blind. Blessed art thou, Lord our God . . . who clothes the naked, . . . who sets the captive free, who raises up those who are bowed down, . . . who gives strength to the weary." These blessings suggest that the mitsvot that Jews are required to do are parallel to acts of loving-kindness that God performs. Now it is clear that the rather audacious parallel between the Jew who wraps himself with the Tallit and God who wraps himself in light is meant to suggest a kind of imitatio deo. The morning liturgy then calls the Jew to live out the parallel in performing acts of loving-kindness just as God does. The Jew who is now adorned with the crown of the Tefillin, like the *mashiah* of Israel who will be adorned in the future, has the job of bringing the spiritual energy of the morning liturgy into the world to be an agent of redemption. The implicit theological argument here is the pragmatic one that the fruits of a life infused with love of God is a life of good deeds in the world. God can then be seen in the human doing of ethical mitsvot in the world. Thus, the elaborate dress of the Jew in the signs of the Tallit and Tefillin not only brings the signs of Judaism into the consciousness and being of the Jew but makes the actions of the Jew in the world into signs of God. This means that we could say that the "logical interpretant" of the central theological statement of Judaism—The Lord our God is One and we must love him—is the loving relations that are established between Jew and Jew and between Jews and the world. One could even say then that the logical interpretant of loving God is the complex of human relations made whole and sacred that is meant by the word redemption!

Sacrifice and the Akedah

As Hermann Cohen tells us, the Jew that glimpses the presence of God and the Jew that sees her own role as helping redeem the world is not necessarily yet ready to go out and do it. Before the Jew leaves the synagogue and goes out into the world to redeem it, she needs to be sure she is worthy of the task. As Rosenzweig suggests in part 2 of the *Star*, awareness of God's love for us immediately brings awareness of our own unworthiness, of our sin. Therefore, the Orthodox liturgy moves now to a concentration of the purification of the individual and back to one of the central purposes of liturgy that is shown in the sacrificial system, and that is expiation of sin. This is a theme that will return over and over in the liturgy. It is introduced with a classic text in which the theme of sacrifice is central, Genesis 22, the Akedah, or the binding of Isaac. Like the texts already quoted from Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, the Abraham text and the figure of Abraham is a central text for Judaism. We could imagine many reasons that the liturgy would want to include Abraham and this text in its canon of biblical texts.[28] Aside from his place as the original monotheist, Abraham, in an important rabbinic view, was the one who instituted the morning service (Berakhot, 26a). However, the liturgy narrows our imagination to serve a specific purpose. It does this with our uttering a specific directive before we read the Akedah: "Our God and God of our Fathers, remember us favorably, and visit us with mercy and salvation. . . . Remember in our favor, Lord our God, the love of our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants. Remember the covenant, the kindness, and the oath that you did swear to our father Abraham on Mount Moriah, and the binding of Isaac his son on the altar." The liturgy follows straightforwardly from the common midrashic understanding of the meaning of the Akedah for the Jewish people.[29] The meaning is that Abraham went ahead to sacrifice Isaac at Mount Moriah in order to earn mercy for the people of Israel in their time of sinning and crisis. Thus, every morning the people remind God of his promise to have mercy on them.

The use of the phrase "God of our Fathers" marks a transition from the naming of God as Lord and King of the universe. I would suggest that the phrase marks a movement in the liturgy from a modality of blessing and praise of God to a modality of request and petition. As an interpretant of God, "our father" or "my father" is particularly powerful and triggers a series of emotions and associations that are employed throughout the liturgy. It is certainly easier to petition our father than to call on the King of the universe for one may hope to find more mercy from his father. When God as father is coupled with Abraham our father, a relational web is established from the worshipper to the congregation back to ancestors and to the patriarchs. At this point, a reference to the matriarchs would provide a good preparation and needed symbols to

prepare the way for the mention of the matriarchs in the Amidah of the new Sim Shalom prayer book, which will be read in the formal public section of the morning service. As it is now, the names of the matriarchs are not presaged by references to them in any other biblical verses, and they thereby appear as strange add-ons. Adding a series of biblical and midrashic references to reflect the central roles that Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah play in the founding narratives of the Abrahamic family at this point in the preliminary service would therefore help weave them into the liturgy more fully.

The familial web of relations that mention of the family of Abraham calls forth serve to thicken the semiotic system with emotional and social markers. These associations, as marked by the terms "the people Israel," "the nation Israel," and "the chosen people," finds resonance in the phrases "from generation to generation," "the chain of tradition," and even "tradition" itself.

In repeating the text of the Akedah here, in the preparatory morning service, the liturgy employs a common strategy, and that is to use God's word in Torah against God. Thus, God is called upon to "remember" his promise to Abraham "I will surely bless you and multiply your seed." The notion of God's "remembering" is extremely odd, since the omniscient God could never forget. So we must assume that the repetition of the Akedah and God's promise really serves the psychological needs of the worshipper, whose sin, fear, and insecurity is a function of his propensity to forget God's word, God's promise, and God's love.

Recalling this promise and love, the liturgy then fills in the consequent reaction, which is the utterance of words of praise: "Therefore we must give thanks to Thee, glorify, and extol Thee, bless and sanctify thy name and give Thee thankful praise. Happy are we! How goodly is our portion, how pleasant our lot, how beautiful our heritage! Happy are we who at early morn and at evenfall twice a day declare [the words of the Shema]: "Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is One." Thus, the preliminary service has the worshippers saying the words of the Shema before the prayer is said in the formal section of the service that will follow. The uttering of the Shema here is a kind of introduction of a theme that we would find in the overture to a symphony or the introduction to a book.

If we step back at this moment, we can perceive a basic pattern in the preliminary morning service that is repeated throughout the larger liturgy. This is a movement from recognition of God's love, to recognition of human sin and forgetfulness, to recollection of God's love again, to human proclamation of God's greatness. Like simple notes on a scale, this pattern is endlessly repeated. Like a simple logical argument, the liturgy first declares, "God loves Israel, God loved Israel, God will love Israel," and then demands a reply from the worshippers in the cohortative form: "Therefore we must give thanks. Halleluyah!" We have this pattern presented here, in the preliminary service,

and will see it repeated in a more extended manner in the *Psukei Dezimrah* section that follows.

The Sacrificial Texts

The section on sacrifice in the Birnbaum prayer book does not end with the Akedah and the Shema but continues with many more biblical and Talmudic texts on the nature and performance of the sacrifices in the ancient temple. These texts are put here so that the worshipper can fulfill the daily mitsvah of the study of Torah. It is, however, remarkable that the morning liturgy, which comes to substitute for the sacrifices, should present for study so many texts on how to bring sacrifices that can no longer be brought.

The last text of the section is Rabbi Ishmael's thirteen hermeneutical principles of interpretation, taken from the *Sifra*. These principles supply the key to unlock all the codes of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism, and the fact that they are placed here after the many texts on sacrifices may be taken to say something like the following: We were given the sacrificial system as a way to expiate sin and come close to God, but we were also given the ability to interpret these texts. Our liturgy, which transforms sacrifice into words, may seem audacious, but we were given the thirteen hermeneutical principles precisely to perform such an act of transformation and, thus, our liturgical system is not heretical but very much in accord with the aims of the sacrificial system.

By ending the preliminary service with both the texts of the old sacrificial system and the thirteen hermeneutical principles through which the system is transformed, we see how liturgy attempts to handle the crucial issue of continuity and change in the tradition. Obvious questions to ask are: Why does the preliminary liturgy supply such a rich array of texts on sacrifice? If liturgy comes to replace sacrifice, why do we still need to read about how the sacrifices were performed? One answer is that although the liturgy knows that it has come to replace the system of sacrifices, it is aware that the act of animal sacrifice possesses a deep power of cleansing and purifying that is iconically intrinsic to the act of sacrifice. In substituting linguistic symbols for the act of sacrifice, the liturgy always risks losing some of the power of the act of sacrifice. Perhaps one reason that the preliminary service provides multiple biblical and Talmudic texts on sacrifice is to preserve the connection between the icon and that which replaces it.

Hermann Cohen, more than other modern Jewish philosophers, stresses the power and import of the sacrificial system. He addresses this question through a discussion of the Prophet Ezekiel and his struggle with sacrifices. I reviewed Cohen's suggestion, in chapter 2 of this book, that the act of

transformation of sacrifice into a vehicle of self-purification of sin through communal liturgy was begun with the prophet Ezekiel. His view is that this transformation from sacrifice to liturgy was not an abrogation of sacrifice but a translation that resulted in a "deepening" of sacrifice and a process of bringing it to completion" (*RR*, 175). Thus, the movement away from the iconic level of expression toward the logical level of symbolic expression does not necessarily bring an attenuation of the power of the act of sacrifice but fulfills it by making the ethical power and meaning of the act more accessible and serviceable to the moral development of the individual and the community. Cohen concludes his analysis with a rhetorical question: "It may be asked whether such a transformation is not the best kind of abrogation" (*RR*, 175) of sacrifice. His discussion, therefore, suggests that the transformation of sacrifice from the act of killing an animal to the linguistic and performative activities of liturgy is successful precisely because the icons of animal sacrifice are not erased but preserved. But they are preserved not through retaining the act of sacrifice but through the sublimated acts of enumerating the signs of the sacrifices.

One possible liturgical objection to Cohen's suggestion that the liturgy seeks to abrogate sacrifice by transforming it is the prayer in the traditional Amidah that asks God to "restore the service to the sanctuary in Jerusalem and accept the fire offerings with love and favor." Given this prayer, we could say that the contents of the sacrifices are continually reviewed so that they will not be forgotten and can again, in the messianic time, be restored. There is no doubt that many traditional Jews take this line of reasoning. However, I would also argue that the weight direction of the liturgy seems to move in the direction that Cohen outlines. This we see in the Tahanun section of the morning liturgy that will focus on penitence. For the Tahanun prayers are taken from Psalms, Prophets, and other penitential texts in the Torah that hardly mention sacrifices at all. Aside from this non-sacrificial penitential literature that we see in liturgy, the tradition develops an elaborate series of self-purification rituals under the theme of *Tshuvah*, or repentance, and *Selikot*, penitence, that focus on prayer, charity, and disciplines of self-examination to cleanse the individual from sin and bring him or her closer to God.

Given the importance of the living traditions of Tshuvah and Selikot and the fact that sacrifices are only enumerated and described and not enacted, I would take the prayers that call for the resumption of sacrifice in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem as part of the semiosis of hope. The Temple and animal sacrifices then become a kind of icon of completeness, harmony, and easy access to the presence of God. Prayer for the resumption of sacrifices as they were done in the past, then, is really about an idealized past projected into the future. The resumption of sacrifices can then take its place among a string of images of return—return to the land, to Jerusalem, and to the Davidic monarchy—summarized by the phrase: *Kadesh yameinu k'kedem* ("sanctify our days like the days of old"). This register of signs, which is secure, known, and

idealizable, can give comfort in times of crisis and hope in the face of an unknown future.

If Cohen is right, that the liturgy attempts to preserve a connection to the power of sacrifice as it transforms it, liturgy can be understood as a form of mediation that functions in the capacity of what Peirce calls "thirdness." Here, the third of liturgical repetition of sacrifice through speech stands over against "the first" of preserving animal sacrifice and "the second" of omitting any mention of it entirely. Liturgy, which is often charged with the responsibility of preserving the past, also has the responsibility of responding to the needs of the worshipper in the present. At this point, liturgists are charged with engaging their critical rationality to transform the meaning of a liturgical symbol. And this we see in the transformation of the institution of sacrifice.

The morning liturgy negotiates the challenge of preserving continuity with the past and allegiance to the present by presenting its roots in the sacrificial system as it transforms that very system. But the liturgy does not preserve the sacrifices for preservation's sake. It preserves our knowledge and awareness of that system in the mode of icon precisely because it contains in it a brute and raw form of penitence that responds to a deeply held human spiritual need for cleansing, for purifying, for cathartically releasing the sense of sin and restoring the soul to a felt sense of wholeness, purity, and connection to God. Finally, we can say that the connection to sacrifices that liturgy preserves can be seen as part of the semiosis of hope that liturgy preserves in the face of contemporary and future challenges.

The preliminary morning service now ends as all liturgical services or major sections of services do, with the recitation of the Kaddish. If there are ten men (in the Orthodox rite) or ten Jews (in the Conservative version), the Kaddish will be said here by a mourner or by someone who is celebrating the anniversary of the death of a close relative.

The Kaddish

After the Shema, the Kaddish is perhaps the most famous of all Jewish prayers.[30] The essential part of the prayer, *y'ha shemay rabba* ("May his great name be blessed forever"), goes back to the book of Daniel (2:20). And some version of the Kaddish was used at the close of sermons beginning in the second Temple period. The use of the prayer for mourners was a later, medieval development. Yet, it was a development that clearly filled and continues to fill an important psychological need in the community. One could easily argue that the Amidah is a more important prayer liturgically. But since the Kaddish is said by mourners to remember the dead, it may be better known by the average Jew. The Kaddish is said at the end of every section and in significant subsections of the liturgy, and its constant repetition assures that it is well

known. It is remarkable that the same prayer is used both to mark transitions in liturgy and to mark the most significant human transition, from life to death. Participants in Jewish liturgy are keyed to the different usage of the Kaddish for mourners not by radical changes in the words but by the solemn tone in which the prayer is recited.

The prayer itself is odd in the liturgy because, unlike the language of most of the service, which is said in Hebrew, the Kaddish is said in Aramaic. It, therefore, strikes a dissonant chord and in that very dissonance makes the prayer an index that calls forth reflection, questioning, and commentary.

Among the obvious questions that the recitation of the Kaddish poses are: Why should the liturgy require, at precisely its joyous moments of transition and conclusion, that a mourner step forward to utter a prayer? Why would the liturgy require that this prayer be said only if there is a quorum, a *minyan*, of ten Jews present? Why does the prayer mention nothing about the dead? And, most importantly, what does the prayer mean to convey? What is its menu of possible interpretants?

Let us first look at the prayer. Although there are a variety of longer versions, I will present its shortest "*hatzi*" form here for brevity's sake:

LEADER
Magnified and hallowed be His great name
In this world which He created according to His will.
May He establish His Kingdom during your life and during your days.
And during the life of all the house of Israel.
Speedily and Soon.
And say, Amen

CONGREGATION, THEN LEADER
Let his great name be blessed for ever and ever and to all eternity.

LEADER
Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; though he be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations, which are uttered in the world.
And say Amen.

Thus far, the liturgy has used various names for God: Lord, King, Holy One, Creator, Father. But the Kaddish now refers to God with the term *Shem* or "name" itself. This is a move that we associate with rabbinic Judaism, and it is a move that is very common in Jewish liturgy. So we need to pause to examine it. The basic meaning of the term *Shem* or *HaShem*, "the Name," points to the four-letter word for God—*yod, hey, vov, hey*—normally articulated as "Adonai"

or "Lord"; this name is sometimes referred to as the "Tetragrammaton." This is the name that God revealed to Moshe as *Ehyeh asher Ehyeh* ("I will be what I will be" Ex. 3:14). It is more intimate and personal than the name *El* or *Elohim*, which is the general Hebrew term for "God." The Tetragrammaton is the name that only the high priest knew how to pronounce correctly and that was pronounced only once a year in the holy of holies during Yom Kippur. That the very name of God should be praised suggests that this name has a special power. By ending the first section of the morning liturgy with an exaltation of words and the word for God, the liturgy is saying that language and names have a creative and salvific power.

Perhaps this also ties to the place of the mourner who, in the face of death, calls on the name of God for strength and for the sense that her loved one is assured of eternal life. Yet, it seems that the Kaddish is not only pointing to the power of names and language but also to the limitations of names and language.

After presenting us with simple interpretants for God like king, creator, and father, which have relatively known and knowable meanings, the use of the word "name" for God suggests that these knowable names cannot be taken as objectifying God. God, after all is not a "referent" like any material object or concept; God lies beyond all objects and objectifications. God lies beyond the very process of semiosis.

By virtue of its semantics and grammar, the four letter YHVH, the Tetragrammaton, declares the limits of the semiosis of God. As an odd third-person future form of the verb to be—*yod, hey, vov, hey*—the word means something like "He will be." In his discussion of the Tetragrammaton, Buber suggests that the word designates without limiting God to something certain: "He will always be present, but at any given moment only as the one whom he is then."[31] The word to which HaShem, "the Name," refers is therefore a kind of vague index that only points to a reality that cannot be expressed or referenced. The Kaddish makes it clear that God cannot be expressed in names when it tells us that God is "high above all the blessings and hymns, praises, and consolations, which are uttered in the world." Yet despite this, the Kaddish, using the future *hitpael* forms of multiple verbs of praise, tells us that the name will be or should be blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled, honored, adored, and lauded. What does it mean to bless, praise, and glorify a name? Why are we exhorted to bless and praise the great name of God and not God himself? This directive seems to display a great faith in the power and glory of language. We glorify language and the process of signifying because it brings us close to the Holy One, blessed be He. Yet at the same time, the list of synonyms for praising is so long, and the semantic differences between the terms so slight, that we are also brought up to the limitations of language. The Kaddish seems to be saying that the act of praising He who is beyond language is also beyond language.

The entire morning liturgy seems to use this strategy of multiplying synonyms for naming and blessing God. For more examples, I would direct the reader to the blessing after the *Barakhu* and before the formal recitation of the Shema; but there are others as well. The multiplication of predications for God and for praise of God seems not only to confuse the process of semiosis of God but also to whip the semiotic process into a kind of frenzy that moves beyond the attempt to communicate information and instead builds spiritual energy. At the height of this movement, the use of words moves back down the chain of semiotic functions. In Peirce's terms, this means that we move from thirdness to firstness, from the logical, to the energetic, to the emotional interpretant.

The *Hitpael* Form

One of the distinctive linguistic aspects of the Kaddish is its use of the future hitpael or reflexive form of verbs. In using this form, the Kaddish accomplishes a number of things. First, the repetition of the sound *yitpael*, as in *yitgedal, yitkadash, yitbarakh, yishtabah* . . . gives the prayer its characteristic sound, beat, and rhythm. Also, the reflexive form enters us into a strange verbal and temporal dimension. In this dimension, past and future, and active, passive, and reflective constructs merge. It is not certain if we are being commanded in the imperative to praise God's name, or if worshippers are praising the name now, or if the name will be praised in the future when the Kingdom comes. Is it humans who praise God or, given the reflexive meaning of the hitpael, is the Kaddish saying that the name will praise itself? Is the Kaddish about some future time of the Kingdom that will come, or is it speaking about our ability to experience that Kingdom now, in the liturgical moment?

The Kaddish gives us a theology of creation by telling us that God created the world "according to his will." But it also seems to assume that, despite this creation, the Kingdom is not yet here. It therefore implores God to establish his kingdom "speedily and soon," in the very lifetime of those who say the Kaddish. The words "speedily and soon" are indices that point to the moment of pain in the here and now. Therefore, despite some of its temporal unclarity, it is clear that the Kaddish is meant to address the suffering of individual Jews and the community Israel and wants to bring healing and repair speedily and soon, that is, right now!

This very healing is glimpsed with the following line in the Kaddish, which is the high point in the prayer. Here, all the assembled join the leader of the prayer and cry out in unison, "Let his great name be blessed for ever and ever and to all eternity." Here, the collective does now what it will do in the eternal time of the coming of the Kingdom—bless God!

One could say that the central task of Jews is to praise God. But only the living can do this. As the psalm says, "The dead cannot praise God" (Ps. 115:18).

Death is the great silence. Death is the interruption of praise, the hiatus in the semiosis of God, that can only be resumed by the dead in the time of the Kingdom come. Therefore, for the living community to say that "we will bless God forever and ever to eternity" is to forge a link across the abyss of death over to eternal life. Here, then, the semiosis of God in the Kaddish supplies a mediation between life and eternal life. The semiosis of God in the Kaddish then becomes a sign of the eternality of the Jewish people.

The Kaddish and Death

In the famous opening line of the *Star*, Rosenzweig refers to an intricate connection between "cognition of the All" and death. Rosenzweig tells us that philosophy denies the fear of death (*Star*, 3) and seeks to avoid it. But religion does not have that luxury. Indeed, the fact that the mourner is placed in such a central place in every service suggests that death is embraced and that the liturgy sees addressing the fear of death as one of its central tasks. That the liturgy requires a quorum of ten to be present for the Kaddish to be said suggests that a mourner should not be left alone but needs the support of the community. However, a remarkable aspect of the Kaddish is that the mourner is not a passive recipient of the community's love and support but, instead, the mourner is thrust into the role of leading the Kaddish prayer. Thus, it is the mourner who will address the community and say, "May He establish His Kingdom during your life and during your days." By making the mourner the leader, the liturgy expresses the confidence in the spiritual resources of the mourner who now, at this low point of doubt, is still able to praise God. This act of spiritual triumph allows us to understand why the Kaddish, which makes no mention of the dead, is so appropriate as the mourner's prayer. The Kaddish is said by mourners because, in the face of death, it is a statement of faith in God. In the face of the challenge of mortality, the Kaddish is an assertion of the eternality of God and the eternality of the Jewish people. It the face of the challenge that death brings to God's creation and to the hope of living in his Kingdom, the Kaddish asserts a faith in the goodness of creation and in the ultimate coming of the messianic Kingdom.

By giving the mourner the responsibility of saying the Kaddish, the liturgy appears to be intentionally blurring the issue of whether or not the community, through the minyan, is present to serve the needs of the mourner, or the mourner is present to serve the community.

The presence of the mourner in the morning service and, indeed, in every service, is another kind of signifying marker. The mourner who comes to remember her father or mother, or any close relative, calls upon the sense of family and peoplehood that is an integral part of the Jewish liturgy. The rabbi often says the name of the loved one whose memory is being recalled, and the

name is often specially marked on a "Yarhzeit board" in the synagogue. Thus, the relative is marked in the chain of generations of the synagogue. Through the liturgy, that chain is then extended back to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the matriarchs—Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.

As I have said, the Kaddish is used to mark central transitions in all of Jewish liturgy. Given that the whole life of the Jew is to be lived under the canopy of Jewish law and mitsvot, it is not stretching the metaphor too far to suggest that all of life for the Jew is a liturgical act. If this be true, the Kaddish is an extremely appropriate prayer to be said to mark the passing of a life from here to the next world. Yet, because the dead cannot praise God, a relative says this prayer for the deceased. This act, then, must be seen as part of the series of mitsvot called *hesed shel emet*, which we perform for the dead without repayment.

Conclusion

We may say that the preliminary section of the morning liturgy provides us with the systematic interpretant, the semiotic context, in reference to which the meaning of the signs of the morning liturgy can be understood. The preliminary service is a kind of refresher course in the central texts, themes, theology, and mitsvot of the Jewish liturgical system. The preliminary service prepares a sense of the sacred space and time that liturgy transpires. The preliminary service allows worshippers to don the garments of prayer and provides explanations of their meaning. The service reminds us of the upcoming recitation of the Shema and recalls the central figures of Abraham and his family and of Moses and the events of the Exodus. It introduces the semiotic registers of peoplehood and Messianism and hope. It brings forward the succinct logic and aesthetics of Jewish philosophy and the practical wisdom of the rabbinic ethics. It makes the connection between the ancient sacrifices and the liturgy of words, and marks out a place for the mourner, for death and eternal life. Like the overture to a symphony, the preliminary service introduces themes and patterns that will be repeated and expanded in the service to come.

The preliminary service occurs as the rays of morning light are just filtering in and the worshippers are slowly moving toward full wakefulness. It includes mainly private prayers that can be said quickly by the individuals, each of whom come into the synagogue at different times. Because of this, different individuals can develop different forms of the preliminary service and use it in different ways to prepare themselves for the formal service that is to come. Indeed, I have suggested that because of its concentrated content, the preliminary service contains in a nutshell almost all that will be expressed in the formal morning service that follows. Few worshippers are aware of all that is contained in the preliminary service, and its purpose as preparation to formal

worship is not to overwhelm the worshipper with its "perfusion of signs." Rather, the signs are there to set a backdrop, to recall the canon of texts in which the liturgy is set, and to remind us of the larger context of the cultural–linguistic system of Judaism.

The preliminary service is meant to provide a large array of icons, indices, and symbols, and the web of relations in which these signs sit. I have already stated that the everyday morning liturgy, as a whole, contains within it the basic structure of all Jewish liturgical services—that structure includes introductory psalms, the Shema, the Amidah, and concluding psalms and piyyutim. And one could even go further and suggest that elements from all the festivals are found in the morning service. Thus, we see the holiday of Pesach and the *shelosh regelim* (*Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Sukkot*) represented in the Exodus texts, Shabbat represented in the psalms to creation, and the high holy days represented in the Akedah and Tahanun. We could also say that the preliminary service contains all the elements of the morning service that follows it. Thus, like Ezekiel's series of wheels within wheels, the preliminary service sits in the morning service that in turn sits in the liturgical calendar that sits in the overall cultural–linguistic system of Judaism. And each semiotic piece contains in concentrated form that which is unfolded in the next.

However, it certainly must be said that the preliminary service, as a form of preparation for the formal morning liturgy, has a kind of desultory form that necessarily lacks the structure and power of the performance of the collective liturgy that will follow it. When the formal liturgy that follows the preliminary service is led by rabbi and cantor, and when the words of the liturgy take flight in choral song, group refrain, and responsive readings, and in the rabbi's *dvar Torah* or sermon, possibilities of new harmonies and spiritual flights are set in motion. Here, the liturgy uses the signs of the Jewish people, Judaism, and God, not primarily as tools of education and socialization, but as stepping-stones that forge an opening of the semiotics of the liturgy to the trans-semiotic presence of God. Whether or not the liturgy is successful, and a form of liturgical spirituality occurs, depends upon the time and place, the leadership and the worshippers in the particular liturgical performance. But the uniqueness of Jewish and all religious liturgy as a form of semiotic expression is precisely its strategies to open up the envelope of semiosis to that reality that lies beyond semiosis, to God, to the redemption of the world, and to the fulfillment of a reality that is not yet signified. God, redemption, fulfillment—these terms to which the semiosis of liturgy points—represent a final non-articulated dimension beyond Peirce's third, which we could refer to as the unsaid fourth of completion. This fourth is the end, the eternal, the absolute, the perfection, the "Shabbat" of God.

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Epilogue

Liturgical Truth

This book has attempted to outline the manifold capacities of Jewish liturgy for philosophy, ethics, and theology. The book has not referred to Jewish liturgy in general but has focused on details and particularities of the rituals of the synagogue. Yet in focusing on Jewish particularity, the book has also highlighted certain elements and forms of liturgy that can be found in many of the world's religions and in particular in the three monotheistic religions.

One need not go into specifics by saying that synagogues, churches, and mosques are places where fundamental values and ideals are taught, where collective dreams are imagined and revived, where babies are entered into communities, where youths are ritually moved into adulthood, and where dead loved ones are mourned and eulogized. The spaces of synagogues, churches, and mosques are rendered special and set off from the ordinary if only because of the reverential attitudes and the palpably spiritual energies that are generated in them. These holy spaces provide a nexus for life and death, for good and evil, for belief and action. Words spoken here can be met with deep receptivity by an audience that awaits a word of hope, a direction and a path to follow, and a sense of a peaceful future at a time of crisis and violence.

As we draw near to the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, it is becoming clear that the religious ideas, liturgies, institutions, and leaders, which the avatars of modern secularism expected to be gone by now, are only gaining in power and influence. The resurgence of religion in politics, culture, and war marks a profound disillusionment with the modern secular ideologies of capitalism,

socialism, democracy, and nationalism, and a sense of disappointment with the consequences of modern institutions for the meaning-making enterprise, for the material conditions of those who live outside the richest nations, and for the life-sustaining capacity of the global environment.

In our present context of religious revival and enthusiasm, the question for cultural observers and critics is no longer "Is religion real?" but "Can the reality of religion be mined for sources of healing, and can the power of religion be marshaled for good and for peace?" The irony of this enterprise of mining truth and marshaling religious power is that at a time when divine reality is being extolled, the reality and power of God still depends on human response and initiative. This then brings us back to the fundamental truths of modernity—that human autonomy, reason, and will remain central vehicles of human transformation and the realization of all the great redemptive and salvific dreams of humankind.

The postliberal move is then to attempt to re-envision and remake a new synthesis of philosophy and faith that is religiously diverse and particular and also philosophically true. This is a reformulation of the fundamental monotheistic principle of covenant between God and human: the fact that the human and the divine are dependent upon one another for the assurance and future of a good and just and equitable society. Although there have been countless attempts to merge philosophy and religion in the West, almost all of them have required emptying out religious particularity into philosophical concepts. The central feature of liturgical reasoning is to find reason in and through the hallmark of religious particularity, which philosophers from Plato to Kant have identified with religious rituals and liturgies. My argument has been that precisely in the odd performances and strange behaviors of the oldest continually practiced religion of the West, precisely in the synagogue liturgies of the Jews, one finds some of the most profound attempts to formulate truth. The postliberal view of truth could thus be restated in a philosophical fashion as the hypothesis that *truth is liturgical*.

To say that "truth is liturgical" is to do what philosophers do, and that is to step back from the particular to make a general statement. But I do this in the manner of the pragmatic philosopher who first observes and describes and only afterward reflects and generates hypotheses. To develop the hypothesis that truth is liturgical, I am going to re-gather some of the threads of the arguments of the past chapters of the book and look less at the content of specific liturgies and more at the form of the liturgies I have reviewed. What the form of liturgy tells us is that truth is performative, communal, and temporal rather than static, based on the individual mind, and divorced from space and time. Liturgy tells us that truth is also multi-staged and processional; it takes time to develop and unfold. Therefore, it is better known at the end of a process than at the beginning and can be seen in the fruits of actions, rather than in origins. Liturgy also tells us that truth is an activity of the body, mind,

heart, and soul together. Liturgy tells us that truth requires an attitude of reverence and respect; it requires a state of mind that is at once concentrated and open, aware and empty, full of old images yet released for the new. What the form of liturgy tells us is that truth is a hybrid multi-shaped thing rather than a pure and univocal essence. The multi-shaped quality of liturgy means that truth is philosophy, ethics, theology, art, poetry, music, and dance all working together. Yet even with its multi-formed quality, liturgy tells us that truth has a special affinity for the logos, for the word, and for reason. And monotheistic liturgies tell us that truth has been married to scripture. So, if I may return to the particular, I would observe that monotheistic liturgies are full of scriptural texts, sometimes uttered, sometimes sung, often taken out of context and placed in surprising juxtaposition with other scriptures, but finally, so flexible as to allow the human voice to interpret them. So liturgy, itself, becomes a combination of the human and divine logos as word and reason and healing.

Scriptural Reasoning and Liturgical Truth

Throughout this book the reader has seen ways in which scriptural interpretation and liturgy interrelate. In speaking of scripture, I have from time to time referred to the contemporary movement of Scriptural Reasoning (SR), in which Jews, Christians, and Muslims study scripture together as a form of collective reasoning. To extend and illustrate what I mean by liturgical truth into a broader context than the synagogue, church, and mosque provides, I would like now to refer to liturgical aspects of Scriptural Reasoning study sessions.

One of the first principles or "rules" of SR is that the particularities of language, history, and ritual should not be undermined or diluted and that differences and disagreements must be expressed and respected. SR is a fairly open practice of reading the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur'an in which the disciplines of traditional modes of exegesis, modern literary science, philosophy, theology, and ethics are brought to bear on the interpretation of scripture. However, even with all this openness, another very important rule is that SR desists from any syncretistic attempts to formulate some new hybrid monotheistic forms. I want to make this clear because I am now going to suggest that SR has a "liturgical quality" and often displays aspects of what I have called "liturgical truth."

The liturgical truth that is displayed in SR is not the result of the performance of a shared Jewish–Christian–Muslim liturgy or even the practice of one of the liturgies of one tradition by members of other traditions. Rather, liturgical truth arises from the form, the attitude, and the subject matter, (i.e., scripture) that is collectively studied and a series of rough "rules" that are followed. I have already published these "rules" in "A Handbook of Scriptural Reasoning"[1] and will not repeat them in their entirety now. But I will restate

and summarize some of them to let the reader know why I want to suggest that SR provides us with a particularly compelling model for the performance of "liturgical truth." Perhaps the first thing that one needs in order to label a human activity as liturgical is a "script," or a series of behaviors, that can be identified and repeated. Liturgy passes through stages of setup, margin, liminality, aggregation, and aftereffect, and all these stages can be identified in SR.

The Script of Scriptural Reasoning Practice

The script of SR requires participants who are at once dedicated to their religious traditions, knowledgeable in both the discourses of traditional interpretation and contemporary social and human sciences, and willing to read their scripture together with the scriptures and persons of the two other traditions. Before SR sessions begin, thought must be given to the scriptures that will be read. SR practice has been to choose texts from the three traditions that focus on a common figure, for example, Abraham, or a theme or issue, such as hospitality, creation, sacrifice, or usury. Scriptures of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Qur'an are the primary texts, but materials from secondary sacred literature are also employed. In SR sessions, members are not heavy-handed about "themes" because they find that new themes and issues quickly arise.

After texts are chosen, attention must be given to where the sessions will be held, what kind of room will be used, and how the tables and chairs are to be set up. Scriptural reasoning requires space for small intimate groups of about six to study together and a room to bring the small groups together for plenary sessions. Each small group should have representatives of each of the three traditions, and it is best to have each tradition represented by more than one person. It is preferable to find a "neutral site" that is not associated directly with one religious tradition, but SR sessions have taken place in Christian, Islamic, and Jewish institutions with good results. However, if these settings are used, it is important that the home tradition not attempt to take special prerogatives in setting or limiting the agenda of the meetings.

It is important to set aside adequate time for both the development of scriptural interpretation and the building of human relations between interpreters. Multiple two-hour sessions work well, and small sessions for in-depth study should be followed by plenary sessions in which small groups share with the whole group the processes and conclusions that were reached in their small sessions. SR sessions often begin in plenary with brief presentations by knowledgeable participants of historical context, textual problems, and overviews on each text that will be studied. It is common practice to begin a small session by reading the chosen scriptures out loud; then the group focuses on a text from one or sometimes two texts from different traditions. Following this, the small-group session will address the text from the other traditions and also

reflect on the relations between the scriptures. Time is also needed for reflection on the insights gained and for attempts to draw these insights together into patterns and conclusions.

Each session requires a convener, and this person should have both knowledge of SR theory and experience in SR practice. Note takers are also needed. Egalitarian principles of speech must be respected and protected. This means that the voices of women and men, senior and junior members, critical text scholars and theologians, and representatives of the different traditions are treated equally. To safeguard the cardinal rule of an egalitarian speech situation, the convener may have to exercise her authority and intervene in the discussion to quiet a particularly strong voice or bring out a quiet one.

No single religious framework and no single methodological approach to the scriptures is privileged. It is the scriptures that hold the place of privilege, and they and not the convener or individual participants are to be placed at the center of discussions. When scriptures are placed at the center and treated with respect, they readily become sources of revelation, community, and guidance. Respect for the scriptures, however, should not limit interpreters from subjecting them to text-critical analyses. SR asserts that philological, historical, and critical analyses have the power to assist us, its readers, in the process of understanding the text. However, text-critical methods are often turned to early in an SR sessions to clarify issues of language, history, and the context, and then study moves outward to the more general and comparative forms of analysis that arise, often spontaneously, from the process of interpretation.

The first and most important stage of SR is achieved when a give-and-take "trialogue" about the meaning of the scriptures occurs. In the moment of trialogue scriptures take life and spark new insights into the nature of God, revelation, textuality, and tradition. Commonalities and differences between the traditions surface, and the basic allegiances and beliefs of the human partners in dialogue are clarified. I would correlate this with the ritual stage of margin or liminality, where central values are expressed and new insights discovered. In this stage, the mind and soul are activated and the spirit of the divine word disclosed. In the "in-between" of the fast-moving dialogue about the words of scripture, the exegetical insights of biblical science, the traditional interpretations of the *Tafsir*, *Midrash*, and Church fathers, and the insights of the human participants in the SR room, I would suggest that "truth" makes its appearance. This truth is a "bound truth"—bound to the moment, the room, the windows that look out, bound to the attitudes and the texts and the people present. As "bound truth," this truth, which I call liturgical truth, is not easy to articulate. Its articulation may be best found in witness and testimony that requires metaphor and image in addition to rational concepts and hypotheses. The articulation, then, of liturgical truth, like the very scripture that lies at its core, has what a number of the members of the Scriptural Reasoning theory group[2] call a kind of "poesis." And this poesis, in order to be adequate to the truth it

represents, requires an "apophatic moment," a form of expression that points to something inarticulate, a kernel that is composed of so much thought, word, energy, spirit, feeling that it is best communicated as silence. Thus, in SR as liturgy, participants make little Rosenzweigian suitcases in which they pack scripture and reason and humanity into tight bundles that they cannot properly name.

But Scriptural Reasoning, like all liturgy, does not end in the sacred space and time of its performance. As Victor Turner and Richard Schechner tell us, liturgy rightly includes a stage after the performance and an "after stage" of aggregation or return to the quotidian, the everyday. The social scientists and SR practitioners like to stress that the stage of aggregation and the return to normalcy after the liturgical performance involves a change. In the initiation rituals that Turner studies, the performers return from their liturgical performances to a different, "higher," social status. In monotheistic liturgy, the participants should return spiritually renewed, refreshed, and rededicated to the "straight path" of faith, good works, and commandments. Yet, recognizing truth as liturgical not only renews the spiritual and moral life but can also be an inspiration for the life of thinking and reasoning. Although liturgical truth finds its first home in its performance and its first articulation in the tightly wound bundle of thought, feeling, and word, it can be worked upon and opened, "unfolded," crafted and formed. This means that truth as liturgical also has a postperformance stage, and that is the stage of "reasoning after liturgical truth," in which analytical and logical theorizing takes over. Here is the place for applications of more-traditional forms of phenomenological, semiotic, pragmatic, idealist, and ethical philosophy. What I am suggesting here, then, is that liturgical truth need not end in its liturgical performance. Philosophy as we have known it still has a place, but that place comes after the event of the performance instead of before it as its origin and foundation.

To mine and express the powers and truth of liturgy, this book has focused mainly on religious thought and liturgies. In suggesting that truth is liturgical, however, I want to suggest that philosophy could and should recognize its liturgical dimension. Catherine Pickstock makes a similar argument in her *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*. Pickstock argues that to recapture its liturgical dimension, philosophy need only look to its Greek origins, where philosophy was conceived as both a way of thinking and living and where philosophers regularly met for ritualized dialogue sessions. In chapter 1, I reviewed Mendelssohn's argument that writing and printing and the professionalization of philosophy had, in his day, eclipsed the central act of oral discussion and teaching. Using the model of rabbinic oral thought and the centrality of ritual and liturgy to Judaism, Mendelssohn attempted to revive the connection between thinking and living and the dynamic, temporal, practical, and social dimension of philosophy. In suggesting that truth is liturgical, I am attempting to both reiterate and extend Mendelssohn's and Pickstock's

arguments to suggest that philosophy today would find its energy and dynamism invigorated, its sources of truth deepened, its social and cultural relevance extended, by recapturing a liturgical dimension. Here, philosophers could learn not only from religious thinkers but also from scientists who almost never work alone in isolated library cubbyholes but, from start to finish, collaborate with colleagues and students in producing their scientific reasoning. Indeed, the scientific method suggests that research is a performance that not only follows rules but most often requires that multiple people work together so that science becomes an event of social thinking in which discoveries and insights flow from a group process of action and reasoning.

After this too-brief discussion of philosophy and science, I do want, in closing this book, to return to my primary subject and to the liturgical quality of truth as we see it appearing in religious reasoning. Here, I will return to Scriptural Reasoning and highlight a final liturgical aspect I have not yet mentioned, which is the eschatological dimension of an SR session. Like most monotheistic liturgies, the truth of SR is eschatological in that it is not yet fully known, not yet open to the light of day, still somewhat hidden and too tightly packed to really see. The truth of SR is also eschatological in that building on the eschatologies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, it imagines an end time in which all the children of Abraham will live together in peace. However, like most monotheistic liturgies, SR not only imagines an end time of peace, it anticipates that time now in the very performance of Jews, Christians, and Muslims reasoning with scriptures. The eschatological dimension of SR practice means that, while in the SR performance, people whose communities are otherwise at war with each other are sitting down in peaceful conversation. The generosity, friendship, and sense of divine spirit that is released recalls to SR members messianic images of the universal recognition of the kingdom of God.

Imagining SR practice as a glimpse of the end time is extremely powerful because, as with all eschatological thinking, it necessarily has implications for the present. The new eschatology of SR calls into question some of the exclusivist and triumphantalist aspects of the traditional eschatologies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in which one religion triumphs over the other two. Work in the group reading of the three scriptures can thus disclose the extent to which some of the traditional eschatologies are more about rectifying a past or present situation of suffering and oppression in a specific time and place than they are about a true future time of peace. A practical result of face-to-face SR readings of eschatological texts of the three monotheistic traditions by Jews, Christians, and Muslims is that it becomes harder to maintain eschatologies that expect to overcome the religious particularities of each tradition. This allows for the re-imagining of a new type of end time, in which peace is won through preserving the particularity of the other instead of obliterating it. Here, the end-time can function as the ideal that pulls the traditions along

with it to a future time of human fulfillment, a reign of justice and peace and communion with God. Reading scriptures together as a form of eschatological thinking also recalls past times of rich interaction between Jews, Christians, and Muslims and a beginning time of creation before time, in which the world was created as good, and the human as, indeed, very good.

Notes

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

1. Franz Rosenzweig, *Breife und Tagebücher*, vol. 1, part 2, ed. Rachel Rosenzweig and Edith Rosenzweig-Scheinmann (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), 1001–5. Franz Rosenzweig, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*, trans. Nahum Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1970), 246.

INTRODUCTION

1. I turn to German scholarship to explicate the philosophical power of liturgy partially because the modern study of Jewish liturgy began with German–Jewish scholarship in the form of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), the founder of the movement, eschewed the ahistorical, legal, and theological agenda of rabbinic studies of prayer and liturgy from the time of the Mishna (200) through the Gaonic period (seventh through eleventh centuries). Zunz used philology and comparative analysis of extant prayer books to attempt to uncover the "Urtext" or original forms of Jewish prayers. We will also see this tendency to unearth certain original forms of Judaism in the Ethical Monotheists. However, we argue that the unique contribution of the Ethical Monotheists to the study of liturgy is found in their ethical, philosophical, and theological insights.

2. My study loosely follows a suggestion in Paul Mendes-Flohr's chapter "Rosenzweig and Kant: Two Views of Ritual and Religion." In this chapter, Mendes-Flohr first presents Kant's negative portrait of Judaism and its liturgies and then argues that Rosenzweig attempted to overcome this view through a philosophical and theological defense of Jewish liturgy. This chapter is in Paul Mendes-Flohr, *Divided Passions: Jewish Intellectuals and the Experience of Modernity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).

3. Contemporary studies of Jewish liturgy, most notably those of Lawrence Hoffman, have vastly expanded the methods of analysis of the Science of Judaism to include sociological and anthropological approaches and to develop a more "holistic approach" to the study of liturgy. See Lawrence Hoffman, *Beyond the Text* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987). Where Hoffman's earlier work was circumscribed by an explanative social scientific agenda, his recent books on liturgy are more open to normative and theological themes. See the influential Synagogue 2000 Web site and *My People's Prayer Book*, 8 vols., ed. Lawrence Hoffman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1997–2004). In these more recent books, Hoffman still does not engage the specifically philosophical, ethical, and theoretical concerns that I focus on.

4. Arnold Eisen has specifically taken up the theories of the Ethical Monotheists on liturgy, yet his studies have followed a descriptive sociological rather than an explicitly normative agenda. Eisen eschews the philosophical problem of developing a collective normative discourse for liturgy by following the liberal trend toward the individualization and personalization of religious meaning. Eisen argues that there is no collective meaning for Jewish liturgies and offers that every person will take away a different private meaning for each liturgical performance. Arnold Eisen, "Divine Legislation as 'Ceremonial Script' Mendelssohn on Commandments," *AJS Review* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 239–67. See also Eisen's book-length study that views major themes and transformations of modern Judaism through the lens of ritual practice with a special focus on issues of Jewish identity: *Rethinking Modern Judaism: Ritual, Commandment, Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

5. I share Catherine Bell's passion to overcome the needless dichotomy between "ritual and belief" and the attempts to build up a thick interconnected social field within which to theorize ritual. However, my study attempts to preserve a philosophical and theological dimension for ritual (and liturgy) and thereby departs significantly from Bell's approach, which culminates in a complex method to understand relations of power and legitimation in ritual but eschews any theological analysis. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

6. Jean-François Lyotard, *La Condition postmoderne* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1979). For a good collection of central figures see *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. Thomas Docherty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). For a summary of epistemological and sociological aspects of postmodernism, see my *Interpreting Judaism in a Postmodern Age* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

7. The terms "hermeneutics of suspicion" and "hermeneutics of retrieval" are adapted from Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 28. For a more fully developed view of his comprehensive hermeneutic method, see Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976).

8. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 13.

9. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 3.

10. Ibid., 4.

11. For a description, see my introduction in volume 1 of the *E-Journal of Textual Reasoning*, etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/tr/volume1/index.html. See also Peter Ochs and Nancy Levene, eds., *Textual Reasonings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 2–14.

12. See the *E-Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*, etext.virginia.edu/journals/ssr.

13. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 14.

14. It was Daniel Hardy of the University of Cambridge who pointed out to me the importance of this relation God–word–world for the efficacy of scripture and liturgy and the traditional understanding of God's role in the world (conversation with the author, Cambridge, England, June 6, 2006).

15. This ignorance of the language of Islamic liturgy is less widespread in predominantly Muslim countries, but in the diaspora communities in the West the phenomenon is also seen.

16. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), viii.

17. Gavin Brown, "Theorizing Ritual as Performance: Explorations of Ritual Indeterminacy," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17, no. 1 (Jan. 2003): 3–18.

18. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Payot, 1967).

19. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1973), 167–89.

20. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

21. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984).

22. The other central figure in this group is Hans Frei; related figures are Stanley Hauerwas and Peter Ochs.

23. Lindbeck, *Nature of Doctrine*, ch. 2.

24. Steven Kepnes, "Revelation as Torah: From an Existential to a Postliberal Judaism," *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 8 (Summer 2000): 1–33.

25. Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

26. John Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

27. Henry Sayre, "Performance," in *Critical Terms for Literary Studies*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 91.

28. Arnold van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage* (Paris: E. Nourry, 1909), 91.

29. Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985). Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1988).

30. Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, 16.

31. Ibid., 20.

32. Robert Gibbs and Peter Ochs have also used this theme. Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 257. Peter Ochs, "The Rules of Scriptural Reasoning," *Journal of Scriptural Reasoning* 2, no. 1 (May 2002). Etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/SSR, 7–9.

CHAPTER 1

1. See the highly influential work by Friedrich Schiller, *On the Naïve and Sentimental in Literature*, ed. and trans. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1981). Schiller argues, here, that art can bring together the rational and sensuous natures of humanity.

2. David Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and Aesthetics in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). I am indebted to Zachary Braiterman for pointing me to this good book and for suggesting that I use him to highlight Mendelssohn's semiotics in this chapter.

3. Wellbery, *Lessing's Laocoon*, 17.

4. Moses Mendelssohn, "*Űber die Empfinden*, "*On the Sentiments*," *Philosophical Writings* (1771), ed. and trans. Daniel Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

5. Ibid., 29.

6. Ibid., 14.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 16–17.

9. Ibid., cf. 30–33.

10. August Friedrich Cranz argued that by denying religious communities the power to enforce their beliefs and doctrines, Mendelssohn had undermined Judaism, which was based on fear of punishment. See *The Search for Light and Right in a Letter to Mr. M. Mendelssohn* (Berlin: Maurer, 1782), reprinted in Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriten Jubiläumsausgabe*, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: F. Frommann Verlag, 1983), 75–87. Mendelssohn responded that Judaism actually demanded adherence only to law and did not coerce belief. That power was associated with the Church, which deemed adherents "heretics" and excommunicated them for improper beliefs. For a good review of the Christian challenges to Mendelssohn, see the introduction to *Jerusalem* by Alexander Altmann in the English edition.

11. Fritz Bamberger, "Mendelssohn's Concept of Judaism," in *Studies in Jewish Thought*, ed. Alfred Jospe (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 344.

12. Letter to Herz Homberg, March 1, 1784, translated and quoted by Alexander Altmann, in *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 518.

13. Immanuel Kant was so convinced of the morally defunct nature of Jewish law that he believed that Mendelssohn was disingenuous in his support for the law and that Mendelssohn would give it up when Christians gave up their equally irrational "articles of faith." See *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 154. Christian theologians were perplexed by Mendelssohn, with some believing that his enlightened views should bring him to convert to liberal Christianity and others feeling that his philosophy of Judaism was not only self-contradictory but undermined traditional understandings of revelation.

14. Konrad Feiereis, *Die Umprägung der Natütlichen Theologie in Religionsphilosophie* (Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 1965). Arkush reviews various scholars' discussions of Kant's position that Mendelssohn "could not possibly have been a genuine believer . . . in the eternally binding character of the Mosaic laws" and concludes

that "Mendelssohn's writings provide ample cause for entertaining at least some doubts." See Allan Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 281.

15. Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974).

16. Bamberger, "Mendelssohn's Concept," 343.

17. Arkush, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Enlightenment*, ch. 6.

18. David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), xxiv.

19. Benedict Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications), ch. 14.

20. By lumping "revealed religion" together with "natural religion," Mendelssohn might confuse some contemporary readers who are accustomed to seeing revelation and natural religion separated. But Mendelssohn's notion of revealed religion is ascriptural. He follows a biblical tradition that suggests that God's majesty is revealed through nature. Thus, the psalmist says: "The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). Like many Enlightenment thinkers, Mendelssohn believed that an additional source of "revelation" is reason.

21. See Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn*, 546–48.

22. Compare the *Zohar*, the central book of Kabbalah, Jewish mysticism: "The Torah may be compared to a beautiful and stately maiden who is secluded in an isolated chamber of a palace, and has a lover. For love of her he passes by her gate unceasingly and turns his eye in all directions to discover her" (*Zohar* II, 99a).

23. Steven Kepnes, *The Text as Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

24. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1982), 446.

25. Arkush translation of Mendelssohn's German rendering, in Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, 122.

26. Alexander Altmann, Commentary, in Arkush translation of Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, 220.

27. Mendelssohn also presents a more traditional argument for the need to observe the law, and that is that God or His emissary has not appeared to publicly revoke the law (*J*, 133).

CHAPTER 2

1. Hermann Cohen, *Religion der Vernunft: Aus den Quellen des Judentum*, 1st ed. (Leipzig: Fock, 1919). This was published posthumously.

2. Steven Kepnes, "Introduction," *The Journal of Textual Reasoning*, etext.virginia.edu/journals/tr.

3. Hermann Cohen, *Jüdische Schriften*, ed. Bruno Strauss, with an introduction by Franz Rosenzweig (Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke, 1924).

4. For more details and references to the two schools of thought on whether or not Cohen returned to Judaism, see Michael Zank, *The Idea of Atonement in the Philosophy of Hermann Cohen* (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 2000), 165–67.

5. Ibid., 190.

6. See Zank's bibliography of Cohen's earliest works, *Idea of Atonement*, 401–5.

7. For another resource on Cohen that, in a short article, maps out a path to Cohen's "Jewish Liturgical Existence," see Hartwig Wiedebach, "Aesthetics in Religion: Remarks on Hermann Cohen's Theory of Jewish Existence," *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy 11*, no. 1 (2002): 63–73.

8. Steven Schwarschild, "The Title of Hermann Cohen's 'Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism,'" in Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism*, trans. Simon Kaplan, with introductory essays by Leo Strauss, Steven S. Schwarzschild, and Kenneth Seeskin (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 8.

9. Ibid., 9.

10. Hermann Cohen, *System der Philosophie. Erster Teil: Logik der reinen Erkenntnis* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1914), 81. For a good discussion of Cohen's philosophy of origin, his use of the infinitesimal method, and the formulation of his critical idealism, see Andrea Poma, *The Critical Philosophy of Hermann Cohen* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

11. Schwarschild, "The Title," 10.

12. Ibid.

13. Author's conversation with Michael Zank; Cazenovia, New York; July 2006.

14. Schwarzschild, "The Title," 10.

15. Given that Cohen published this chapter before it appeared in *Religion of Reason*, it is not so far-fetched to look at this earlier text out of the order in which it appeared.

16. As quoted in Schwarzschild, "The Title," 8.

17. For a good review of the history of the Noachide laws, see David Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism* (Lampeter, UK: Edwin Mellon Press, 1983). See also David Novak, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), ch. 1.

18. Peter Ochs, "The Rules of Scriptural Reasoning," *Web Journal of Society for Scriptural Reasoning* 2, no. 1 (May 2002). Etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/ssr. Cohen's notion of monotheism as a form of self-corrective reasoning also has some resonances with Ochs's Peircean notion of "A-reasonings" (Ochs, "The Rules," 10).

19. The correlate to the *Ger*, or convert, in rabbinic Judaism is the *Goy*, or non-Jew. The Goy is also a creation of rabbinic Judaism, which, in the translations of the Bible, gives the meaning of the word as "nation," a neutral term that only later comes to have a generally negative and pejorative connotation.

20. Most traditional commentators who follow the rabbinic commentary called the *Mekilta* on Exodus would suggest that Shabbat was given with the admonition *both* to remember and to observe it. Ramban argues that Moses heard the command as "remember" because he was on a higher spiritual level and did not need to be commanded to "keep" the laws of Shabbat. But the people were on a lower level, and they had to be commanded to "keep" or observe the laws of Shabbat.

21. Hermann Cohen, *System der Philosophie. Zweiter Teil: Ethik des reinen Willens*, 2nd ed., in *Werke* (1907; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1977), 7:484–88.

22. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. R. G. Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), part 1.

23. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

24. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 157.

25. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 50, 51.

26. Buber, *I and Thou*, 21–22.

27. Buber eventually saw this in Jewish texts, and he came to assert that the eternal Thou spoke not only through the rare moments of meeting in everyday life but also through the language and signs of the biblical narrative. See my *The Text as Thou*, chs. 5, 7.

28. When Buber gives examples of his I–Thou encounters, they are usually with strangers, students, or colleagues, where the ethnic or religious identity of the persons is not emphasized. See Martin Buber, *Meetings*, ed. and trans. Maurice Friedman (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1973).

29. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 101.

30. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 39–40, 194–201. Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 99–102.

31. For a related attempt to address the ethical importance of repentance through a semiotically attuned approach, see Robert Gibbs, "*Why Ethics?*" (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), part 4.

32. Zank, *Idea of Atonement*, 285.

33. Later rabbinic law explicitly determined that "for sins which were committed intentionally and in defiance of the law, sacrifice was not permitted" (*RR*, 199).

34. Maimonides outlines a process of asking forgiveness from the injured party. If the person refuses to forgive after the third time, the sin falls on him! See Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah: Sepher Hamadah*, "*Hilkhot Teshuva.*"

35. Prayer for the reestablishment of the sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem were excised from liberal Reform prayer books in the nineteenth century. In the "Sim Shalom" (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1985; new edition, 1988) prayer book of the United Synagogue, the Conservative movement, worshippers are offered alternatives to the *musaf* prayers that allow worshippers to "omit mention of sacrifices" (1985 edition, 435; 1998 edition, 174).

36. Moses Maimonides, "Laws of Repentance," *Mishna Torah: The Book of Knowledge*, ed. Moses Hyamson (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1981).

37. Maimonides has already shown in his "*Shemoneh Parahim*" (from his commentary on the Mishnah) how Aristotle's character ethics is applicable to the life of Halakah as a system that habituates Jews to moral actions. Yet, where Aristotle argues that the virtuous character is an achievement with stability and durability, Maimonides takes the view that we see in Ezekiel and in rabbinic thought that one can never be totally secure in his moral status—"sin crouches always at the door"—and, therefore, the virtuous self needs to be reconstituted daily. For a good translation, see "Eight Chapters," *Ethical Writings of Maimonides*, ed. R. L. Weiss and C. Butterworth (New York: Dover, 1975).

38. In chapter 12 of "*Why Ethics?*" Robert Gibbs argues that Levinas does have a notion of the ethical value of the "I" that Gibbs refers to as the "Me" (see Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, 126). Gibbs uses the "Me" to refute the charge against Levinas

and other postmodern ethicists "that without autonomous subjects we cannot be responsible" (273). Gibbs argues that the Me is not the autonomous subject that is constituted by reason, it is the Me that is continually made through responding to the other. Gibbs makes a case that Levinas does have a notion of the responsible subject, but the focus of Levinas's work is certainly not that subject. Rather, the subject and her needs are largely assumed and the abuses exaggerated. Certainly, Levinas does not give attention to the liturgical and communal supports for the subject that Cohen is concerned with.

39. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Logic of Late Capitalism," in *Postmodernism: A Reader*, ed. Thomas Docherty (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 73.

40. Ihab Hassan, "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism," in Docherty, *Postmodernism: A Reader*, 152.

CHAPTER 3

1. In this chapter I use two English translations of Rosenzweig's *Der Stern Der Erlösung, The Star of Redemption*. I mainly use the new translation by Barbara Gallie, which is referenced as "*Star*" (see Abbreviations), because it is more attuned to philosophical terminology. However, I also use the older Hallie translation because it presents a more felicitous English. This older translation is referenced as "*Star*, 1985" (see Abbreviations).

2. For an extended discussion of the relation of the *Star of Redemption* to various styles and movements in modern art, see Zachary Braiterman, *The Shape of Revelation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

3. Robert Gibbs, *Correlations in Rosenzweig and Levinas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 21–23 and epilogue.

4. A number of scholars have noticed affinities between Rosenzweig's *Star* and Augustine's work. Amos Funkenstein has written insightfully about the ways in which we see the *City of God* reflected in the *Star*, and I will focus on the importance of the *Confessions* in this chapter. Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For a good review of the literature on the relation of Rosenzweig and Augustine, see Marc Krell, *Intersecting Pathways: Modern Jewish Theologians in Conversation with Christianity* (New York: Oxford, 2003), 31–41.

5. Rosenzweig adapts his notions of contraction and expansion from the theosophical and mystical ruminations of Friedrich Schelling's *Die Weltalter* (*The Ages of the World*). Gibbs shows how Schelling traces out a path beyond the dead ends of a purely rational Idealism that denies God's freedom and an irrational Existentialism that supplies no philosophical ways to knowledge of God. Gibbs, *Correlations*, ch.2.

6. Daniel Matt has noted a parallel between the cosmology of the Big Bang and the Lurianic process of tsimtsum. Thus, God's light emerges from its primal concealment into the emptiness, like the energy that the theory of the Big Bang describes as emerging from the infinitely dense point of singularity. Creation, then, is an eternal process of the contraction or concealment of energy into matter, a

dynamic ebb and flow of heating and cooling of energy. The contraction of energy into matter gives rise to the creation of particular and diverse things and forms of life. Propagation of life continues through procreation, and in death life expands back into the elements that came together to produce it. Matt, *God and the Big Bang* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1996).

7. Revelation may further be seen as a contraction if we consider God's love for humans as a personal and exclusive relationship, unique to each revelatory encounter. However, this love is also a manifestation and unfolding since the intimate moment of love awakens and makes manifest the soul within the human being. This is further developed as humans turn outward toward other humans and the world in love. This outward turning of human love unleashes powers of love within the world and history that moves it toward redemption.

8. For a wonderfully clear expositions of part I of the *Star*, see Gibbs, *Correlations*, ch. 1, and Norbert Samuelson, *A User's Guide to Franz Rosenzweig's* Star of Redemption (Surrey, UK: Curzon, 1999), part 1.

9. *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. Edward Pusey (New York: Macmillan, 1961), 187.

10. Ibid., 194.

11. There are obvious parallels here between Rosenzweig's *Star*, which begins with a phenomenology of the existential challenge of death, and Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which focuses on the notion of "being unto death." Karl Löwith displays the similarities in beginning points but also shows how Heidegger moves back to Greek ontology and does not follow Rosenzweig's path to the Bible and theology. See Karl Löwith, "M. Heidegger and F. Rosenzweig: Temporality and Eternity," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 3, no. 1 (Sept. 1942). For a more appreciative attempt to show further similarities between Rosenzweig and Heidegger, see Peter Eli Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

12. Friedrich Schelling, *Die Weltalter 8, Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling (Stuttgart, 1861). *The Ages of the World*, trans. Frederick Bolman Jr. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942).

13. Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin: Schocken, 1936). *Scripture and Translation*, trans. Lawrence Rosenwald (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). A short summary of the principles of biblical translation, including the Leitwort principle, can be found in Buber, "Toward and New German Translation of the Bible," ed. Steven Kepnes, trans. Alan Swensen, in *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Peter Ochs (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1993).

14. Yet, despite the existence of a pattern to biblical narrative and to life, the very temporality of existence, its free spontaneity and unpredictable turns, its threat of variation and reversal, means that the providential hand of God is always hidden and the final chapter never written. So, for example, despite his lineage and successes, Jacob is never sure of God's blessing and promise even when it is presented openly to his face. This is perhaps the true genius of the biblical text, to at once mimic the anxiety that the human feels about living in time with freedom and mortality, and to also give the assurance that there is a providential pattern to time, what Frank

Kermode called a "sense of an ending," in *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

15. Those who follow Greek philosophy have used the existence of a heaven and an earth before God's creative words "Let there be Light!" to suggest that the world is eternal and did not come to being ex nihilo, but Rosenzweig does not take this path. Instead, he follows the rabbinic model that suggests that some kind or series of worlds was created by God (ex nihilo) before the creation through the word.

16. See, for example, the Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch translation of the *Song of Songs* (New York: Random House, 1995). In their commentary, the Blochs dismiss the theological reading and focus on the elements in the Song that reveal "sexual awakening of a young women for her lover" (3).

17. In a response to Michael Fishbane's commentary on the midrash *Song of Songs Rabba*, I attempt to outline in more theoretical and descriptive depth how the genius of the midrash is its ability to maintain a kind of binocular vision between the literal *pshat* sense that the Song is about human sexual desire and the *derash* sense that the Song is about love for God. Rosenzweig's reading of the Song could be considered a late modern commentary in the midrashic tradition. See my "Fishbane's Commentary to Song of Songs Rabba as Analytic Textual Reasoning," in *Textual Reasonings*, ed. Peter Ochs and Nancy Levene (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 57–66.

18. Martin Buber called this type of hermeneutics "existential exegesis," and, by it, he meant that the reader must both bring his or her own human experiences to the text and allow that the text will clarify, deepen, and augment that experience. Martin Buber, *Good and Evil*, trans. R. G. Smith (New York: Scribner's, 1953), 6.

19. *Confessions*, 198.

20. Ibid., 204.

21. Ibid., 205.

22. Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, 291–96.

23. Paul Mendes-Flohr shows that although Rosenzweig did abandon the methods and goals of historicism, he did not abandon the concerns and processes of the historical world. "Rosenzweig and the Crisis of Historicism," in *The Philosophy of Franz Rosenzweig*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988).

24. George Mosse, "The Influence of the Volkish Idea on German Jewry," in *Germans and Jews*, by George Mosse (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), ch. 4.

25. Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 19.

26. Some synagogues follow a triennial schedule through which one third of each Torah section is read each week. The triennial cycle then takes three years to complete.

27. I take the metaphor of time as a Torah scroll from Robert Gibbs, "Eternity in History: Rolling the Scroll," in *Liturgy, Time, and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Roshkover and C. C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 127–41.

28. This would be a Rosenzweigan restatement of the famous rabbinic exegetical principle "*Ain Mukdam u' me'uhar baTorah* ("There is neither early nor late in the Torah").

29. Samuelson, *User's Guide*, 225.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Rosenzweig, *Breife and Tagebücher*, 1:135.

34. Batnitzy, *Idolatry and Representation*, ch. 1.

35. Funkenstein, *Perceptions*, 292.

36. Franz Rosenzweig, *Breife and Tagebücher*, 1:134–135, in *Judaism Despite Christianity*, ed. Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, trans. Dorothy Emmet (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1969), 131–36.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Funkenstein, *Perceptions*, 298.

40. Ibid., 299.

41. Franz Rosenzweig points out that apologetics is actually characteristic of most of Jewish philosophy. With the attacks of philosophers and Islamic and Christian theologians, Jewish philosophers needed to formulate responses and provide interpretations that showed the implicit philosophical content of Judaism and thematized its intellectual and moral power. This was done not only to answer non-Jews but to make Judaism intellectually respectable to Jews themselves. Rosenzweig argues that the greatest work of Jewish philosophy, Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, is more of a work of apologetics than of systematic theology. Unlike Thomas's *Summa*, which endeavors to display the inner logic of Christianity and draw out its consequences for all knowledge, indeed, for the entire universe, Maimonides is preoccupied with defending Judaism against challenges of anthropomorphism and irrationalism, which came from Islamic Aristotelians. Franz Rosenzweig, "Apologetic Theology," *The Jew*, ed. Arthur Cohen (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1980), 266–67.

42. Rosenzweig, "Apologetic Theology," 266.

43. One representative critique is found in Gillian Rose, "Franz Rosenzweig: From Hegel to Yom Kippur," *Judaism and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

CHAPTER 4

1. Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism*, 1st ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1966), 3.

2. Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survivalism: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

3. Emil Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (New York: New York University, 1970), 84. In other books, Fackenheim does supply biblical, rabbinic, and philosophic justifications for his 614th commandment. See *To Mend the World* (New York: Schocken, 1982) and *The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). For an explicit discussion of the issue of the survival and meaning of the Jewish sacred after the Shoah, see Michael Goldberg, *Why Should the Jews Survive? Looking Past the Holocaust to a Jewish Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

4. Richard Rubenstein and Elie Wiesel, "An Exchange," in *Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications*, ed. John Roth and Michael Berenbaum (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 365.

5. Ibid., 364.

6. Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 87.

7. Elie Wiesel, *Messengers of God* (New York: Random House, 1976).

8. Elie Wiesel, *Memoirs* (New York: Knopf, 1995).

9. Peter Ochs, "From Two to Three: To Know Is also to Know the Context of Knowing," in *Scripture, Reason and the Contemporary Islam–West Encounter*, ed. Basit Koshul and Steven Kepnes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 177–200.

10. Ibid., 188.

11. Ibid., 192.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 190.

14. For the way this is worked out through modes of rabbinic interpretation, see David Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash: Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), chs. 4, 5.

15. Janet Soskice, "Athens and Jerusalem, Alexandria and Edessa: Is There a Metaphysics of Scripture?" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8, no. 2 (April 2006), 149–62.

16. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Seabury, 1973), part 3. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking, 1963). Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Holocaust* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1989).

17. Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire: Judaism, Christianity and Modernity after the Holocaust," in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?* ed. Eva Fleischner (New York: KTAV, 1977), 7–57.

18. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Response," in Fleischner, *Auschwitz*, 97–108.

19. Irving Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire," in Fleischner, *Auschwitz*, 46.

20. The traditional liturgy demands more extended rabbinic remarks on a few occasions like *Shabbat Hagadol*, and before Pesach, *Shabbat Teshuva*, and Yom Kippur.

21. Eugene Borowitz, "Auschwitz and the Death of God," in *Holocaust Theology*, ed. Dan Cohn-Sherbok (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 359.

22. For the best example of this, see Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996). Hartman uses Holocaust testimony to develop not only an analysis of the contemporary period but also a kind of literary–cultural worldview.

23. Zachary Braiterman, *(God) after Auschwitz* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 31.

24. A highly creative and profound alternative to anti-theodicy is developed by Martin Kavka with his notion of "meontology"—the Jewish interpretation of the Greek doctrine of "nonbeing." Kavka finds in the modern Jewish philosophers a productive function of nonbeing as the anticipation of a messianic future that at once explains the lack in Jewish history and sustains hope for its repair in messianic

redemption. Martin Kavka, *Jewish Messianism and the History of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

25. Rosenzweig does refer to these historical holidays in his discussion of the Christian liturgical calendar. But he states that they are both insignificant and not truly historical since their dates are accidental and they have become fixtures in the circular calendar of Judaism (*Star*, 391).

26. Since both Cohen and Rosenzweig focus on the Jewish liturgies of Shabbat and the special holy days, we may rightly ask what is to happen to the public spheres of the everyday life and the processes of history and politics. Cohen is extremely interested in politics and history, but when it comes to the Jewish involvement in these spheres, he is content to turn it over to his messianic dream of a new cultural consciousness. On the other hand, Rosenzweig turns this sphere over to Christianity. Despite their different forms of return to Jewish traditions, both Cohen's and Rosenzweig's failures to address the daily worship services follow a peculiarly modern Protestant pattern. In this pattern, religion is turned into a weekend religion. Ethical Monotheism also sought to legitimate diaspora Jewish existence by delegitimizing the aspects of Judaism that valorized the particular land of Israel. In this, Ethical Monotheism served the ideology of Classic Reform Judaism, which systematically excised references to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the ingathering of the Jewish exiles to the land, and the Davidic monarchy. Although the Ethical Monotheists developed their interpretations of Judaism in Germany, their strategies were adopted, expanded, and revised by the liberal forms of Judaism in America. Thus, the Ethical Monotheists became important figures for the development of liberal religion in America. Here, too, we see, especially in early and middle twentieth-century liberal forms of Judaism, a willingness to turn the everyday and public sphere over to secular American institutions of education, politics, and culture. Here, too, we see a focus on Shabbat and select holy days and an unwillingness to attempt to spread the sacred canopy of Judaism over the sphere of everyday life.

27. For Cohen's anti-Zionist position, see "The Buber and Cohen Debate on Zionism and Messianism," in *The Jew in the Modern World*, 2nd ed., ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 571–77.

28. Emil Fackenheim, *The Jewish Return into History: Reflection in an Age of Auschwitz and a New Jerusalem* (New York: Schocken, 1978).

29. Lawrence Hoffman has suggested that the content of daily Hallel was decided on by the 8th–9th centuries because he finds it both in *Seder Rav Amram* and in *Massekhet Sofrim*. See Hoffman, "Introduction to the Liturgy," in *My People's Prayer Book Vol. 3: "P'sukei D'Zimrah*, ed. Lawrence Hoffman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1999), 8.

30. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 1976), 120–22.

31. Ibid., chs. 4–9.

32. Yeshayahu Leibowitz argued this case in reference to contemporary Israeli society quite vociferously. *Leibowitz, Human Values and the Jewish State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

33. See Woocher, *Sacred Survivalism*.

34. See note 27.

35. Martin Buber, *On Zion: The History of an Idea*, trans. Stanley Godman (New York: Schocken, 1973), part 1.

36. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 9. I assume that Fackenheim took this term from Rosenzweig, who actually speaks of "Epoch-making events" in the *Star* (see page 359 of the *Star*).

37. Greenberg, "Cloud of Smoke," 7–8.

38. Ibid., 55.

CHAPTER 5

1. For a semiotic analysis of the daily morning service that complements mine, see Peter Ochs, "Morning Prayer as Redemptive Thinking" in *Liturgy, Time and the Politics of Redemption*, ed. Randi Rashkover and C. C. Pecknold (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006). I am indebted to Ochs for my understanding of Peirce's semiotics and for conversations with him on the insights that semiotics can bring to liturgy.

2. Urszula Niklas, "Peirce's Concept of Sign and Modern Semantics," in *Semiotic Unfolding: Vol. 1*, ed. Tasso Borbé (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1983), 221.

3. Peter Ochs, *Peirce and the Logic of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

4. Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vols. 1–6, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931–35), 5:484.

5. Ibid., 2:228.

6. Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers*, Vols. 7–8, ed. A. W. Burks (Cambridge University Press, 1958), 8:176. One can see from a Peircean perspective that if a participant has no "interpretant" for a liturgy, he will not make sense of it and it will be close to meaningless to him.

7. Peirce, *Collected Papers*, 2:276.

8. Ibid., 2:279.

9. Ibid., 4:531.

10. Ibid., 2:85.

11. Ibid., 2:84.

12. Ibid., 1:337.

13. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 113.

14. See Lawrence Hoffman's early work, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979). There is also the old classic work by A. Z. Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (1932; repr., New York: Schocken, 1967). For a fine compilation of commentaries, see *My People's Prayer Book: Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, 8 vols. (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1997–2004).

15. For example, the traditional *Rinat Israel* Siddur used in Israel does not begin with the Mah Tovu phrase (Num. 24:5) and the following texts from Psalms that we find in most diaspora prayer books. On the other hand, the Standard Prayer Book of the British Empire places the Yigdal and Adom Olam just after the Mah Tovu and before the putting on of the Tallit and the Birnbaum (and Rinat Israel) and places

the Yigdal and Adom Olam after the putting on of the Tallit. These changes reflect *minhaggim* or customs that are not dictated by Jewish law but are derived from local authorities and traditions.

16. *Sim Shalom: A Prayerbook for Shabbat, Festivals, and Weekdays*, ed. Jules Harlow (New York: Rabbinical Assembly, 1985).

17. Another extremely valuable Web source is Lawrence Hoffman's "Synagogue 2000" project.

18. One of the more creative feminist Orthodox reinterpretations of Jewish liturgy is found in the Jerusalem-based "Shirah Hadasha" community that is slowly spreading its liturgical forms worldwide. This group also has a Web site.

19. See Btal: Hulin 91b, where it is suggested that sacred space allows for a "shrinking of the ground" between different places. What this seems to mean is that sacred space does not follow the rules of secular space. Sacred space overcomes geographical distance so that not only can one sacred space move to another, but multiple sacred spaces can be considered to be isomorphic with a central sacred space. Thus, all sacred spaces in scripture inhabit the sacred space of Jerusalem.

20. The non-Orthodox movements count both men and women; the Orthodox only count men.

21. Nina Beth Cardin, "A Union of Weavers," in *Enveloped in Light: A Tallit Sourcebook*, ed. Dov Peretz Elkins and Steven Schwarzman (Princeton: Pomegranate Books, 2004), 139–40. I wish to thank Rabbi Rachel Ain, of Dewitt, New York, for pointing me to the Cardin and Grossman references I use in this chapter.

22. Ibid., 141.

23. Susan Grossman, "On Tefillin," in *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality*, ed. Ellen Umansky and Dianne Ashton (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 279.

24. Ibid., 280. Grossman also speaks of a prayer that she developed and added to her Tefillin ritual: "May you imbue me with wisdom, as you filled Sarah with wisdom. . . . And let me serve you with all my actions, as did Rivka, . . . with all my intellect, as did Leah, whose eyes, according to midrash, were weak, weak from studying so hard" (281).

25. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902; repr., New York: Random House, 2002), 499.

26. Ibid., 500.

27. In the Sephardic Siddur, these blessings are said privately in accord with the dictates of Maimonides.

28. Unfortunately, the Conservative "Sim Shalom" prayer book omits this section. And it also provides alternative prayers that omit mention of the sacrifices for the Mussaf Amidah of Shabbat and festivals.

29. "Abraham gave thanks and prayed there and said . . . I sought to perform your decree with joy; so, when the descendents of Isaac my son shall come to the time of distress, remember them, hear their supplications, and deliver them" (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. 22:14).

30. There are a series of wonderful resources on the kaddish and Jewish death and mourning rituals and liturgies. See Henry Abramovitch, "Anthropology of Death," in *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences* (Oxford: Elsevier,

2001), and Abramovitch, "Death," in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought*, ed. Arthur Cohen and Paul Mendes-Flohr (New York: Scribner's, 1987); Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, "The Halakha of the First Day," in *Jewish Insights into Death and Mourning*, ed. Jack Riemer (New York: Schocken, 1995); Leon Wieseltier, *Kaddish* (New York: Knopf, 1998); and perhaps the best, Samuel Heilman, *When a Jew Dies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

31. Martin Buber "The Burning Bush," in *On the Bible*, ed. Nahum Galtzer (New York: Schocken, 1982), 59.

EPILOGUE

1. Steven Kepnes, "A Handbook of Scriptural Reasoning," *Modern Theology* 22, no. 3 (July 2006): 367–83.

2. For a sample of the theory, see the rest of the essays in the special issue of *Modern Theology* 22, no. 3.

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