

"PRE-POSTMODERN"

Four Jewish Nationalist Thinkers of the Last Century

Avinoam Rosenak

Translated by Joel Linsider

For a symposium on the consequence of blur in a journal whose aims are irenic, it seems right that contributions should blur distinctions on which current enmities are built or in the process of building. One distinction of this kind is of specific relevance to enmities (or *resentments* is perhaps a better word) in Israel but, given the significance of Jewish nationalism to international politics, has wider ramifications. For some years now, an opposition has been drawn, not only among Israeli academics but among politicians and journalists as well, between Jewish nationalist or Zionist thought and the kind of thinking that is called "postmodern." The argument is that a Zionist cannot be a postmodernist and vice versa, the two being incompatible. It appears that this opposition originated with an identification made between "post-Zionist" historical revisionism (of the kind associated with Ilan Pappé, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, Simha Flapan, and Tom Segev) and postmodernist methods, assumptions, and claims. In some cases, the identification was made by the "new historians" themselves. While there is considerable bad blood between post-Zionist scholars and those, inside and outside the academy, who defend one or another version of the Zionist narrative, it needs

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1. This article relies in part on the Hebrew phrase *hamah ve-shalom be-ha-veir* ("War and Peace") (see Rosenak, "Ha-veir" ("War and Peace") Regarding 'the Other'), which focuses on the postmodernist theme of the "Other" but is not expressly treated in my article. For otherwise noted, translations of the Hebrew sources are by Joel Linsider.

2. Ranjit Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and the Problem of Concealment* (New York: Routledge, 2004). Chatterjee, "Wittgenstein and the Problem of Concealment," *Congress of Jewish Studies* 10 (2004): 1–12.

3. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden, introduction by David G. Armstrong (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953). Chatterjee puts the matter in this way: "The most important thing that Wittgenstein says is that the most important thing that could directly be said is that nothing can be said. Concerning these things, we must be silent." Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1–2.

4. Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and the Problem of Concealment*, 1–2. Chatterjee maintains that the two periods of Wittgenstein's thought sought to convey his ideas in different ways. In his style in *Philosophical Investigations*, Chatterjee notes that his idea was not clear but that it was not clear as antimetaphysical rather than as metaphysical.

to be demonstrated that postmodernism has nothing to do with their adversarial relations. My effort here will be to show that, even before postmodernism was heard of, Zionist nationalist thinkers such as Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hakohen Kook (1865–1935), Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel (1883–1946), Rabbi Abraham Hazan (1920–2003), and Professor André Néher (1914–1988) mounted Zionist arguments of a sort that we now regard as poststructuralist or postmodern.¹

Connections between postmodern thinkers and various Jewish sources are by now well established. In his book *Wittgenstein and Judaism*, for example, Ranjit Chatterjee describes the Jewish background of Ludwig Wittgenstein, his ties to the characteristic hermeneutics of Judaism, his interest in Jewish texts, and his own prophetic experiences.² In particular, Chatterjee argues that the Jewish origin of Wittgenstein's thought left its mark on the concluding sentence of the *Tractatus*, "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."³ Chatterjee understands this idea to be a defining feature also of the *Philosophical Investigations* (thus Chatterjee dismisses the conventional notion of a gap between Wittgenstein's early and later thinking).⁴ His Jewishness is said to be evident as well in his opposition to Augustine in particular and the dualist Christian narrative in general—and Chatterjee interprets Wittgenstein's writings overall as waging an unyielding war, in the spirit of Maimonides, against idolatry.⁵ The writings of Jacques Derrida are treated in a similar manner by John D. Caputo, Harold

1. This article relies in part on Avinoam Rosenak, "Maimonides and the Jewish Thought of Wittgenstein," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 36 (2005): 99–125. Here I focus on the postmodern context of the question, which is not expressly treated in my article in *Dat*. Except as otherwise noted, translations here of quotations from Hebrew sources are by Joel Linsider.

2. Ranjit Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism: A Triumph of Concealment* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). See also Chatterjee, "Wittgenstein as a Jewish Thinker," *World Congress of Jewish Studies* 10.C2 (1990): 41–46.

3. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. C. K. Ogden, intro. Bertrand Russell (1922; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 189. Chatterjee puts the matter in this way: "What was that insight? That being could directly be said it would not touch his ethical concerns, these things would escape such a reader." Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism*, 22.

4. Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism*, 21–22. He maintains that the two periods differ only in how Wittgenstein sought to convey his ideas and that Wittgenstein changed his style in *Philosophical Investigations* only after discerning that his idea was not clear to his readers, who understood it as antimetaphysical rather than Jewish (31, 34).

5. Andrew Saldino criticizes Chatterjee's exaggerated efforts to prove his thesis and also his slide into kabbalistic and psychological arguments. Saldino, "Wittgenstein and Judaism," *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 7.2 (Spring 2006): 77–84, at 80.

Bloom, and other scholars.⁶ Derrida shook up many admirers during the final two decades of his life as he began to speak of religion, to tell of his own “religion without religion,” his prayers and tears, and his understanding of the concept of the messiah.⁷ Contradicting a prevalent view that Derrida’s thought opens the way to (the hell of) nihilism, Caputo points to the Jewish elements in his writings: the battle against idolatry, the opposition to cultural models demanding monistic decisiveness—and Bloom finds the source of such elements in Kabbalah, which, while being by no means a nihilism, suggests that all “interiors contain exteriors” and that “effects determine . . . causes.”⁸

Studies like these, by philosophers and literary theorists, of important postmodern thinkers have prompted scholars in Jewish studies to reconsider elements of Jewish thought in postmodern terms. Derrida’s concept of representation has been useful in explicating rabbinic and Hasidic exegetical doctrines. Talmudic, midrashic, and Hasidic texts are now frequently described as open-ended and dialogic genres of literature.⁹ Benny Perl, for example, argues that the deconstructive practice of “describing a phenomenon in two different, even contradictory, ways” is unsurprising to yeshiva students, since they are taught its import and legitimacy.¹⁰ Indeed, many passages of the Gemara read like examples of deconstructive writing, for instance where “the force of a marriage entered into by a man even after he has lived affectionately with his wife for many years” is nullified on the basis of a determination that “the entire time he was married, he was not in fact married but was engaged, rather, in fornication. . . . It is *halakhah* that determines absolutely what is proper and what is not . . . and the conclusion is that *halakhah* has no existence beyond the existence it itself creates.”¹¹ The idea

6. See John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), and “Shedding Tears beyond Being: Derrida’s Experience of Prayer,” in *Théologie négative*, ed. Marco M. Olivetti (Rome: CEDAM, 2002), 861–80; Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (1975; New York: Continuum, 1983); Susan Handelman, *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 163–78; Shira Wolosky, “Derrida, Jabès, Levinas: Sign-Theory as Ethical Discourse,” *Prooftexts 2* (1982): 283–302; and Chatterjee, *Wittgenstein and Judaism*, 145. See also the bibliography on Derrida in Lieven Boeve, “Negative Theology and Theological Hermeneutics: The Particularity of Naming God,” *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture 3.2* (2006): 1–3, esp. n. 18.

7. All of these factors led Derrida to write a document that can be considered a “Jewish confession.” See John D. Caputo, “Jacques Derrida (1930–2004),” *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory 6.1* (December 2004): www.jcrt.org/archives/06.1/caputo.pdf.

8. Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism*, 53.

9. See, for instance, Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick, eds., *Midrash and Literature* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), to which Derrida contributed an essay, as well as Michal Ben-Naftali’s introduction to *Naftulei bavel*, the Hebrew translation of Derrida’s *Des Tours de Babel* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2002), 34 n. 20. For an argument against postmodern readings of Talmud, see Eliezer Greenstein, “Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth: *Peshat*, *Derash*, and the Question of the Context” [in Hebrew], *Resling 5* (Summer 1998): 34–41, www.resling.co.il/pdfs/issue_article_53.doc.

10. Benny Perl, “Al ‘emunah, midrash, halakhah u-postmodernizm” (“On Faith, Midrash, Halakhah, and Postmodernism”), *Ha-zofeh*, March 8, 2005, www.hazofeh.co.il/web/katava6.asp?modul=24&id=31111&word=&gila_yon=2299&mador=. It should be noted that Perl in this article comes out against the postmodern approach.

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that a phenomenon is determined by "the observer, and not because it so exists" is a foundational idea of Talmudic thought (and appears too, Perl notes, in the work of Niels Bohr, the baptized Jew who was the father of quantum theory).

Mordechai Kosenberg's writings on the concept of "re-composition" and the possibility of "re-biography" in midrashic hermeneutics are another instance of a scholar describing Jewish texts and interpretive practices as anticipations of deconstruction. In Kosenberg's view, exegetical monism is a Christian "mission-ary" concept,¹² standing in sharp contrast with the sort of textual re-composition that Jewish concepts of time, repentance, and history legitimize.¹³ The talmudic trope of "read not *x* but *y*" (in Aramaic, *al tikri*) is an interpretive move that permits re-composition, which is to say that it permits the interpreter to forge new ways of reading any text at any time.¹⁴ Kosenberg, to be sure, does distinguish between his approach, which he refers to as *aggadah*, and the postmodern stance toward narrative; but the distinction cannot obscure the hermeneutic foundation of postmodernism that is revealed in classical Jewish sources.¹⁵

The difficulty for any scholar writing on postmodernism and Judaism is that one assumes at first glance that, since postmodern discourse excludes metaphysics, it must also exclude religion.¹⁶ Beyond that problem, which for some religions (though not for Judaism) is insurmountable, there is the complication that in postmodern discourse any metanarrative of the past becomes a narrative¹⁷ dependent on interpretation,¹⁸ and assessment of its truth or falsehood is confined to the narrative framework.¹⁹ Thus, the content of religious concepts may remain

12. Mordechai Kosenberg, *Re-Biography and Deviance: Psychotherapeutic Narrativism and the Midrash* (New York: Praeger, 1987), 34.
13. Mordechai Kosenberg, *Dia-logo Therapy: Psychonarration and ParDeS* (New York: Praeger, 1991), 31.
14. "Don't read (the text) like this, but through a switching or changing of the letters in the biblical text read the reverse or word in a different way with a different intent" Kosenberg, *Dia-logo Therapy*, 29.
15. Mordechai Kosenberg, "Bein ha-narativ ha-'ishi la-'agaddah ha-hevratit" ("Between Personal Narrative and Social Legend"), in *Be-darkei shalom: Tynuntive and Social Legend*, in *Be-darkei shalom: Tynuntive and Social Legend* (Jerusalem: Beit Shalom Rosenber, ed. Benjamin Ish-Shalom (Jerusalem: Beit Shalom Rosenber), 2006-7), 122-23.
16. For a comprehensive overview of the principles of postmodernism relevant to the discussion of Judaism, see Gill Zivian, *Da-le-olam postmodernist (Religion without Illusion: Facing a Postmodern World)* (Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2005-6), 28-60. For a discussion that touches on my analysis below and that can serve as background for it, see Avinoam Rosenak, "Ha-culture in question, and since they are themselves a part of that culture, they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do." Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 23.
17. "We no longer have recourse to the grand narrative.... The little narrative [*petit récit*] remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention." Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 60.
18. Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 93. Lyotard puts the matter in this way: "The obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation [leads to] the narrative function... losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements.... Conveyed within each cloud are pragmatic valences specific to its kind." Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, xxiv.
19. "Narratives... determine criteria of competence.... They define what has the right to be said and done in the culture in question, and since they are themselves a part of that culture, they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do." Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 23.

unchanged even as their metaphysical or metanarrative relevance to the concepts and narratives of others will be quite limited. On the other hand, the role of language as a shaper of reality will be greatly enhanced.²⁰ It is this combination in particular that alienates Jewish nationalists who want their understanding of the past to be affirmed by all as simply true. The postmodern nexus is viewed as by nature leftist in politics and, in relation to Israel, post- and anti-Zionist. Still, what is most characteristic of postmodern thinking is a matter of form rather than content: postmodernism differs from other intellectual streams in that it incorporates no positive claims at all. It holds no substantive brief regarding one claim or another and seeks only to illuminate the limits of claims that others advance. As Tamar Ross has said, this formal approach makes it possible to maintain a highly conservative orientation in religious discourse while being simultaneously in the forefront of postmodern conversation.²¹ I will now try developing that insight with respect to Professor Neher and Rabbis Amiel, Hazan, and A. I. Kook.

The Messianism of the Unity of Opposites

Rabbi Kook was among the most prominent and influential figures of the Zionist movement.²² His teachings comprise a classic of modern Jewish thought, but I want to direct attention here primarily to the doctrine of “the unity of opposites”²³ that lies at the heart of his writings (and is derived from, among other resources, the thinking of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague [called Maharal]).²⁴ The doctrine has far-reaching implications from the perspective of postmodern religious discourse, because it considers opposed elements of reality as equally expressions of the same divine source.²⁵ It follows that each member of a pair of opposites requires the existence of the other—a position with radically pluralist

20. Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, *'Askolat Frankfurt ve-ba-historiyah shel ha-pesimizm (The Frankfurt School and the History of Pessimism)* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1996), 82. See also Peter Winch, “Understanding a Primitive Society,” in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (Evanston, IL: Harper and Row, 1970), 82: “Reality is not what gives language sense. *What is real and what is unreal shows itself in the sense that language has.* Further, both the distinction between the real and the unreal and the concept of agreement with reality themselves belong to our language. . . . *If then we wish to understand the significance of these concepts, we must examine the use they actually do have—in the language*” (emphasis supplied).

21. Tamar Ross, “Mashma'utam shel hegedim datiyim be-'idan postmoderani” (“The Meaning of Religious Statements in a Postmodern Era”), in *Tarbut yehudat be-'ein ha-se'arah (Jewish Culture in the Eye of the Storm)*, ed. Avi Sagi and Nacham Ilan (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad, 2002), 459–83.

22. Avinoam Rosenak, *Ha-rav Quq (Rabbi Kook)* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2006); Dov Schwartz, *Ha-ziyonut ha-datit bein bigayon li-meshibiyut (Religious Zionism between Logic and Messianism)* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1999); *Faith at the Crossroads: A Theological Profile of Religious Zionism*, trans. Batya Stein (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

23. On the unity of opposites, see Avinoam Rosenak, *Ha-halakhah ba-nevu'it: Ha-filosofiyah shel ha-halakhah be-mishnat ha-re'ayah Quq (Prophetic Halakhah: Rabbi A. I. H. Kook's Philosophy of Halakhah)* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007), 44–57.

24. See Avi Sagi, *The Open Canon: On the Meaning of Halakhic Discourse*, trans. Batya Stein (London: Continuum, 2007), chaps. 7–8.

25. In the kabbalistic context, this conception would be understood in terms of the *sefirah* of *keter* or *'ayin*.

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26. Rosenak, *Ha-halakhah ba-historiyah* (Historical contribution of Rabbi Kook), *Modern discourse has been treated* see her “Ha-re'ayah Quq u-p ha-hakarati shel ta'anut 'eme modernism: The Cognitive *Akdamat 10* (Winter 2000–2001) [org.il/files/1101294402773-hegedim](http://www.dor.ac.il/files/1101294402773-hegedim),” 282.

27. See Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of David Goldstein*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Littman Library, 1989).

28. Accordingly, I argue that the product of the post-Six Day religious Zionism. See Ehud Goren merasen 'o me'oded s

implications.²⁶ To be sure, Rabbi Kook was speaking from the perspective of a religious metanarrative that would violate postmodern decorum. He moreover drew an ontological distinction (grounded in Kabbalah)²⁷ between Israel and the other nations, a difference that he regarded as unbridgeable.²⁸ At the same time, given his understanding of the unity of opposites, he argued that the relationship between Israel and the other nations is a complementary one, even one of mutual need. In the words of Rav Shagar (Shimson Gershon Rosenbergh), "from a pluralistic concept of word games encompassing no truth (not because we have failed to find the truth but because there exists no basis for establishing it), from a humble relativistic concept," we arrive at "a concept of mystical bonding that asserts that all is truth, all is within God, and 'no place is without him.'²⁹ Rabbi Kook, drawing on Rabbi Judah Halevi and Maharal, depicts the relationship between Israel and the nations as one between core and periphery.³⁰ This model sustains both the "unity of opposites" and the vital nature of "the other." Israel encompasses the universal potential of the world, and the nations of the world express that potential in their diverse cultures and forms of creativity.³¹ Rabbi Kook conveys these views in his historical and political analyses of World War I and of Zionism, but especially in his analyses of "peace" and "war" as concepts.³² His specific approach to these concepts and to the content of substantive arguments regarding the pros and cons of Christian violence are beyond the scope of this article.³³ I am interested here in the *formal* implications of his stance.

The model of the "unity of opposites" enables us to see the world of the other as one we need even if its perspective is diametrically opposed to our own. Multiplicity and variety are necessary for the full expression of the unattainable and inexpressible "One." The infinite gap between Creator and creature strives to narrow itself by including a range of variations. That inclusiveness does not compromise my personal identity; on the contrary, Israel is the seed that encom-

26. Rosenak, *Ha-halakhah ba-nevur*, 44–57. The potential contribution of Rabbi Kook's doctrines to postmodern discourse has been treated at length by Tamar Koss; see her "Ha-re'ayah Qnq u-postmodernizm: Ha-'erekh ha-hakarat shel ta'not 'emet'" ("Rabbi Kook and Post-modernism: The Cognitive Value of Truth Claims"), *Akdamut* 10 (Winter 2000–2001): 185–234, ww.w.bmf.org.il/files/1101294402773.pdf; "Mashma'utam shel hegedim," 282.
27. See Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, trans. David Goldstein, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Littman Library, 1989), 447–546.
28. Accordingly, I argue that this tendency is not unique to Rabbi Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Y. Kook, and is not only the product of the post-Six Day War transformation of religious Zionism. See Ehud Luz, "Ha-dat ha-yehudit Gorem merasen o me'oded shimush be-koah?" ["The Goren merasen o me'oded shimush be-koah?"] (*Files*) (Jerusalem: Kanaan, 1999), vol. 2, bk. 5, par. 205; and vol. 3, bk. 7, par. 170.
29. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, *Shemoneh gevuzim (Eight Files)* (Jerusalem: Kanaan, 1999), vol. 2, bk. 5, par. 205; and vol. 3, bk. 7, par. 170.
30. See Rosenak, "Ha-halakhah ha-nevur," 46, 51, 81, 131.
31. Rosenak, "Ha-halakhah ha-nevur," 58–88.
32. See, more broadly, Rosenak, "Shalom u-milhamah."
33. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, *Shemoneh gevuzim (Eight Files)* (Jerusalem: Kanaan, 1999), vol. 2, bk. 5, par. 205; and vol. 3, bk. 7, par. 170.

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passes the variations seen among the nations of the world. Israel must preserve its uniqueness so as to make possible its integration of the others, who draw strength from it.³⁴ This model (grounded, as noted, in the writings of a classical source—Maharal) gained further vigorous expression in writings produced in France and North Africa by Rabbi Abraham Hazan and his teacher André Neher.

In Praise of the Diagonal

Rabbi Hazan³⁵ was one of the leading rabbis in twentieth-century North Africa.³⁶ Following World War II, he served as chief rabbi of the French army in Morocco; later as rabbi of the North African Jewish community in Strasbourg; and, beginning in the 1960s, as chief rabbi of the Israeli police and prison service. He melded the tradition of the North African rabbis and the world of André Neher. Neher was one of the leading Jewish philosophers in twentieth-century France and a pillar of what is called the Paris school of Jewish thought.³⁷ Hazan's world rested on contradictory cultural foundations, drawing as it did on Judaism, Arab culture, and French culture. That complexity had implications for his role as an educator and produced a pluralistic, anti-ideological personality, open to divergence from the conventions of his contemporaries.³⁸ The Parisian school of Jewish thought left its mark on a wide segment of French Jewry,³⁹ creating the atmosphere in which the Lithuanian Emmanuel Levinas and the North African

34. For broader treatment of this issue, see Rosenak, "Halakhah ha-nevu'it," 64–88.

35. See Miriam Stievie, *Linto'a shamayim: Mif'al hayyav shel ha-rav Avraham Hazan, rav ba-mishtarab u-vatei ha-sobar (To Plant the Heavens: The Life Work of Rabbi Abraham Hazan, Police and Prison Chaplain)* (Jerusalem: Bet-El Publishing, 2007); Avinoam Rosenak, "Bein 'ashkenaz li-zefon 'Afriqah: Halakhah, meta-halakhah ve-hinukh bi-khetavav shel ha-rav Avraham Hazan" ("Between Ashkenaz and North Africa: *Halakhah, Meta-Halakhah* and Education in the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Hazan"), *Pe'amim* 109 (2007): 95–124; "Ma'aseh 'avot siman lebanim: Historiyah, ge'ulah u-teshuvah be-haguto shel ha-rav Avraham Hazan" ("The Deeds of the Fathers Prefigure Those of Their Children: History, Redemption, and Repentance in the Thought of Rabbi Abraham Hazan"), in *Teshuvah u-ge'ulah (Repentance and Redemption)*, ed. Dov Schwartz (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2007); "Anti-Ideological Religion: Repentance, *Halakhah*, and Secular Culture in the Writings of Rabbi Abraham Hazan," *Revue des Études Juives* (forthcoming).

36. Hazan's teachers were Rabbi David Ashkenazi, (1898–1983), the chief rabbi of Algeria; and Rabbi Isaac Roche (Tlemcen, Algeria, 1906–Jerusalem, 1984).

37. Neher was born in Auvergne. Before the war he taught German; thereafter, he was active in communal affairs in France. He was a professor of Hebrew at the University of Strasbourg, where he founded the Institute for Hebrew and Jewish Studies. In 1974 he immigrated to Israel and settled in Jerusalem. See Judah Amir, ed., *Nezah be-'itot shel shinui: Andreh Neher ve-he-hagut ha-yehudit ha-zorfatit le-'abar ha-sho'ab (Eternity in Changing Times: André Neher and Post-Holocaust Franco-Jewish Thought)* (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute; Tel-Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuḥad, 2005).

38. Amir, *Nezah be-'itot shel shinui*. And see, more broadly, Rosenak, "Bein 'ashkenaz." This appreciation of complexity was dealt a severe blow by what they saw as "the treachery of the West" in the face of events during World War II. But Hazan's own appreciation of complexity gained theological support from his encounter with Neher, who exercised a profound influence over him.

39. See Joseph Sharvit, "Morashto ha-tarbutit shel ha-rav Yehudah Lei'on 'Ashkenazi" ("The Cultural Legacy of Rabbi Yéhouda Léon Askénazi"), *Pe'amim* 91 (Spring 2002): 112.

Rabbi Yéhouda Léon Askénazi, a philosopher, was moreover, a philosopher who was educated. He was not pluralistic in the sense of opposites and mutual exclusion. In Neher's view, the diagonal was the diagonal. Maharal.⁴¹ For example, the diagonal is the diagonal, with which the diagonal and polarity in the diagonal, lower, evil versus good, is the diagonal with *bet* rather than the diagonal only to distinguish the diagonal, the diagonal way to integrate the diagonal, all-inclusive One, the diagonal must be united—the diagonal, particularism—the diagonal, each element.

The diagonal is the diagonal, again the diagonal, again the diagonal.⁴³ For the diagonal, along the diagonal, the diagonal, mines the diagonal, the diagonal (church life), which the diagonal, to their fellows (again the diagonal, integrating these two axes, the diagonal, and dynamic center, the diagonal, *halakhah*, the Jewish, treated in Judaism, the diagonal, theology, metaphysics, the diagonal, dedicate himself to the diagonal, society. . . . [The diagonal, who loves [God's, gives up on society, Elsewhere he asks

40. For Manitou's biography, see www.manitou.org.

41. See André Neher, *The Teachings of Maharal* (Mass, 2003).

42. See Maharal, *Sefer* (1955), chap. 45, "u-ve-

Rabbi Yehouda Léon Askenazi (called Manitou) did their work, and affording, moreover, a philosophical voice to the Near Eastern culture in which Hazan was educated.⁴⁰ The writings of Neher and Hazan, produced within this plural if not pluralistic environment, depend implicitly on the doctrine of the unity of opposites and make use of it explicitly when treating the concepts of peace and war. In Neher's oeuvre, the doctrine appears most explicitly in his writings on Maharat.⁴¹ For example, in Neher's interpretation (following Maharat), the letter *bet*, with which Genesis and thus the Torah begins, represents the tension and polarity in which the world and history are suspended: higher realms versus lower, evil versus good, negativity versus affirmation.⁴² That the Torah begins with *bet* rather than *alef* conveys that plurality is essential and that we need not only to distinguish between affirmation and negation, but also to find a suitable way to integrate all of the opposites that express different aspects of the all-inclusive One. It is in historical experience, Neher suggests, that opposites must be united—including pluralism and versus purism, universalism and versus particularism—while affording due consideration to the continued existence of each element.

The distinctiveness of the Jewish approach here is prominent in Neher's depiction, again following Maharat, of the three axes—vertical, horizontal, and diagonal.⁴³ For the most part, human life and Christian religious life proceed along the vertical and horizontal axes: the vertical-transcendental axis determines the relationship between man and God (and is the locus of religious and church life), while the horizontal-immanent axis sets human beings in relation to their fellows (and is the locus of secular life). Judaism's vitality lies in its bringing these two axes together in a single diagonal axis—in its forging of an "active and dynamic center" between the horizontal and the vertical.⁴⁴ In other words, *halakhab*, the Jewish law or way of life, is meant to sanctify the secular. Ethics is treated in Judaism with the gravity that in other religions might be accorded to theology, metaphysics, or mystical communion. As Hazan writes: "No man can dedicate himself to God without constantly doing battle for the benefit of human society. . . . [That is the sense of] the well known comment in *Pirquet Avot*: 'One who loves [God's] creatures loves God' [6.1]. . . . A true man of faith . . . never gives up on society and never encloses himself in a wilderness of barren faith."⁴⁵ Elsewhere he asks: "Is God immanent? Is He transcendent? Ah, He is everything

40. For Manitou's biography (in Hebrew or in French), see www.manitou.org.il.

41. See André Neher, *Mishmaro shel ha-Maharat mi-Pirquet Avot* (Tel Aviv: Pardes, Mass, 2003).

42. See Maharat, *Sefer Nezarab Xisra'el* (Tel Aviv: Pardes, 1955), chap. 45, "u-ve-peraq beleg (Sanhedrin 97b)." June 24, 1943; Stievie, *Linto'u*, 75.

43. Neher, *Ha-Maharat*, 44–54.

44. Neher, *Ha-Maharat*, 44–54.

45. Abraham Hazan, Letter to Emile Saban, St. Louis, June 24, 1943; Stievie, *Linto'u*, 75.

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at once; He is One in His variedness and in the thousand revelations of man and nature."⁴⁶

This dialectical tension, whose result is life lived on the diagonal, can be found as well in Neher,⁴⁷ who, like Hazan, finds it expressed in the Bible and embodied in history.⁴⁸ It is also voiced in Hazan's impassioned opposition to ideology:

Any perceptive person will see that a terrible affliction has become epidemic in our world and our society; its name is "ideology." . . . The concept serves as the source for all sorts of totalitarianisms. . . . Ideology is a non-Jewish myth, and every myth has more than a drop of idolatry. Ideology is the mother of every modern transgression . . . of exclusivist isolation, as it declares "I and no other."⁴⁹

The sin of ideology is that it relates everything without exception to first principles in a vision that is all-encompassing. Religion is so different from ideology that the two cannot even be contrasted in the same terms and figures. Religion should be figured as a journey, not a puzzle; and the journey, according to Hazan and Neher, is toward a broad horizon. There is no set path toward it, so long as the traveler keeps an eye on the horizon. Ashkenazi-style idealism, in Hazan's view, has always aimed to derive a philosophy from its religious world, but the world of faith cannot be examined with the tools of logic and analysis. The search for truth, in the philosopher's sense of truth, is one part of the human world, but faith—Hazan contends, following Neher and the existentialists—is a leap beyond it.⁵⁰ He quotes Neher saying, in the same vein: "Philosophy cannot be Jewish except on the authority of the Jewish religion, whose essence is opposition to philosophy."⁵¹

Universal Peace

A similar spirit is evident in Neher's and Hazan's discussions of peace. Neher criticizes the Western Christian conception of peace, which he compares to the

46. Abraham Hazan, Letter to Emile Saban, Rousseau, July 13, 1943; Stievie, *Linto'a*, 73; see also 88–89.

47. André Neher, *U-ve-khol zo't! (Anyway!)* (Jerusalem: Reuben Mass, 1977), 29–30.

48. See André Neher, *Zeibuteimu ha-yehudit (Our Jewish Identity)*, trans. from French by Azariah Shmueli (Jerusalem: Reuben Mass, 1994), 30.

49. Hazan's farewell speech on completing his term as chief rabbi of the police and prison service, July 11, 1991 (from a MS in possession of his family). His comments

include an element of criticism of the rabbinate of the time; see Rosenak, "Bein 'ashkenaz."

50. See, in this context, Samuel Hugo Bergman, *Dialogical Philosophy from Kierkegaard to Buber*, trans. Arnold A. Gerstein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 77–93, 110–15. The idea was already present in Hazan's early writing; see Stievie, *Linto'a*, 85–86.

51. Abraham Hazan, lecture delivered on a study day marking ten years since Neher's death, Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem, 1998 (in *Eternity in Changing Times*, 3).

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52. For analysis of N "Neher, Levinas, v yehudim be-zorfat" (" of Jewish Intellectuals Times, 65–66.

53. André Neher, " Hevel" ("The Biblical nity in Changing Time s.v. *vayehi bi-byotam ba*

kind of relations that obtained between Cain and Abel until the first murder took place.⁵² Peace based on division or separation, he argues, cannot last. Abel was a shepherd and Cain a farmer, but their division of land and labor gave rise to an irresolvable tension, for "the world does not lend itself to division. When Abel's herds tarried in some field, Cain would say, 'No, this field is mine, to which Abel replied, 'the field, perhaps, but the pasture is mine.'⁵³ And so things remains today—as Neher writes:

It is impossible to live as brothers by separating from one another. Eternal life necessarily means granting the other whatever belongs to me; everyone must live and move within a whole that encompasses my own essence. My brother must benefit from the field I own; and we can be brothers only on that basis—and not thanks to some sort of dividing line, even if its purpose is to attain peace. One of the ways to locate oneself in relation to the other is to say "what is mine is mine; what is yours is yours"; that sort of distribution prevails in the world and is the normal and moral way. But the Jewish sages call it the way of Sodom; it is the approach adopted by Cain.⁵⁴

Neher's critique of "the normal and moral way" of "distribution" is formulated here in moderate terms, but the argument reaches greater depth in his student Rabbi Hazan's essay "Jerusalem, or Universal Peace"⁵⁵:

"Moreover, concerning the stranger who is not of Your people Israel . . . he shall come and pray toward this house" (1 Kings 8:41–42). Even God Himself, in His glory, declares, in the voice of the prophet Isaiah, "For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa. 56:7). . . . It is no mere happenstance that it was in the very heart of Jerusalem that, for the first time in history, voices were raised that emphasized universalism and the brotherhood of all men.⁵⁶

It is "no mere happenstance" that Jerusalem was selected to stand for universal peace, because it was there that (according to an aggadic tale Hazan recounts) two brothers, unlike Cain and Abel, supplied each other's needs. The brothers of the aggadic tale were landowners, one a bachelor, while the other had a family. The former surreptitiously tried to help his brother sup-

52. For analysis of Neher's article, see Samuel Wygoda, "Neher, Levinas, ve-kinusai ha-'inteleq'ualim ha-yehudim be-zorfa'" ("Neher, Levinas, and the Gatherings of Jewish Intellectuals in France"), in *Eternity in Changing Times*, 65–66.
 53. André Neher, "Ha-d'ialog ha-miqra'i: Qayin ve-Hevel" ("The Biblical Dialogue: Cain and Abel"), in *Eternity in Changing Times*, 230–31. Cf. *Exodus rabbah*, sec. 31, s.v. *vayehi bi-hyotam ba-sadeh*.
 54. Neher, in *Eternity in Changing Times*; see also Mishnah *Avot* 5:10.
 55. See Stievie, *Lmito'a*, 434–43.
 56. Abraham Hazan, "Jerusalem ou Paix Universelle," 1–8 (French MS in possession of his family); Stievie, *Lmito'a*, 435.

port his family, while the latter surreptitiously tried to alleviate his brother's loneliness:

And behold, one night [while each was bringing wheat to the other's field] . . . the brothers ran into each other, recognized each other, and fell crying on each other's neck. The Holy One Blessed Be He saw this and said, "When the time comes at which I want to cause My Name to dwell among mankind, I will establish My house at this point of brotherly encounter." And so, on a night that was dark and moonless but glowing with brotherly love, Jerusalem was established.⁵⁷

The story of Rome's founding, Hazan continues, is quite different: "Underlying the founding of Rome we also find two brothers: the twins Remus and Romulus. . . . Both were raised by a she-wolf, and after Romulus murdered his brother, he founded the city that was destined to destroy Jerusalem."

Jerusalem's distinctiveness as the city of universal peace is implicit in its very name. In making this point, Hazan forges a new and one might say deconstructionist reading of the word *Jerusalem*, a reading rooted in the midrashic tradition:

The name of Jerusalem, mentioned 656 times in the Hebrew Bible, begins and ends every Jewish prayer and is the source of all inspiration and yearning. But there is an interesting semantic phenomenon, flowing from the philological mysteries of the Hebrew language: though written in the Bible as *y-r-w-sh-l-m* [which would be pronounced *yerushalem*], it is pronounced *yerushalayim* [as if written with an additional *yod*, in the *plene* rather than the defective spelling actually used, as *y-r-w-sh-l-y-m*]. The *qere* [pronounced form] always differs from the *ketiv* [written form]. According to the *ketiv*, the name is *yerushalem*, which means "city (or foundation) of peace," a single, unified peace. According to the *qere*, however, the name is *yerushalayim*, meaning "city (or foundation) of doubled peace"—a shared, divided, perhaps even dual peace.⁵⁸

The mystery concealed within this plural peace, according to Hazan, is implicit in Psalm 122, which specifies four divisions of the city: one theological (between heavenly and earthly Jerusalem), one topological (between upper and lower Jerusalem), one historical (between the Jerusalem of the past and of the future), and one between Jerusalem as a political capital and Jerusalem as a religious center. The city is destined to resolve each of these dualist tensions by realizing that the polar opposites are complementary, then learning to live with the tension.

In the absence of this kind of resolution (one that appears to resolve noth-

57. Stievie, *Linto'a*.

58. Stievie, *Linto'a*, 436.

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ing), what developed was the Western concept of peace, the Pax Romana—a peace ensuring that wars would be waged only outside the empire and that, within it, no competing interests would be allowed to emerge. In that same spirit were the "Eternal Peace" of Freiberg (1516),⁵⁹ the "Pax Americana,"⁶⁰ and the "Russian Peace."⁶¹ Islam as well has followed the Western imperial model, which Hazan defines as a division of domains: "the *sal'ām*—the terrible peace that Islam engraved on its banner and that, as a theological matter, divides the world into two domains: *dar al-islām*, in which *sal'ām* prevails; and *dar al-harb*,⁶² the domain of the murderous sword, which must be subjugated by repeated attack and by force of arms."⁶³ In contrast to these types and definitions of peace, Hazan introduces his idea of "Jewish peace, whose full meaning we must infer from the Hebrew root by uncovering the connection between the *geri* and the *ketiv*":

Peace, in order to attain its perfection, must break its singular form and become the more tumultuous dual form of the name Jerusalem (*yerush-alam*)—precisely in accord with the Hasidic adage "nothing is more whole than a broken heart!" The message of "Jewish peace" appears in all its force and scope in the book of Leviticus: "I shall grant peace in the Land" [26:6]. The verse allows for two interpretations of "land": the Land of Israel or, in the broader sense, the entire world.⁶⁴

Citing the interpretations of this verse by Nahmanides (1194–1270) and Rabbi Ḥayyim ben Attar (1696–1743), Hazan extracts from them an image of Jewish peace as he understands it. From Nahmanides, he learns that "the promised peace is not limited only to your land. It is a general peace that will begin with Israel but will encompass the entire world. It is peace for every individual, which will prevail in all geographic reaches of the human world." From Rabbi Ḥayyim ben Attar's comments on the verse, he again learns the importance of "peace through-out the world," a peace inferred from the nature of the "seventy sacrifices (cor-responding to seventy nations of the world)" brought in the Temple during the festival of Sukkot (Talmud Bavli *Sukkah* 55).

"It is natural," says Rabbi Ḥayyim ben Attar, "that when there is war in the

59. This was the peace agreement between François I and European empire, who bore the assignment of waging war in distant parts, the better to defend the states that supported them." Stevie, *Limot*, 437.

60. "The Americans landed in France in 1917, only after the unspeakable slaughter in the trenches of Verdun; and only in 1942, more than three years after the start of the Second World War, did they reach the shores of North Africa. They were acting here on a subconscious isolation-ism of 'American Peace'; that impulse was somewhat per-verse and certainly egocentric . . . as in the Korean War

61. That peace gave rise to "conflicts . . . far from the Soviet Union, in Latin America, Cuba, Africa, . . . and Afghanistan." Stevie, *Limot*, 437.

62. See Qur'an 47:4, 9:5.

63. Hazan, *Jerusalem*; Stevie, *Limot*, 437.

64. Hazan, *Jerusalem*.

world, even those dwelling in security will be frightened by the winds of war.” Any real peace, then,

must be our peace and that of the other. If peace is not universal, it cannot exist for us either. If it affects only our territory and security, it is mistaken and misleading. . . . Peace does not simply pertain to the other; it begins with the other: “[peace, peace] for far and near,” proclaims the prophet Isaiah (57:19). . . . This is a peace that begins with the far before the near; a peace whose meaning in accordance with the *gerei* makes possible its meaning in accordance with the *ketiv*; a peace that bridges between essence and actuality. . . . It is precisely these two [Nahmanides and Rabbi Ḥayyim ben Attar], refugees from unjust oppression on the part of Judaism’s two daughter religions, who define for us what is meant by “Jewish peace”—a peace whose unity cannot be divided but which must be split so that its first part can be given to the other and the distant, in order that one may enjoy its second part.⁶⁵

It is worth reemphasizing that the author of this passage, Rabbi Hazan, was a Jewish nationalist, one whose Zionism demanded that the Western model of peace, the Pax Romana, be left behind in Europe and a more wholly Jewish model be followed in the Land of Israel. His approach, which draws on midrashic sources and classical commentaries as well as on the “unity of opposites” model, may seem, in the context of current Israeli politics, “pre-postmodern” (to borrow a phrase from Barbara Herrnstein Smith).⁶⁶ The formal construct of the “unity of opposites” negates or obviates the premises of monistic ideology and so entails a kind of pluralism. The specific kind of pluralism entailed is realized, however, in a specifically Jewish context, one that draws sustenance from a metanarrative that the most dedicated opponents of postmodernism in Israel should be able to recognize as their own.⁶⁷

The “Tree of Knowledge” and the “Tree of Life”

Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, who was chief rabbi of Tel Aviv–Jaffa from 1936 to 1946, did not adopt the doctrine of the “unity of opposites” that was so important to Rabbi Kook and Rabbi Hazan.⁶⁸ Rather, Amiel’s innovative views grew out of a

65. Hazan, *Jérusalem*.

66. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, “Relativism, Today and Yesterday,” *Common Knowledge* 13.2–3 (Spring–Fall 2007): 227–49, at 240.

67. See, to similar effect, the comments of Moshe Meir, “Ha-gevul ve-ha-halal ha-panui,” *Makor Rishon*, June 8, 2007.

68. Rabbi Amiel studied with Rabbi Ḥayyim of Brisk (1853–1918) and Rabbi Ḥayyim Ozer Grodzinsky (1863–1940). Amiel became chief rabbi of Tel Aviv–Jaffa, having previously served (since 1920) as chief rabbi of Antwerp. From a literary perspective, he was one of religious Zionism’s most effervescent and prolific writers; for a bibliography, see Isaac Werfel, “Kitvei ha-rav Moshe Avigdor ‘Ami’el” (“The Writings of Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel”), in *Sefer ha-yovel le-ha-rav M. ‘A. ‘Ami’el* (*Jubilee Volume for*

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Rabbi M. A. Amiel) salem: Mossad Ha-teachings, see Avigdor Avigdor ‘Ami’el” (“The Thinking of Rabbi Amiel”) (*Sefer ha-yovel le-ha-rav M. ‘A. ‘Ami’el*) (*Jubilee Volume for Rabbi M. A. Amiel*) (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute, 2005), 409–38; the philosophical position is on war and peace a Aaron Tamrat. See *Mivhar ketavim shel Rabbi M. A. Amiel* (*Selected Writings of Rabbi M. A. Amiel*) (Tel Aviv: Center, 1992).

69. On Hazan’s typology of “Ma’aseh ‘avot.”

70. For elaboration on Rosenak, “Halakha and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought,” see Josef Dan, ed. *Rachamim*

dualistic distinction typical of the Zionist thinkers of his time—a sharp distinction between Israel and other nations—though he drew from it his own conclusions.⁶⁹ For him, the distinction was not ontological but cultural.⁷⁰ At the same time, his central role in the Zionist movement led him to a harshly critical view of modern nationalism; Jewish nationalism would need to differ from it substantially. Though himself possessed of broad general learning, Amiel maintained that the close involvement of Jews with European Enlightenment ideas was productive of spiritual distortions within Jewish culture.⁷¹ Its sheer externality to Judaism was for him problematic.⁷² In the context of this highly particularistic narrative, Amiel defined the distinctive nature of Israel's Torah. The Torah is not a book of science or of ethics; it is "a Torah of life."⁷³ In his view, Israel's Torah differs greatly from other scriptures in how it analyzes reality, how it relates to society, how it approaches morality. These differences, he argued, shed light on the militaristic and amoral character of philosophical and Christian culture, in contrast to the pursuit of peace that characterizes Israel's Torah.

As for the differences between Jews and non-Jews in their understanding

Rabbi M. A. Amiel, ed. Y. L. ha-Kohen Fishman (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1943), 245–56. On Amiel's teachings, see Avinoam Rosenak, "Ha-zilyonut ke-mahapeikha ha-medinit be-mishnato shel ha-rav Mosheh Avigdor 'Amiel'" ("Zionism as an Apolitical Revolution in the Thinking of Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel"), in *Me'ab ba-parushah (Meditations on the Parushah)*, ed. Natfali Rotenberg (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute, 2005), 458–71.

71. Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, *Ha-zedeq ha-sozial ve-ha-zedeq ha-mispari u-masari shelam (Social Justice and Our Legal and Moral Justice)* (Tel Aviv: Torah va-Avodah Movement and Mizrahi, 1936), 57, 64, 66, 160; *Li-nevukhei ha-teqnah: Fingei bistakut be-mabut ha-yehudit (For the Pleased of the Age: Studies of the Nature of Judaism)* (Jerusalem: Moriah, 1943), 142.

72. See Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, *Darkei Mosheh*, bk. 2, *Darkei ha-ginyanim* (Warsaw: Grafya Press, 1931); "Darkeh shel torah," 13, 15–16. Amiel criticizes those drawn to the Enlightenment and thereby led away from the Jewish world; he gives as examples Philo, the perplexed of Spain (led by Maimonides), and all those asserting "Jewish consciousness" during the nineteenth century. Eventually, Amiel writes, "they were uprooted from the company of Jews and followed the company of that man; And even many of the perplexed of Maimonides' time were drawn after that group [i.e., the Christians]." Amiel, "Darkeh shel torah," 18.

73. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 43. See also *Ha-middot le-bever halakha (Rules for Investigating Halakha)*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Datus ha-Ivri, 1939), 138.

Josef Dan, ed. Rachel Elior and Peter Schaffer (Tübingen: and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought: Festschrift in Honor of the Writings of Rabbi Haim David Halevi," in *Creation Rosenak*, "Halakha, Thought and the Idea of Holiness 70. For elaboration on this distinction, see Avinoam "Masach avot."

69. On Hazan's typological approach, see Rosenak, Center, 1992).

Torah: Selected Writings of A. S. Tamrat (Jerusalem: Dinar Tamrat ketavim shel A. S. Tamrat (Pacifism in Light of the Aaron Tamrat. See Ehud Luz, ed., *Pazifizm le-or ha-torah*: on war and peace are similar to those of Rabbi Samuel sophical position is based on these articles. Amiel's views 2005), 409–38; the following overview of Amiel's philo-1 (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute and Hebrew University, *Jubilee Volume for Eliezer Schwed*), ed. Yehoyada Amir, vol. *ruah: Sefer ha-yovel le-Eliezer Schwed (The Way of the Spirit: Thought of Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel)*, in *Derekh ha-Link between Jewish and General Culture in Light of the dor 'Amiel'"* ("A Socio-Cultural Model for Examining the le-tarbut kelalit le-or mishnato shel ha-rav Mosheh 'Avig-hevrat-tarbuti li-vehinat ha-zigah she-bein tarbut yehudit Han University Press, 2003), 287–306; "Iyyun be-degem ed. Avi Sagit and Dov Schwartz (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-shenot zilyonut datti (Hundred Years of Religious Zionism), the 'Thinking of Rabbi Moses Avigdor Amiel'), in *Me'ab ba-parushah (Meditations on the Parushah)*, ed. Natfali Rotenberg (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute, 2005), 458–71.

Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 309–38; "Parashat gorah: 'Kol ha-'edah kullam gedoshim?'—Masah be-'iyot ha-re'ayah Qun ve-Yishayahu Leibovitz" ("Parashat Gorah: 'The Entire Congregation Is Holy?'—A Journey in the Footsteps of Rabbi Kook and Yeshayahu Leibovitz"), in *Hogim ba-parushah (Meditations on the Parushah)*, ed. Natfali Rotenberg (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute, 2005), 458–71.

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of reality, Amiel argues that gentile "knowledge" (*yedi'ah*) differs from Jewish "recognition" (*hakkarah*), which is grounded in faith. Knowledge comes from an empirical science founded on sense data; its epistemological nature is analytical. Recognition or awareness, in contrast, flows from intuition, which leads a person to become cognizant of God in the world.⁷⁴ Since the knowledge valued in the West is scientific in origin,⁷⁵ it produces a theology in which God is an abstraction without providential qualities.⁷⁶ Judaism, meanwhile, entails unmediated cognizance of God, and the Jew encounters nature only through that cognizance.⁷⁷ Science and philosophy produce a human being with a low self-image;⁷⁸ Judaism understands mankind as a covenantal partner with the Creator.⁷⁹ Like the better-known distinctions drawn between Rome and Jerusalem by Moses Hess,⁸⁰ Athens and Jerusalem by Leo Strauss,⁸¹ and Israel and the nations by Rabbi Kook and his student the Nazir (Rabbi David Ha-Kohen),⁸² the distinction made by Rabbi Amiel between Greece and Israel is centered on distinctive concepts of place and time. In brief, the philosophers and scientists of Greece think most intently about place, while the Jewish sages think most intently about time. One who thinks about place has an understanding of the world that requires quantification, order, regularity, and stability; it is founded in the material realm. In contrast, thought based on time is diffuse, innovative,⁸³ dynamic, and abstract.⁸⁴ Because it focuses on the world of the "is," Greece is pessimistic; Israel, directed toward the future "ought," is optimistic (146). From the vantage point of place, one looks for deterministic natural law; from the vantage point of time, one looks for wonder and freedom (151). This gap, Amiel argues, generates a corollary distinction with respect to society: elitist philosophy versus popular religion (40-41).

It is in this context, Amiel maintains, that one can best understand the moral and political dispute between Israel and the nations: focused in its science and philosophy on knowing the "is," Greece tends to produce monistic ideas, whereas Judaism, aspiring to know the "ought," tends to be pluralistic (146). A parallel distinction drawn, a few years ago in these pages, by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz may help to shed light on what Rabbi Amiel means. Steinsaltz would not argue that Judaism is or should be pluralistic. The distinction as he makes it is

74. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 7.

75. Amiel, *Darkhei Mosheh*, 19-20.

76. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 7, 45.

77. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 143.

78. This image also affects Jews enamored of philosophy; see Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 44.

79. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 147, 222.

80. Moses Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem*, trans. Maurice J. Bloom (New York: Philosophical Library, 1958).

81. Leo Strauss, "Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections," in *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity: Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, ed. Kenneth Hart Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 377-405.

82. Rabbi David ha-Kohen, *Qol nevu'ah (The Voice of Prophecy)* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1970); Schwartz, *Ha-ziyonut ha-datit*, 234-72, 273-84.

83. On this argument's political implications for the Jewish nation, see Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 70.

84. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 144-46.

between two kingdoms, understand alternatives—but by people and thus,

Even ultimately, Judaea. It is the religious among the gentiles; redemption; but right that of Jews. . . . Jews perform their own salvation by the God

Steinsaltz presents only one of which but science has its own content: he was Greece as egocentric doing battle on behalf class to another.⁸⁷

For the nation be molded by the live or is put to death it proper . . . to sense One who is unwillingly accepted among the collective there traces the roots of children sent their children were exposed that have guided World political interconnection antipluralistic stand

85. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, *The Irrelevance of 'Torah Knowledge* 11.1 (Winter

86. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 92.

87. Amiel's remarks taking comments about Jewish view that may be interesting Ahituv, "Ha-rav 'Ashla-la-zulat" ("Rabbi Ashla-Other"), *Be-darkei shalom*

between two kinds of zealotry, scientific and monotheistic. Religions, like sciences, understand themselves as supporting one truth against all the supposed alternatives—but Judaism, Steinsaltz adds, is a religion meant uniquely for one people and thus, unlike other faiths, has no missionary aspirations:

Even ultimately, Judaism does not view itself as the religion of all people. It is the religion of the Jews alone. . . . In other words, the righteous among the gentiles are not blocked, as transgressor Jews are, from redemption; but righteous gentiles have their own path, different from that of Jews. . . . Judaism makes room for adherents of other faiths to perform their own religious obligations in a way that entitles them to salvation by the God of Israel.⁸⁵

Steinsaltz presents a more or less formal distinction between kinds of zealotries, but science has its problems with Judaism). Amiel's distinction is more focused on content: he wants to denigrate the philosophical and scientific approach of Greece as egocentric and unsympathetic,⁸⁶ while seeking to depict Judaism as doing battle on behalf of human equality because it rejects the servitude of one class to another.⁸⁷

For the nations of the world, Amiel thus argues, the individual is "as clay to be molded by the collective; by will of the collective, the individual is allowed to live or is put to death." Hence "even the most enlightened . . . governments find it proper . . . to send individuals to the battlefield . . . there to kill or be killed. . . . One who is unwilling to go is universally judged worthy of death, for it is generally accepted among them that an individual who does not fulfill his duty to the collective thereby forfeits his right to exist on the face of the earth."⁸⁸ Amiel traces the roots of this approach to Athens. There, in the name of social utility, children sent their aged parents to their deaths in the mountains, and defective children were exposed to die.⁸⁹ In the end, then, it is not Platonic abstract ideals that have guided Western society,⁹⁰ but rather a system of self-interested, egotistical interconnections, based on a fear of social anarchy.⁹¹ A coercive, monistic, antipruralistic stance is shared by all in the West—capitalists, socialists, and fas-

88. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 54.

89. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 52.

85. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, "Peace without Conciliation: The Irrelevance of 'Tolerance' in Judaism," *Common Knowledge* 11.1 (Winter 2005): 41–47, at 41–43.

86. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 92, and *Li-nevukbet*, 42.

87. Amiel's remarks take issue with Nietzsche's sweeping comments about Judaism; see *Ha-zedeq*, 108. For a view that may be interestingly compared to his, see Yoska Ahituv, "Ha-rav 'Ashlag ve-Levinas al ha-mehuyavut la-zulat" ("Rabbi Ashlag and Levinas on Duty to the Other"), *Be-darkei shalom*, 469–84.

91. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 32, 92; *Li-nevukbet*, 75, 92–97, 124.

90. This distinction drawn by Amiel between Platonic and conventional Greek thinking might be seen as blurring his distinction between Jewish and gentile thought. See, further, Rosenak, "Tyun be-degem hevatit."

cists alike. The “image of God” within human beings is an idea that is foreign to them, and Western culture therefore affords a person status only insofar as he subjects himself to a party or other group.⁹²

Judaism, by contrast, rejects all manner of interests (be they collective or personal). Jewish justice, according to Amiel, is unaffected by money, party, or status.⁹³ The law is sensitive, though not subordinate, to the individual in his distinctiveness, and it calls society to account for offenses against him. Gentile law is figured as a Procrustean bed, associated by midrashic interpretation with the consummately inhospitable people of Sodom.⁹⁴ Abraham, on the contrary, is said to have offered his visitors beds suited to their size.⁹⁵ In the same spirit, *balakhab* strictly enforces equality: “You shall have one manner of law,”⁹⁶ favoring neither the poor (“neither shall you favor a poor man in his cause”)⁹⁷ nor the rich (“you shall not respect persons”)⁹⁸—nor even the homeborn (“The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt”).⁹⁹ “Man was created as an individual,” Amiel reasons, and the individual precedes the collective. Of that individual, the psalmist says to God, “you have made him but little lower than the angels.”¹⁰⁰ An individual’s sorrow breaches the gates of heaven; Jewish ethics demands respect for parents even when it clashes with social utility; and the Jew’s obligation to love mankind applies to everyone.

Peace and War

With respect to the concepts of peace and war, the distinctions that Amiel makes are entirely between Israel and the West. He admits of no relevant distinctions between the Greco-philosophical, Christian, and modern secular ethics of war.¹⁰¹ In his view, each of these cultural structures contains within it a warrant for violence against “the other.” The narrow, monistic “knowledge of the truth” in the philosophical tradition entails an aggressiveness that subjects the other to the

92. “The . . . culture regards man as a small screw in the machine, which has no importance apart from the machine. The instant the screw is removed from the machine, it no longer has any value” (Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 137). He is here writing of the rise of fascism.

93. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 91.

94. “If the guest was larger than the bed, they would cut off his legs. Conversely, if he was too small, they would stretch his legs.” Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 71.

95. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 171.

96. Lev. 23:22.

97. Exod. 23:3.

98. Deut. 16:19.

99. Lev. 19:34.

100. Ps. 8:6.

101. Mishnah *Sanbedrin* 4:5. Amiel uses the same logic in criticizing Christian culture as he does in criticizing Western secular culture, but he draws a distinction between them, in that he favors inquisitorial Christianity over the secular order that produced the world wars. The Inquisition, for all its dreadfulness, reflected a dispute “for the sake of heaven,” but disputes among secular political parties no longer need any sort of religious cover (Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 137–38). Moreover, he argues, secular ideology gave rise to racism and its attendant horrors.

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102. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 33.

103. Amiel, *Darkhei Mos*

104. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*,

105. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*,

106. Amiel, *Darkhei Mos*

107. Amiel, *Darkhei Mos*

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"good" of whoever holds power and authority. The Inquisition was thereby justified in the name of a "Christian morality" that called for burning people alive so their souls might enter paradise.¹⁰² A similarly narrow and violent morality, Amiel believes, is to be found in the secularist approach, which derives from the sin of eating from the "tree of knowledge" (in other words, the secular world is given over to technology and the pursuit of quality of life).¹⁰³ Modern Western culture, secular and technological, knows how to "make human life pleasant and devise new delights"; at the same time, however, "it serves as a means of destruction," a murderous machine, more disastrous even than the medieval Crusades.¹⁰⁴ Worse, the level of technology and quality of life become dependent on the destructive might that governments can deploy. War is the impetus for the technological creativity that enhances human comfort, while technological creativity strengthens the drive to wage war, thereby renewing the cycle.¹⁰⁵

Hence Amiel's figuration of Western technological culture as the deadly result of eating from the tree of knowledge:

all the sciences . . . come from the angel of death, like whom none is as great in wisdom and knowledge. Consider the Great War, the World War, which has only recently come to an end—and who knows if it really has come to an end—and has wreaked horrific destruction and a flood of tears and blood. And yet, on the other hand, we see how the war brought about a widening of scientific knowledge to an extent previously unimaginable and led to the development of grand and valuable inventions that our forefathers could not have envisioned, such as artillery able to hit targets from great distances. . . . And that, indeed, is the nature of the tree of knowledge, the Torah tells us. . . . If you want to know the tree of knowledge of all the nations . . . their civilization and their culture . . . you must start with Genesis. . . . Were it not for the turning, flaming sword, created from the tree of knowledge, mankind today would still dwell in the ancient Garden of Eden as a king in his gazebo.¹⁰⁶

In stark contrast, Judaism entails eating of the "tree of life," which is embodied in the pursuit of righteousness and justice¹⁰⁷—a justice that embraces all of humanity and all of nature as well.¹⁰⁸ Here the distinction made is between Israel and Amalek: "Amalekism detests the weak, while Judaism detests the mighty. Amale-

102. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 33.
 103. Amiel, *Darkei Mosheh*, 22.
 104. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 135.
 105. Amiel, *Li-nevukhei*, 137.
 106. Amiel, *Darkei Mosheh*, 19–20.
 107. Amiel, *Darkei Mosheh*, 22.
 108. Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, *Shabbat maiketa: Qovez ma'amarim u-ne'umim she-nitparsenu be-'ittomim shonim le-raglei bodesh ta'ammulab lema' ba-shabbat (The Sabbath Queen: Selected Essays and Speeches Appearing in Various Periodicals during the Course of a Month Devoted to Publishing the Sabbath) (Tel Aviv: Mishmeret Hashabbat, 1939)*, 24.

kism prizes the pursuers, but the God of Israel prizes the pursued.”¹⁰⁹ And how is Amalekite murderousness to be opposed? Judaism does not, Amiel argues, believe in using force against force: “An accuser cannot become a defender. Evil cannot be extirpated from the world through evil itself. Terror cannot be eliminated from the world through terror by the other side. Accordingly, war against the mighty hand is not waged with the mighty hand.” Rather, “war [is waged] against the sword with the book. The book of paper or parchment . . . will vanquish every sword.”¹¹⁰ On his interpretation, opposing violence with words has always been Israel’s path¹¹¹—and he adds that the nations of the world were so stunned by this refusal to shed blood in battle that they invented the libel that Jews shed gentile blood in secret.¹¹²

Of course, Israel can take up the sword when there is no alternative, in order to save lives, but Jews do so “with great sorrow and anguish, for they are the descendants of Jacob, who feared killing more than he feared being killed.”¹¹³ Amiel rejects absolutely any acts of terror or violence meant to attain a goal: “that sort of morality is the morality not of Jews but of gentiles.”¹¹⁴ It is a morality prepared to forgo the prohibition of murder on utilitarian grounds:

This is also the morality of Bismarck’s nationalism and Hitler’s, a morality based on the principle that the end sanctifies the means and that in pursuing their overall benefit, they may use all means, however ghastly. Jewish morality teaches the very opposite: the end does not sanctify the means; rather, ghastly means desecrate even a holy purpose.¹¹⁵

Jewish nationalism cannot permit what Judaism forbids, and it forbids the hatred of the other that is the basis of non-Jewish nationalism.¹¹⁶ Even the supreme goal of return to the Land of Israel cannot permit what religion forbids.¹¹⁷ There is

109. Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, *Derashot ‘el ‘ami (Discourses to My People)* (Tel Aviv, 1964), pt. 3, 134.

110. Amiel, *Derashot*, 134.

111. Battling the sword with the word had been Israel’s way, Amiel writes, since the time of Joseph before Pharaoh, Joshua against Amalek, Simeon the Righteous before Alexander of Macedon, and Rabbi Yohanan ben Zaqai before Vespasian and Titus: *Derashot*, 135. After citing the midrash from *Yoma’* 69a, Amiel adds: “Simeon the Righteous did battle against Alexander of Macedon; against military uniforms, we go forth in priestly garb” (135).

112. “Not for naught did our enemies invent the blood libels they charged us with. Their minds could not grasp how a nation so different from all other nations could exist in the world without drawing blood from the others. By their lights, they had to suspect us of shedding blood in secret, instead of their overt shedding of blood like water.”

113. Amiel, *Derashot*, 137–38.

114. Amiel, *Ha-zofeh*, July 27, 1938.

115. Amiel, *Ha-zofeh*, July 27, 1938.

116. “This nationalism draws nourishment, first and foremost, not from the ‘image of God’ within man but from the satanic destructive force within him; that is, from his hatred for anyone who is not of his race or not a citizen of the land.” Amiel, *Li-nevukbei*, 287.

117. They have spoken accurately, Amiel writes, of “a nation that resembles an ass”; for if the nation’s only “coagulating agent is the Land—the shared homeland of the entire nation, from which they sustain themselves—their feelings are felt by an ass as well, however thickheaded.” See *Li-nevukbei*, 243. See also Gadi Taub, *Ha-mitnablim ve-ha-ma’vaq ‘al mashma’ut ha-ziyyonut (The Settlers and the Struggle over the Meaning of Zionism)* (Tel Aviv: Yediot Aharonot, 2007), where he notes the shift within religious

indeed no interest. The order may not be perfect in itself, in all its glo-

We are forbidden to kill; we shall not murder”; and in murdering people of other religions, we know clearly that both sides are obligated to firm their resolve through blood.¹¹⁹

In sum, Rabbi Amiel distinguished between, at one time, would be correct. The of monism and ex- “precapitulates” a rida to Julia Kristeva. Zionist nationalist, an anarchist and even anarchist from science is cha-

As for Nehemiah, Jewish thinkers examined the unity of opposites to serve an overall goal. Each opposite that there is no hierarchy. Furthermore, holds the and is therefore o- Hazan understood and particularism positions. Jewish incompatible. Each been too sharply o- by no means natu-

Zionism from support- ing a Jewish state to su- achieving settlement. both trends.

118. “Of such national- torically: ‘Remain here- that resembles an ass- understood by gentiles- well. ‘The ox knows its

ended."109 And how is Amiel argues, believe Amiel cannot be eliminated, war against the [is waged] against every will vanquish every [s] has always been so stunned by this that Jews shed gentle s no alternative, in anguish, for they are red being killed"113 attain a goal: "that It is a morality pre- ds: -l- in -y: ne t forbids the hatred n the supreme goal fords.117 There is

indeed no interest in Judaism to which all else should be subordinated, and murder may not be permitted as a means to a goal even for the sake of redemption itself, in all its glory.118 Amiel words this point unequivocally:

We are forbidden to spill Arab blood . . . by the commandment "you shall not murder"; and it represents moral decline to explain the sin of murdering people only on utilitarian grounds. In my view, even if we know clearly that by [killing] we will attain the total redemption, we are obligated to firmly reject that "redemption" and not be redeemed through blood.119

In sum, Rabbi Amiel, a central figure of the Zionist movement in his day, distinguished between Jews and gentiles on grounds that, among many Zionists of our time, would be considered post-Zionist and postmodern. His objection to all forms of monism and exclusivist metanarrative as kinds of aggression against the other "precapitulates" a line of postmodern thinking that extends from Levinas and Derrida to Julia Kristeva, Gianni Vattimo, and Bruno Latour. While undoubtedly a Zionist nationalist thinker, Amiel argued that Jewish culture includes antinationalist and even anarchic dimensions. Moreover, the antipositivism evident in his recoil from science is characteristic of all postmodern discourse.

As for Neher, Rabbi Hazan, and Rabbi Kook, the other Jewish nationalist thinkers examined in this article, it cannot be denied that their doctrine of the unity of opposites makes metaphysical assumptions and is itself easily made to serve an overarching metanarrative—yet the doctrine demands of itself that each opposite that is embraced be affirmed in its own right and on its own terms. There is no hierarchy or synthesis of these elements implied. The doctrine, furthermore, holds that every narrative requires the existence of all other narratives and is therefore obliged, paradoxically, to respect and protect them. Neher and Hazan understand the doctrine of the unity of opposites as a rejection of monism and particularism, which they regard as nonreligious and certainly non-Jewish positions. Jewish nationalism and postmodern thought, then, are by no means incompatible. Each requires only to be blurred slightly at the edges—which have been too sharply drawn, in any case—for the two to appear complementary, and by no means natural enemies.

Zionism from support for settlement as a means for attaining a Jewish state to support for the state as a means for achieving settlement. Amiel's critique applies equally to both trends.

118. "Of such nationalism the sages already spoke the- torically: 'Remain here with the ass [Gen. 22:5]—a nation that resembles an ass; that is, nationalism as usually understood by gentiles is a feeling found among asses as well. 'The ox knows its owner, and the ass his master's

119. Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel, *Tehumin* 10 (1989): 148. Amiel, *Ha-zedeq*, 111. great one, the difference is only quantitative, not qualitative while the trough is a small matter and the Land of Israel and from which they are nourished and sustained. And land from which they are nourished and sustained. And

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